

The Roman Catholic Parishes of  
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher  
St. James the Apostle, Irwin  
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 7-8, 2024

Make ready your  
heart,

Make ready your home,

Make ready the people of  
God,

Prepare the Way.



*Prepare*

Weekend Masses:

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 5:00 pm	Sun. 10:30 am
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:30 am	
St. James	Sun. 9:00 am	

Confessions:

St. Margaret Mary	Sat. 4:15 pm
Sacred Heart	Sun. 7:05-7:20 am
St. James	Sun. 8:35-8:50 am

Church Mailing Address:

207 E. 5th Street

Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "There is no pain so great as the memory of joy in present grief."

—Aeschylus

Third Sunday of Advent		December 14-15, 2024		
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Dec. 14 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, Dec. 15 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, Dec. 15 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Dec. 15 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Dave Emling Roger Jensen Gery Wright Bob Schultz	James Mallaney David Kirkpatrick	Bob Buente Vic Carlile Jeff Steinke Jeff Martin	Youth Mass
Lector	Bobbi Buza	Mike Hertz	Mary Peerbolte	Youth Mass
Eucharistic Minister				Wayne Bisailon
Servers				Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter—Donna Bernicky R. Leader—Karen Miller	Youth Mass

### Mass Intentions for the Week

**Monday, Dec. 9 (SMM)**

8:00 am + Adam Andrzejewski (Uta Dubravec)

**Tuesday, Dec. 10 (SH)**

8:00 am +Carson Cross (Noreen Saathoff Family)

**Wednesday, Dec. 11 (SJ)**

8:00 am +Dorene O'Connor (Alan Ader Family)

**Friday, Dec. 13 (SMM)**

8:00 am +Jim Feller (Lisa/Kory Scanlon)

**Saturday, Dec. 14 (SMM)**

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

**Sunday, Dec. 15**

7:30 am (SH) +Deanna Chalkey (Jackie Cross)

+Cecelia Monk (Dale/Marilyn Pfeiffer)

9:00am (SJ) +Pat Perreault (Larry/Birdie Stevenson)

+Rick Nelson (Steve/Dena Coy)

10:30 am SMM +Harold Fournier (Scott Frerichs)

### Question of the week

What do I need to repent of in order to cross the main chasm that separates me from God?

### A Look Ahead

**December 7/8**—2nd Collection for Retired Religious

**Sunday, Dec. 15**—Youth Mass at SMM

**Sunday, Dec. 15**—St. James Christmas Pageant, Breakfast, and Raffles

**Tuesday, Dec. 17**—Advent Confessions SJ 7:00 -7:45

**Friday, Dec. 20**—Christmas Parade Downtown Herscher

Pastor— Fr. Ron Neitzke- 815-426-2550

Deacon – Ron Gagnon— rjgckg@aol.com

Home—815-933-4077

Parish Email – smm\_sja\_sh@yahoo.com

TriParish web page – [www.triparishcatholics.org](http://www.triparishcatholics.org)

Like us on Facebook triparishcatholic communities

Tri Parish Church office –Barb Riker 426-2550

Julie Bisailon 426-2550

Bulletin – Debbie Jensen - 426-2550

debjen04@gmail.com

Religious Education –

St. MM – Jill Fulton [jfulton.stmm@gmail.com](mailto:jfulton.stmm@gmail.com)

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga [tosenga81@gmail.com](mailto:tosenga81@gmail.com)

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line—

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 [Jdstreefarms@aol.com](mailto:Jdstreefarms@aol.com)

St. James— Mary Offerman—602-670-8888 (call or text)

Sacred Heart-Marilyn Pfeiffer 815-955-8246 (call or text)

Terri Weakley— 815-514-8171

### Collections Weekend of Dec. 1, 2024

St. Margaret Mary—\$2,171

St. James—\$2,078

Sacred Heart—\$7,581

Thank you for your generosity!

### Gospel Shorts— Time to Wipe the Slate Clean

The excitement of building toward Christmas, both as a religious celebration and a holiday, sometimes means that Advent gets “lost in the shuffle.” Yet, truly to appreciate Christmas, we cannot leave Advent behind. Indeed, an “Advent attitude” is something we can carry with us every day, long after the calendar has turned from December 25. Advent offers us the opportunity, as John tells us, to start over, to straighten out the paths, to level the mountains in our lives, to wipe the slate clean. And as we realize Advent is full of beginnings, we can more truly realize how wonderful it is that God so fully redeems us by sending us Jesus Christ at Christmas.

