

A few years into my priesthood, I hit a wall. I had taken on too many commitments: Masses, meetings, ministries, projects. I couldn't keep up. I was double-booking, forgetting things, running late, and letting people down. My boss at the time, a wise priest, and our shared secretary, noticed. For my birthday, the two gave me a stack of 100 flashcards, each with one word printed in a different language: "NO." It was funny, but also painfully true.

If I couldn't say no, my yes was in danger.

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus says, "Let your "Yes" mean "Yes," and your "No" mean "No." Anything more is from the Evil One" (Matthew 5:37). He's not just giving advice about polite speech. He's showing us something about the freedom of Christian discipleship. The follower of Christ is called to speak clearly, simply, and honestly. There is joy in that kind of freedom. The Church Fathers often linked this kind of straightforward truthfulness with spiritual maturity. The devil is the father of lies, but Jesus is the Word made flesh. When we hedge, flatter, exaggerate, or avoid, we open space for the shadows to creep in. That little stack of flashcards reminded me that God does not want us enslaved to the expectations of others or to the fear of disappointing them. He wants us to enjoy the peace of saying yes and meaning it, and saying no, and meaning it, too.

**Lenten Challenge:** Practice one moment of honest, peaceful speech this week. Maybe it's a sincere "yes" to something important, or a humble "no" to something you cannot do. Let it be a quiet step into the freedom Jesus offers. —Father John Muir

#### LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR FEB. 21 & 22, 2026

##### Sat. Feb. 21 @ 4:30PM @ St. Nicholas

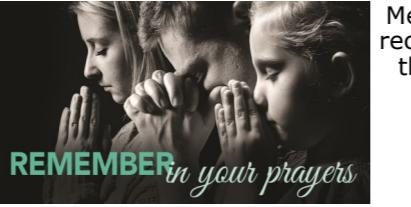
Reader: Kelsey Bentlage  
Music: Sally Rehberger, Barb Zaloga, & Colleen Lozier  
Euch. Min.: Brenda & Marce Tebbe  
Server: Pat Kalous

##### Sun. Feb. 22 @ 8:00AM @ St. Gertrude

Reader: Chad Korte  
Music: Nick Worman & Randy Eckstein  
Sacristan: Gail Ohren  
Euch. Min.: Terry & Sue Dickman & Sue Messerli  
Ushers: Karen & Nathaniel Straube  
Servers: Nevin Straube & Katie Schwarz

##### Sun. Feb. 22 @ 10:00AM @ IC

Reader: 3rd Grade PSR Class  
Music: Joy Winkeler  
Servers: Emma Winte & Jack Williamson  
Euch. Min.: Cindy Knebel, Evelyn Knebel & Mary Korte



Members of our parish families who are recovering in the hospital & at home, for their strength and patience each day, and for all those who ask for our prayers for health or other issues.

John Alberternst, Pat Beard, Ana Cantrell, Steve Crawford, Don Dapkus, Teresa Dickman, Garland Edwards, Jean Fields,

Gabriel Frey, Jerry Fyke, Ed Gagen, Karen Grabowski, John Grubb, P.J. Hereford, James Hodge, Gene Jolliff, Pat Kalous, Val King, Janice Korsmeyer, Barrett Korte, Denny Korte, Randy Korte, Ruth Korte, Steve Korte, David Kuehn, Sue Luber, Christopher Marti, Taylor Marti, Barry May, Alex McCall, Eleanor Munie, Cody Neal, Linda Merkle-Neumann, Jeannie Oestlinger, Robin Pollmann, Suzanne Steinbring, Marcia Rowe, Gunner Sadler, Abby Schrage, Bill Schroeder, Marie Weis, Ginny Werner, Dean Wernle.

#### FOR OUR PARISHIONERS IN NURSING HOMES:

Delmar Knebel, Harold Schwarz, Barbara Weiss, Margie Zurliene and special people in our families.

