

When I was 11, I was riding my bike on a Friday night in Scottsdale, Arizona. I saw giant spotlights swirling in the sky. Something amazing had to be happening. I pedaled after them with excitement. Sweaty and tired, I arrived, only to find a used car lot. Bright lights, flapping banners, inflatable balloon men swaying wildly in the wind. I stood there, heart sinking.

All that spectacle, and all my effort....for this?

As life proceeds, we learn what it is like to pursue promising but fruitless searches. This week we hear Jesus ask the crowds regarding John the Baptist: "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by wind?" (Matthew 11:7). He's not just describing the crowd's mis-aimed pursuit. He's naming our tendency to chase after what's flashy but flimsy.

What are our swaying reeds? For me, it is endless video reels on my phone, worldly pleasures, entertainment in sports, and the good opinion of others. Inflated distractions that bend whichever way the wind blows. But they can't satisfy my soul. What are your flimsy needs? John the Baptist wasn't a swaying reed. He was rooted, grounded, unafraid to speak the solid truth.

The people went to see him because, deep down, they were starving for something real.

This Advent, the Church asks us to reassess: what are we really looking for? Are we chasing the dazzling but hollow? Or are we seeking what is solid and lasting — that which points to Christ? —Fr. John Muir

LITURGICAL MINISTERS FOR DEC. 20 & 21, 2025
Sat. Dec. 20 @ 4:30PM @ St. Nicholas
 Reader: Kelsey Bentlage Music: Sally Rehberger
 Euch. Min.: Brenda & Marce Tebbe
 Server: Pat Kalous

Sun. Dec. 21 @ 8:00AM @ St. Gertrude
 Reader: Katrina Korsmeyer
 Music: Nick Worman
 Sacristan: Wendy Essenpreis
 Euch.Min.: Judi Rode, Gail Ohren & Brenda Knackstedt
 Ushers: Nathaniel & Nevin Straube
 Servers: Oliver Lewis & Teagan Barr

Sun. Dec. 21 @ 10:00AM @ IC
 Reader: Tim Schuette Music: Joy Winkeler
 Servers: Kendyl & Dylen Potthast
 Euch. Min.: Kristin Potthast, John Dea & Evelyn Knebel

We have a very special day coming up! 33 years ago on 12/31/25, Father Cal was ordained a priest! Since December 31 is New Year's Eve, we will celebrate Father Cal's ordination on Sunday, December 28, join us for refreshments and fellowship after the 10am Mass at Immaculate Conception that day! We look forward to helping Father Cal celebrate his priestly ordination!

The Nativity of the Lord Mass Schedule

Dec. 24th Christmas Eve:
 4:30PM @ Immaculate Conception
 7:00PM @ St. Gertrude

Dec. 25th Christmas Day:
 8:00AM @ St. Nicholas
 10:00AM @ Immaculate Conception

There will be Christmas caroling about a half hour before Mass so come early & sing along!

Mon. (Dec.15) 8:00am (St.N)
 Tues. (Dec.16) 8:00am (St.G)
 Wed. (Dec.17) 8:00am (IC)
 Thur. (Dec.18) 8:00am (St.N)
 Fri. (Dec.19) 8:00am (IC)
 Sat. (Dec.20) 4:30pm (St.N)

Sun. (Dec.21) 8:00am (St.G)
 Sun. (Dec.21) 10:00am (IC)

† Mass Intentions †
No Mass
 † **All Souls**
 † **Imogene Holtgrave** — Int. of Bill & Denise Trickey
 † **Peggy Haberer** — Int. of Mark Williams
 † **Roman Korte** — Int. of Karen & Joseph Mersinger
 † **Bill & Betty Haberer** — Int. of Don Cureton
For the People of St. Nicholas, St. Gertrude & Immaculate Conception
 † **Ronnie & Bonnie Rutz** — Int. of the Hess Family
 † **Cy & Dolores Weis** — Int. of Herb & Shirley Weis
 † **Allan & Millie Frey** —Int. of Steve & Jayne Fergesen



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, Dave Deiters, Teresa Dickman, Joan Dickshot, Jean Fields, Rita Frank, Scott Frank, Gabriel Frey, Jerry Fyke, Ed Gagen, Karen Grabowski, P.J. Hereford, James Hodge, Gene Jolliff, Pat Kalous, Val King, 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, Jeannie Oestringer, 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, Ann Plocher, Barbara Weiss, Margie Zurliene and special people in our families.

FOR THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE MILITARY:
 Adam Canfield, Tim Doll, 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.



"Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed." This powerful message from the Centurion to Christ is our daily cry to Christ before receiving Christ during Holy Communion. In this Advent season, as pilgrims of hope, we are already vigilantly awake for the incarnation of Christ. We are making fruitful preparations through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, intensive prayers, and positive acts of holiness to make our hearts worthy to receive Christ. Be alert, be ready, and be prepared.