**Mark your Calendars! The St. James Christmas Pageant/ Breakfast and Basket Raffle will be held on December 15.**



**If you would like to donate a basket for our raffle, please have it to the church by December 8. If**

**you have any questions, please contact Tahnya at 815-530-4406 or at the religious ed office.**

**Set up will be done on December 11.**

### Advent Confessions

The sacrament of reconciliation will be held on Tuesday, evening, December 17<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 7:45 at St. James. There will be two priests there to hear confessions.

### A Stewardship Moment

**Second Sunday of Advent Weekend of December 7/8, 2024** In today's second reading, Saint Paul prays with joy and confidence for his friends in the Christian community at Philippi. He is encouraged that the community has partnered with him to proclaim the Gospel. He sees Christ's active presence and plan of salvation at work in the community. God's overarching plan is unclear to us. But when we see evidence of God working through others, doesn't it give us reason to hope that Christ is alive among us? Does the witness of others help our own prayer lives? Does it inspire us to be partners with others in promoting the Gospel? Food for thought in this second week of Advent.

### Parish News:

St. Margaret Mary—

◆ *Joy in January is January 4, 2025. Registration 11 am, lunch at 12pm at the Kankakee Country Club. SMM ladies interested in joining us for Joy in January, please sign up in the back of the church and pay \$19 to the CCW by Dec. 15.*

◆ Ladies, please have the Gift of Warmth presents to Jackie by December 12. Feel free to call her with any questions— 815-421-4048

St. James—

◆ *Sign up for Joy in January is on the bulletin in the foyer. Cost is \$19 to each attendee (CCW will pay the other half). The event is 1/4/25 at the Kankakee Country Club but please sign up by 12/15/24 so we can send in our reservation and check.*

◆ *Christmas is coming! Please join us Tuesday, December 10th for church cleaning at 5 pm and Christmas decorating at 6 pm. We'll take any time you can donate. Thanks!*

◆ We are collecting winter wear accessories (mittens, hats, etc) in the hallway of St. James for the Salvation Army. Thanks to all who participate!

◆ *The St. James CCW Christmas breakfast is Sunday, December 8th after mass at the Herscher Restaurant. Please sign up in the foyer if you'd like to attend.*

◆ **Christmas Pageant/ Breakfast, Basket Raffle Dec. 15**

Sacred Heart—

◆ Ladies, please sign up in church entrance for our CCW Christmas Party. We will be going to the Herscher Restaurant, Tues. Dec. 10th at 6pm. We will be ordering from the menu on separate checks. Each person will be given \$10.00 towards their bill. Come join the fun.

◆ There is also a sign up sheet if you wish to attend the Kankakee Deanery “Joy in January” luncheon at the Kankakee Country Club on Saturday, January 4th.

◆ *Sacred Heart Church is planning another free breakfast following the 7:30 AM Mass Sunday Dec. 29th. All are invited to join in fellowship and welcome in a new year.*

All Parishes—

◆ **Adult Religious Ed Class—Class on December 11 7pm**

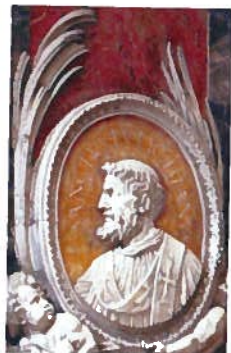
◆ **Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.**

◆ **Dartball Practice!** Your TriParish Dart team will practice Dec. 15. The team will be holding practice at St. James at 7:00pm in an effort to improve their standing in the league.





**Obscure saint of the week: St. Eucharius of Trier (Dec. 8)** was the first bishop of Trier, Germany. A basilica was built over his tomb in the catacomb of Saint Matthias. Legend says that he was one of the 72 disciples of Christ, and that he was sent to Gaul as its first bishop in the 1st century. There, one of his companions, Maternus, died. Eucharius returned to Saint Peter the Apostle, borrowed his pastoral staff, returned to Gaul, touched Maternus with the staff, and brought him back to life.