#### FOR THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE MILITARY:

Adam Canfield, Tim Doll, Ensign Eli Jones, Chad Knebel, Michael Knebel, Dustin Korte, Solon McGill, Lt. Abigail Mesaros, Jerritt Mettler, Jimmy O'Boyle, Sgt. Joseph Patterson, Rickie Schuster, Joseph Schatte, Greg Spina, T.J. Waddington, Sgt. Tyler Wegman, Sgt. Zach Weiss.

If you would like to have someone added or removed from the prayer list please call the parish office.

#### Ash Wednesday Mass Schedule Feb. 18th:

8AM @ St. Nicholas  
5PM @ St. Gertrude  
7PM @ Immaculate Conception



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Mon. (Feb.16) 8:00am  
Tues. (Feb.17) 8:00am (St.G)  
Wed. (Feb.18) 8:00am (St.N)  
Wed. (Feb.18) 5:00pm (St.G)  
Wed. (Feb.18) 7:00pm (IC)  
Thur. (Feb.19) 8:00am (St.N)  
Fri. (Feb.20) 8:00am (IC)  
Sat. (Feb.21) 4:30pm (St.N)  
Sun. (Feb.22) 8:00am (St.G)  
Sun. (Feb.22) 10:00am (IC)

#### † Mass Intentions †

##### No Mass

##### † All Souls

† Ralph Goestenkors — Int. of Lowell & Denise Wellen

† Skip & Joan Dickshot — Int. of Brenda Knackstedt & Family

† Tom Whalen — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey

#### For the People of St. Nicholas, St. Gertrude & Immaculate Conception

† Kylie Toberman — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey

† Bill Klostermann — Int. of Laurie & Frenchie Eilers

† Kenny Rutz — Int. of Clarence & Ruth Korte

In Memory of the 80th Wedding Anniversary of Emil & Freda

Klostermann — Int. of the Klostermann Family

† Tony & Virginia Vosholler — Int. of Lowell & Denise Wellen



#### Readings for the week of February 15, 2026

##### Sunday:

Sir 15:15-20/Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34/  
1 Cor 2:6-10/Mt 5:17-37 or 5:20-22a,  
27-28, 33-34a, 37

##### Monday:

Jas 1:1-11/Ps 119:67, 68, 71, 72, 75, 76/  
Mk 8:11-13

##### Tuesday:

Jas 1:12-18/Ps 94:12-13a, 14-15, 18-19/  
Mk 8:14-21

##### Wednesday:

Jl 2:12-18/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and  
17/2 Cor 5:20-6:2/Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

##### Thursday:

Dt 30:15-20/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6/  
Lk 9:22-25

##### Friday:

Is 58:1-9a/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19/  
Mt 9:14-15

##### Saturday:

Is 58:9b-14/Ps 86:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/Lk 5:27-32

##### Next Sunday:

Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17/  
Rom 5:12-19 or 5:12, 17-19/Mt 4:1-11

"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20

The Pharisees lived according to the letter of the law, and they used this to elevate themselves above the other people. Jesus is clear – it's the love that you have in your heart, for God and others, that will get you to heaven. Simply following church rules to the letter and not out of love, does not necessarily put you on the path to heaven. Attending Sunday Mass and then gossiping about a fellow parishioner on the parking lot is an example of being a modern-day Pharisee.

Jesus does not want us to live within the law — He wants the law to live within us. God's law, fulfilled by His Son, is rich soil. We must let it nourish the words and the decisions of our Christian life — only then will it flow forth into the world.

#### Observances for the week of February 15, 2026

Sunday: 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Monday: Presidents' Day

Tuesday: The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order

Wednesday: Ash Wednesday

Saturday: St. Peter Damian, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Next Sunday: 1st Sunday of Lent



#### VOCATION MINISTRY

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS:  
Feb. 15, 2026

priests may live and preach God's Word with integrity of heart, guiding His people with compassion and faithfulness.

For those discerning their vocation, that they may seek not only to know His will but to live it with integrity and joy.

For our parish, that we may guide young men in prayerful discernment, helping them recognize the path that God is calling them to.