Readings for the week of December 14, 2025

Sunday:
 Is 35:1-6a, 10/Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10 (see Is 35:4)/Jas 5:7-10/Mt 11:2-11

Monday:
 Nm 24:2-7, 15-17a/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9/Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday:
 Zep 3:1-2, 9-13/Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19 and 23/Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday:
 Gn 49:2, 8-10/Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17/Mt 1:1-17

Thursday:
 Jer 23:5-8/Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19/Mt 1:18-25

Friday:
 Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a/Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17/Lk 1:5-25

Saturday:
 Is 7:10-14/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6/Lk 1:26-38

Next Sunday:
 Is 7:10-14a/Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (7c, 10b)/Rom 1:1-7/Mt 1:18-24

"You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand." James 5:8

Patience is another one of those things many of us struggle with. We want things to go according to our plan and our schedule; we like things to be convenient. Any change brings anxiety and fear. Through daily prayer God reveals to us what He wants us to do with the gifts He has given us. We are able to better align ourselves with God's will and His plan, which is far better than anything we can come up with on our own.

Please Note:
 In case of bad weather the Church cancellations will be broadcast on KMOV Channel 4 & KSDK Channel 5

When school is cancelled for EITHER Bond County or Highland, PSR will automatically be cancelled.

When the schools are closed for bad weather during the week there will be no 8AM Mass that morning.



Observances for the week of December 14, 2025

Sunday: 3rd Sunday of Advent
Next Sunday: 4th Sunday of Advent

Advent Reconciliation

Advent Penance Services in Our Area

St. Boniface – Sunday, Dec. 14, 2:30 PM
 St. Gertrude Grantfork – Wednesday December 17 7:00PM
 Tri City @ St. Elizabeth Granite – Wednesday December 17 6:00PM
 SSPP Collinsville—Sunday, Dec. 21 6:30PM

The next IC Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 16th at 7:00PM



We invite everyone to help us decorate the churches for Christmas next Sunday, Dec. 21st. after the 8:00AM and/or 10:00AM Masses. Everyone's help is greatly appreciated!



Bell ringers at St. Gertrude performed at last Sunday's Class Mass. Children are from the PSR Classes.

STN Collection	12/6/25
Envelopes/Loose	\$2,542.00
Sister Parish	\$40.00
IC Collection	\$135.00
Justice & Hope	\$20.00
Retired Religious	\$125.00
Christmas Flowers	\$195.00
Budget Goal	\$1,257.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$1,420.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$28,911.00
Support Actual	\$28,999.06
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$88.06

STG Collection	12/7/25
Envelopes/Loose	\$1,812.00
IC Collection	\$35.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$25.00
Christmas	\$25.00
Children's Home	\$100.00
Sister Parish	\$55.00
Retired Religious	\$100.00
Christmas Flowers	\$215.00
Maintenance Fund	\$200.00
Cemetery	\$100.00
Budget Goal	\$1,505.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$392.00
Support Needed (budget)	\$34,615.00
Support Actual	\$28,403.00
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$-6,212.00

Gaudete Sunday

3rd Candle— Gaudete Sunday
 As we continue to approach Christmas Day, our joy grows more and more. This candle reminds us of the joyful anticipation of the shepherds who journeyed to Bethlehem, even before the wise men. Gaudete is a word that means to rejoice or praise and is known as the "Shepherd's Candle." Its color is pink, the liturgical color for joy.

IC Collection	12/7/25
Envelopes/Loose	\$3,754.17
IC Collection	\$80.00
Christmas	\$25.00
Solemnity of Mary	\$25.00
Children's Home	\$100.00
Sister Parish	\$25.00
Retired Religious	\$50.00
Christmas Flowers	\$168.00
Building Fund	\$40.00
Candles	\$142.00
Budget Goal	\$2,672.00
Weekly Surplus/Deficit	\$1,212.17
Support Needed (budget)	\$61,456.00
Support Actual	\$53,744.45
Surplus/Deficit YTD	\$-7,711.55

Clinton Co. Showcase Presents



525 N. 2nd St.; Breese, IL
618-526-2866 Showtimes:
12/14 at 2PM

Waiting in Joyful Hope...

Advent devotionals are available at the back of each church.

Take one and let it help you seek the Lord and his kingdom this Advent.



The Heartland Community Chorus and The Gateway Ringers

Saturday, December 13, 2025, 7PM
Sunday, December 14, 2025, 3PM St. Paul Catholic Church 1411 Main Street Highland, Illinois

Tickets may be purchased from a Chorus Member, in person, or online at:

www.heartlandcommunitychorus.org



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

Devotions, Explained!

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego in Mexico City in 1531. The Patroness of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe is a beloved symbol of faith, motherhood and identity. Her feast day is Dec. 12.

Prayer for Advent - New Growth

Dear God, Bring new life! Your love creates and cultivates. Bring Your power into the places I think of as "deserts" and your grace to the prayers I fear may be "deserted." You can redeem and restore. Bring a new song to my heart. Amen.

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The Highland HACSM Food Pantry coordinates the Salvation Army Bell Ringers at Wal-Mart & Tru-Buy. You can use the attached QR code to sign up. Anyone can register for a one hour slot to volunteer. The HACSM Food Pantry keeps 80% of all funds deposited into the kettles during the Bell Ringing Campaign.