**Obscure saint of the week. St. Eutychian (Dec. 8)** was the 27<sup>th</sup> pope, but very little is known about him. Legend says he buried 324 martyrs with his own hands, but he reigned in a quiet period of no state persecution, so this is questionable. Another legend credits him with developing the blessings of fields and crops, but this came later. Some documents call him a martyr, but there are no contemporary records to back it up.

**Reflection** —Lessons From the Geese

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

**Lesson:** We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging — not less helpful.

When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow their fellow member down to help and provide protection. They stay with this member of the flock until he or she is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, with another formation, or catch up with their own flock.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as the geese, we'll stand by one another like they do.

This weekend two candles are lit on our Advent wreath. The theme for the Second Sunday of Advent is "Prepare". Bethlehem was prepared to cradle the Christ. We prepare our hearts and homes to receive Christ now.

Bethlehem, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation.

-Micah 5:2

**The Sunday gospel in everyday English**

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod, ruler of Galilee; his brother Philip, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, ruler of Abilene; during the chief-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—John, Zachariah's son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet:

Thunder in the desert!  
 "Prepare God's arrival!  
 Make the road smooth and straight!  
 Every ditch will be filled in,  
 Every bump smoothed out,  
 The detours straightened out,  
 All the ruts paved over.  
 Everyone will be there to see  
 The parade of God's salvation" (from Luke 3).

**Christmas Traditions**

Another family activity to consider this Christmas is hiding the Christmas pickle ornament on the tree. In the old-world parents waited until Christmas Eve to hide a pickle ornament on the Christmas tree. It would be hidden deep in the branches of the tree. On Christmas morning the person who finds it receives an additional gift, special treats, or a blessing. They were also allowed to be the first to open a gift from under the tree.

This weekend I am blessing straw. Why is straw blessed and given out during Advent? You can use it in your Nativity set or you can follow the old European custom and tuck it under the tablecloth. By doing so it becomes a symbol of Bethlehem which means "The House of Bread" in Hebrew.



Catholic Snacks , Get Fed  
What is the feast of all Seraphic saints?

This is the day to celebrate St. Francis and all his followers



The Franciscan Order has produced so many saints in every station of life that the Church granted the Order—called “Seraphic” after St. Francis’s title of the Seraphic Father—a feast day to celebrate all of them. This feast day coincides with the anniversary of the Rule’s approval in 1223.

Many of these Seraphic saints are famous—such as St. Bonaventure, St. Clare, and St. Thomas More.

Many are not as famous—so let’s honor them by learning about a few lesser-known Franciscans:

**St. Veronica Giuliani:** Born in 1660, she showed signs of spiritual strength from a very early age, performing great works of charity for the poor while still a child. At about 16 years of age, she convinced her father to let her enter the convent. After her entrance, she prayed to suffer with Christ Crucified. This prayer was answered in the early 1690s, when she received the stigmata of all Five Wounds and the Crown of Thorns.

**St. Elzear of Sabran:** A French nobleman of the 14th century, Elzear and his wife—Bl. Delphine—both vowed to retain their virginity. They joined the Third Order in 1316 and practiced prayer, mortification, and charity. Elzear’s diplomacy and exemplary virtues were sought and admired in various European courts. He was buried in the Franciscan habit in 1323.

**St. Nicholas Pieck:** A native of Holland, Nicholas joined the Franciscans immediately after completing his education. He was ordained in 1558 at 24 years of age and became a champion against heresy in Holland and Belgium. When the Calvinists gained control of his town of Gorkum, they imprisoned and tortured Nicholas. Finding his allegiance to the true Church unshakeable, they martyred him.