Next Sunday, at the 10AM Mass at IC, we will celebrate the "Rite of Sending for Election" with our catechumenate, Kelsi Hannan. The Church has discerned her readiness for reception of the sacraments this Easter. After Mass, she and her sponsor will be sent to the Bishop for the Rite of Election. As Kelsi's new parish family, we are called to support & encourage her. Please continue to keep Kelsi, her family, sponsor & OCA team in your prayers.

#### HIGHLAND KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

#### Lenten Fish Fries

Beginning Ash Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, then every Friday until Good Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

DINE-IN AND CARRY OUT AVAILABLE CASH AND CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Three meal sizes \$8, \$11, & \$14. Desserts available

THANK YOU 4:00 PM-- 7:00 PM



#### STG Collection 2/8/26

Envelopes/Loose	\$1,263.00
Sister Parish	\$55.00
Latin America	\$25.00
Catholic Times	\$15.00
Eastern Europe	\$25.00
Maintenance Fund	\$145.00
Cemetery/Perp Care	\$1,040.00
Budget Goal	\$1,257.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$24.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$40,224.00
Support Actual	\$43,527.72
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$3,303.72
STG Collection	2/8/26
IC Collection	2/8/26
Envelopes/Loose	\$1,669.00
Sister Parish	\$5.00
Latin America	\$15.00
Catholic Times	\$5.00
Eastern Europe	\$10.00
Building Fund	\$230.00
Budget Goal	\$2,672.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$-1,003.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$85,504.00
Support Actual	\$85,515.93
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$11.93

#### STN Collection 2/7/26

Envelopes/Loose	\$1,358.00
Sister Parish	\$5.00
Catholic Times	\$5.00
Eastern Europe	\$20.00
Maintenance Fund	\$145.00
Cemetery/Perp Care	\$1,040.00
Budget Goal	\$1,257.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$24.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$40,224.00
Support Actual	\$43,527.72
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$3,303.72

## 2026 Lenten Mission

Featuring: Patty Schneier

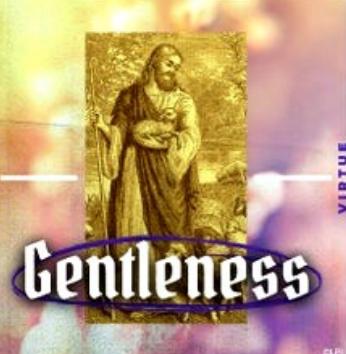
Theme: See the Beauty; Discover the Joy



Monday, March 9, through  
Wednesday, March 11

6:30 p.m.

St. Elizabeth Catholic Church  
Babysitting Provided  
Reception following  
Wednesday Evening



### Virtues, Explained!

Gentleness disposes us to receive the inspirations of the Spirit, who "reveals to men who Jesus is" (CCC 152). In cultivating a spirit of gentleness, we more closely resemble Christ, who was unfailingly gentle, even in the face of violence and death.

### Blessing of Love

Heavenly Father, Ignite us with Your love. Reveal to us Your will, guide us in Your path. Pour Your blessings upon us, You who are the giver of every good thing. Help us to live, work, act, and speak in ways that bring honor and glory to You. Amen.



From February 18 to March 29, we are uniting with many others for another major simultaneous pro-life mobilization – the 40 Days for Life campaign. The mission of 40 Days for Life is to bring together the Body of Christ in a spirit of unity during a focused 40 day campaign of prayer, fasting and peaceful activism, with the purpose of repentance, to seek God's favor to turn hearts and minds from a culture of death to a culture of life, thus bringing an end to abortion. We (Immaculate Conception, St. Gertrude and St. Nicholas parishes) chose to Adopt a Day in the 40 Days for Life Granite City campaign to end the demand for abortion. We were assigned Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> as our adopted day, and we need prayer warriors join us in this important mission. We need prayer warriors to pray at the facility in Granite City, and we need some to pray from work, home, etc. too! 40 Days for Life works because prayer works! If you would like to pray for an hour or two on February 22, 2026, please contact Denise Trickey at 314-495-9080. Thank you for standing up for life!