Meet Our Seminararians



Steven Kehoe
Discipleship II
St. Meinrad Seminary

One thing I have learned in my discernment is about being pruned so you might bear more fruit. Humility receives this gift with joy.

Men's Discernment Retreat

Join other Catholic men for a 3-day retreat at this beautiful, lakeside retreat center, to discern...

Dates: Dec.21-23, 2025

Time: 3pm arrival on the 21st, 7pm departure on the 23rd

Location: Villa Maria Retreat Center — 1903 E Lake Shore Dr. Springfield, IL 62712

Who: For men 18-35 yrs. Meals: All meals provided Cost: Free



Let us prepare for Christ in our hearts a dwelling place of patient merits; let us prepare a crib, a cradle brilliant with the flowers of a good life and the perpetual sweetness of its fragrance. Let us receive the tiny little Lord in our hearts.

Saint Caesarius of Arles

(from the meditation for December 14)

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 13 & 14, 2025



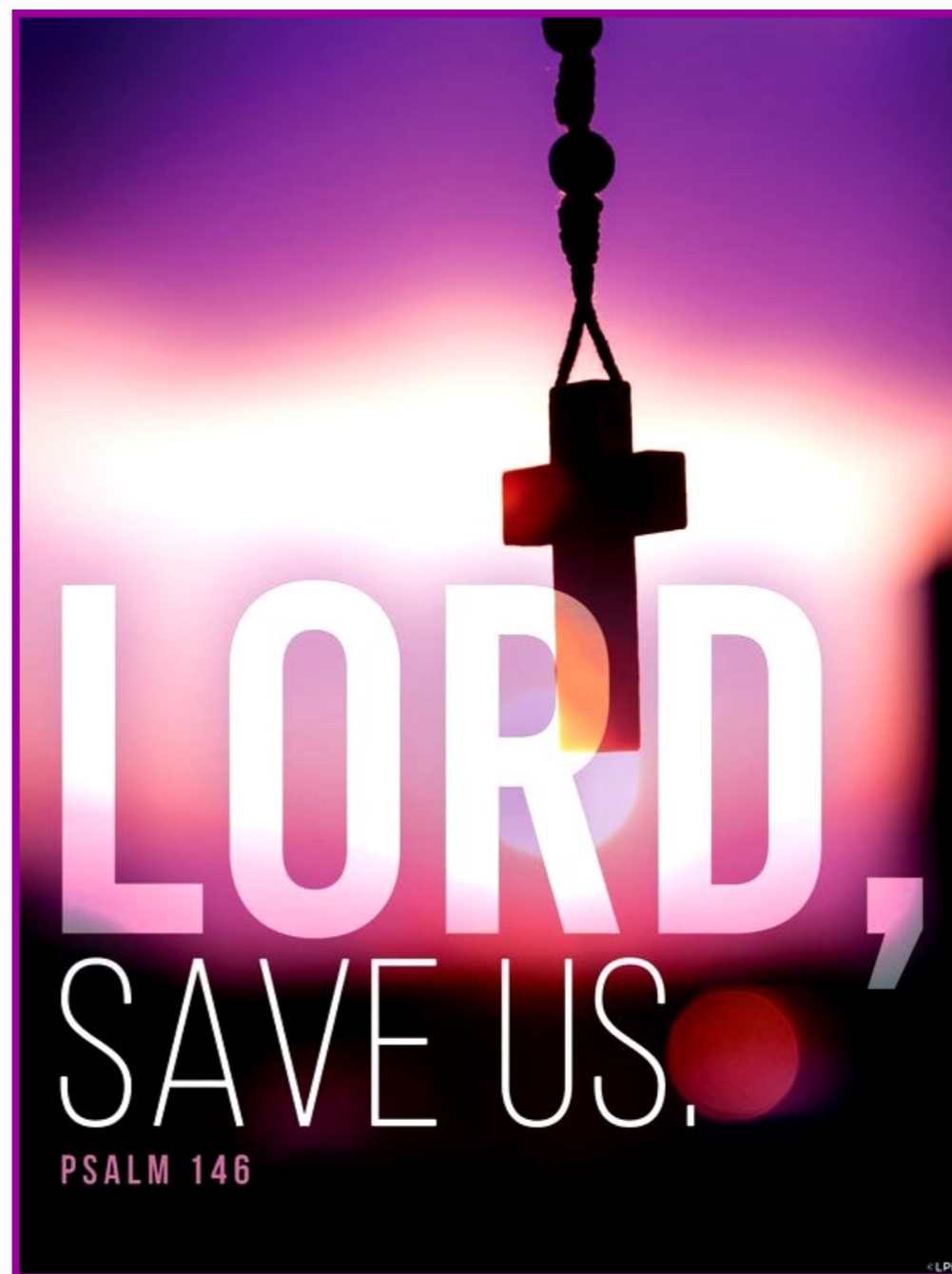
Saint Nicholas - Pocahontas



Immaculate Conception—Pierron



Saint Gertrude—Grantfork



+BISHOP
THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD
IN ILLINOIS



REV. CALLISTUS OSIAGA
PASTOR

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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