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**Sponsor a Needy Individual or Family for Christmas**

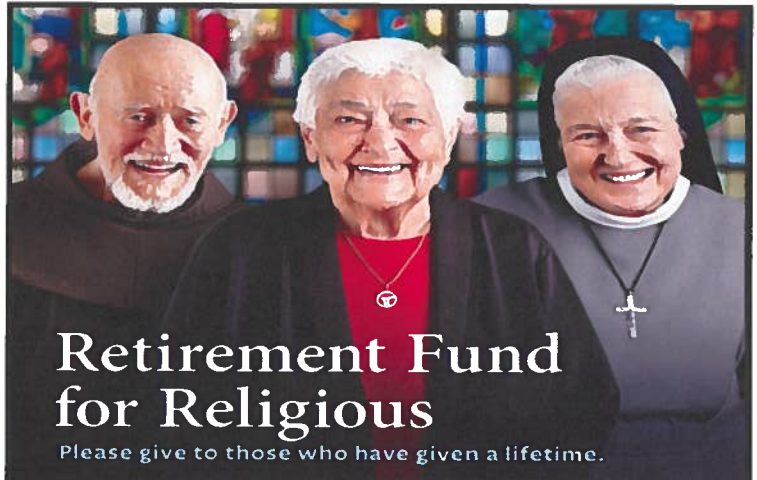
Catholic Charities is offering you the opportunity to help their clients at Christmas this year. The Gift of Christmas is an annual program that fulfills wish



lists for individuals and families served by Catholic Charities. Read stories about clients and choose who you would like to help this Christmas. Or, if you prefer, you can direct your donation to an individual or family who hasn’t been chosen yet. Donating

is simple: visit [catholiccharitiesjoliet.org](http://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org) and click on “donate.” Or, call 815-724-1140 to make your donation over the phone. To send a check, please note “Gift of Christmas” in the memo and send checks to:

Catholic Charities  
16555 Weber Road  
Crest Hill, IL 60403



## Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.

**Our aging religious need your help.** Like those pictured, more than 24,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have devoted their lives to prayer and ministry—usually for little pay. Today, many religious communities struggle to care for aging members. Please give back to those who have given a lifetime.

Please give at your local parish.

To donate by mail:

National Religious Retirement Office  
3211 Fourth Street NE  
Washington DC 20017-1194

Make check payable to Retirement Fund for Religious.

[retiredreligious.org](http://retiredreligious.org)

Visit [retiredreligious.org/2024photos](http://retiredreligious.org/2024photos) to meet the religious pictured.  
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## Questions Catholics Ask

### What are the marks of the church and why are they important to know?

When we profess the Creed, we say: "We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church." Beyond reciting this litany, we may not consider how these four marks, also called notes, distinguish the authentic church from any counterfeit versions we may encounter. Yet this is why the marks were established: so we can tell the difference between the church and its imposters.

Why is this essential? Well, one day I was sitting in a jury room debating a tax evasion charge against a man claiming that his home was a church. This guy had deducted more than a decade of his life as church-related expenses. I was the only person in the jury box who doubted his claim. His "church" had none of the marks.

It may seem rare to be required to testify if a presentation of church is the real deal. In fact, it's closer to home than we think. Since we *are* the church, we need to recognize whether our experience of church, and our personal expression of it in and out of the pews, is authentic. First, consider *oneness*. The church must maintain unity among its members. Some obvious questions might be: How united is your parish? Your diocese? The universal church in this generation? Yet also: how united are we to the mission of the church?

Next, reflect on *holiness*. It's easy to take aim at the holiness of particular church leaders. Yet we also have to examine our own call to be as God is: loving, compassionate, just, truthful, kind, slow to anger, etc. Do you and I still qualify as a version of church the world will recognize?

*Catholicity* seems more opaque; substitute the word *universality*. This doesn't mean the whole world is Catholic or even that it should be. Catholicity defines the church as non-elitist, open to all. No one is excluded because of who they are. Is this true of your parish? And: are you and I, in Christ, a welcoming presence to all comers?

Finally, there's the matter of being *apostolic*. This mark is often thinned to imply merely that our hierarchy derives authority from the first apostles through the laying on of hands. It also and more urgently intends that there's a discernible continuity between our mission and that of the early church leaders. Can we trace a link between their goals and ours? The four marks can, indeed, keep us honest.

**Scriptures:** ONE: Matthew 13:25-30; John 17:20-23; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:3-6; HOLY: 2 Cor 5:21; Ephesians 1:3-4; 5:25-27; Hebrews 2:16-17; 7:26; 1 John 1:5-10; CATHOLIC: Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Timothy 2:4; APOSTOLIC: Mark 3:13-14; Matthew 16:15-19; John 5:30; 15:5; 17:18-19; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 20:28; 2 Corinthians 3:4-6; 5:20



Since we are the church, we need to recognize whether our experience of church, and our personal expression of it in and out of the pews, is authentic.