We are once again doing a "Just Jeans Drive for the Homeless" during the month of February. We ask that you please donate new or gently used adult jeans during the month of February. We will have boxes, to place the jeans in, at the following churches, Immaculate Conception, St. Gertrude, St. Nicholas and St. Paul, we will also have boxes at the KC Hall in Highland and the Highland Police Station. At the end of February, the jeans will be delivered to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in St. Louis. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Bill or Denise Trickey at 314-495-9080.

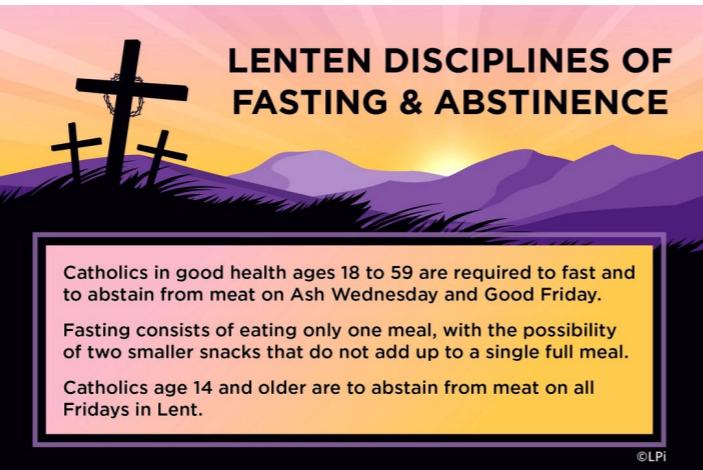
### Meet Our Seminarians



Joseph Tuttle  
Configuration I  
St. Meinrad Seminary

One thing I have learned in my discernment is to continually surrender to the will of the Father. I have learned to say with Jesus, "Not as I will, but as You will." (Matt. 26:39)

Euchre tournament  
Feb. 22 2026; starting 1:00 pm  
at St. Rose Development Club  
Building — 8004 S 1st St.,  
St. Rose



### LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR FEB. 18 ASH WEDNESDAY

#### Wed. Feb. 18 @ 8:00AM @ St. Nicholas

Reader: Marce Tebbe  
Music: Sally Rehberger & Barb Zaloga  
Euch. Min.: Brenda & Marce Tebbe; Server: Pat Kalous

#### Wed. Feb. 18 @ 5:00PM @ St. Gertrude

Reader: Katrina Korsmeyer  
Music: Nick Worman & Randy Eckstein  
Sacristan: Wendy Essenpreis  
Euch. Min.: Carole Sauls, Gail Ohren & Brenda Knackstedt  
Ushers: Bryan Rutz & Kevin Schwarz  
Servers: Elizabeth Schwarz & Morgan Dressler

#### Wed. Feb. 18 @ 7:00PM @ IC

Reader: Denise Trickey Music: Joy Winkeler  
Servers: Jack Williamson & Rebecca Dea  
Euch. Min.: Amy Gilomen, Mary Korte & Erica Knebel

## SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 14 & 15, 2026



Saint Nicholas - Pocahontas



Immaculate Conception—Pierron



Saint Gertrude—Grantfork

+BISHOP  
THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI  
DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD  
IN ILLINOIS



REV. CALLISTUS OSIAGA  
PASTOR

SONYA CURRY  
SECRETARY

**Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 410  
Pierron, IL 62273

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[icpierron@parish.dio.org](mailto:icpierron@parish.dio.org)  
**Website:**  
[www.icstnsta.org](http://www.icstnsta.org)  
**Office:** 618-669-2391  
**Rectory:** 618-654-2789

**Office Address:**  
401 E State Street,  
Pocahontas  
**Office Hours:**  
Mon.—Thurs. 9am to 4pm  
Fridays 9am to 1pm

**Mass Times**  
**Immaculate Conception**  
Wed. & Fri. —8:00am  
Sunday —10:00am

**Saint Nicholas**  
Thursday — 8:00am  
Saturday — 4:30pm

**Saint Gertrude**  
Tuesday — 8:00am  
Sunday — 8:00am