### Humor - Noah's Ark

I just found this old document with some of the animals' reactions after 40 days and 40 nights in Noah's Ark during the Big Flood...

PIGS: C'mon, let's go! There's got to be some great mud out there!

CENTIPEDES: I've got the worst case of sea legs ever!

GIRAFFES: All this time below decks, I can't wait to find a chiropractor!

BEAVERS: Personally, I can't wait to find a tree!

DOGS: You & me both!



Prepare the way of the Lord.  
LK.3:4



December 8, 2024

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

## Second Sunday of Advent

Bar 5:1-9 | Phil 1:4-6, 8-11 | Lk 3:1-6

### **GROW AS A DISCIPLE** | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

On this second Sunday of Advent, when the hustle and bustle of the season is already upon us, I find Paul's words in his Letter to the Philippians very comforting. He says he is confident "that the one who began a good work in [us] will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus." Jesus will continue to be our Advocate and our Rock until the day he comes again. Yes, these are comforting words, indeed. But we know that being a disciple of Christ requires our cooperation and our daily assent to doing God's will. How do we know God's will for us? In his letter, Paul goes on to pray that our love may continue to increase in knowledge and perception "to discern what is of value." In other words, if we are going to be able to choose what is good, we must be able to recognize it and then focus on it.

### **GO EVANGELIZE**

#### **PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT**

This is where "the voice of one crying out in the wilderness" speaks to us during this season in which we prepare for Christ's coming. It is a season of hope and anticipation, but it also must be a season of preparation. In today's Gospel, the proclamation of John the Baptist takes center stage; he proclaims a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" and says to "prepare the way of the Lord." These words do not suggest passivity - waiting patiently for the Lord to come. They suggest action: Repent. Prepare. Make straight his paths. Today let us consider how we can prepare for the Lord's coming in our own lives. God has made us *good*, and he wants to bring that goodness to completion. As we continue in this Advent season, let us stay focused on recognizing and choosing "what is of value" in our lives so that we are able to truly rejoice that the Lord draws near.

### **SING**

*Dear Savior, haste  
Come, come to earth  
Dispel the night and show your face  
And bid us hail the dawn of grace*



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

**December 8, 2024:** Bar 5:1-9 | Ps 126:1-6 | Phil 1:4-6,8-11 | Lk 3:1-6

While we're shopping for gifts, decorating, and sending Christmas cards, what are we doing to make Christmas a new rebirth of Christ for our daily lives?

All the readings at Mass during Advent remind us that this season is a time intended for spiritual preparation. It's tempting to let the busyness of December distract us from the most important purpose of Advent: our personal spiritual growth.

In our responsorial Psalm today, we proclaim: "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy!" Do you actually feel joyful when you mouth these words?

It takes faith to experience joy in the midst of hardships. Faith grows from knowing that the Lord does great things for us because of his mercy – not because we have earned it, as we'll never be good enough. Repenting from our sins opens us to become aware of this mercy.

Therefore, Saint John the Baptizer is proclaiming to us today: "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

Now is the time to ask: What preparations do I need to make? What am I doing to straighten out the messes in my life, the areas of sin that continually distract me from a close relationship with Christ? What penances will help "make straight" my path?

What depressing or discouraging valley of hardship needs to get filled with the joy of the Lord? If it seems hopeless, what will I do to let Jesus take charge of it? What mountain of debt or difficult obstacle needs to be made low by having faith in the Lord's digging tools?



What's twisted and warped in my thinking, like a road that winds through a jungle of confusion? I pray, Holy Spirit, that you will lead me straight to holiness! What's rough about me? What's edgy and sharp and rubs others the wrong way? Lord Jesus, smooth me like a diamond polisher.

Throughout, let us examine the ways in which we still need to see the salvation of God. Let us make a plan of action to be

holier and happier at the end of the Jubilee Year than we are today!

### Reflect & Discuss:

- † Which of the above questions stand out most for you?
- † What will you do with this to prepare the way of the Lord so that your faith grows?
- † Name a tradition you grew up with that prepared you for Christmas. How did this affect your spiritual growth?
- † What's your favorite way of preparing for the holy celebration of Christmas? Why?