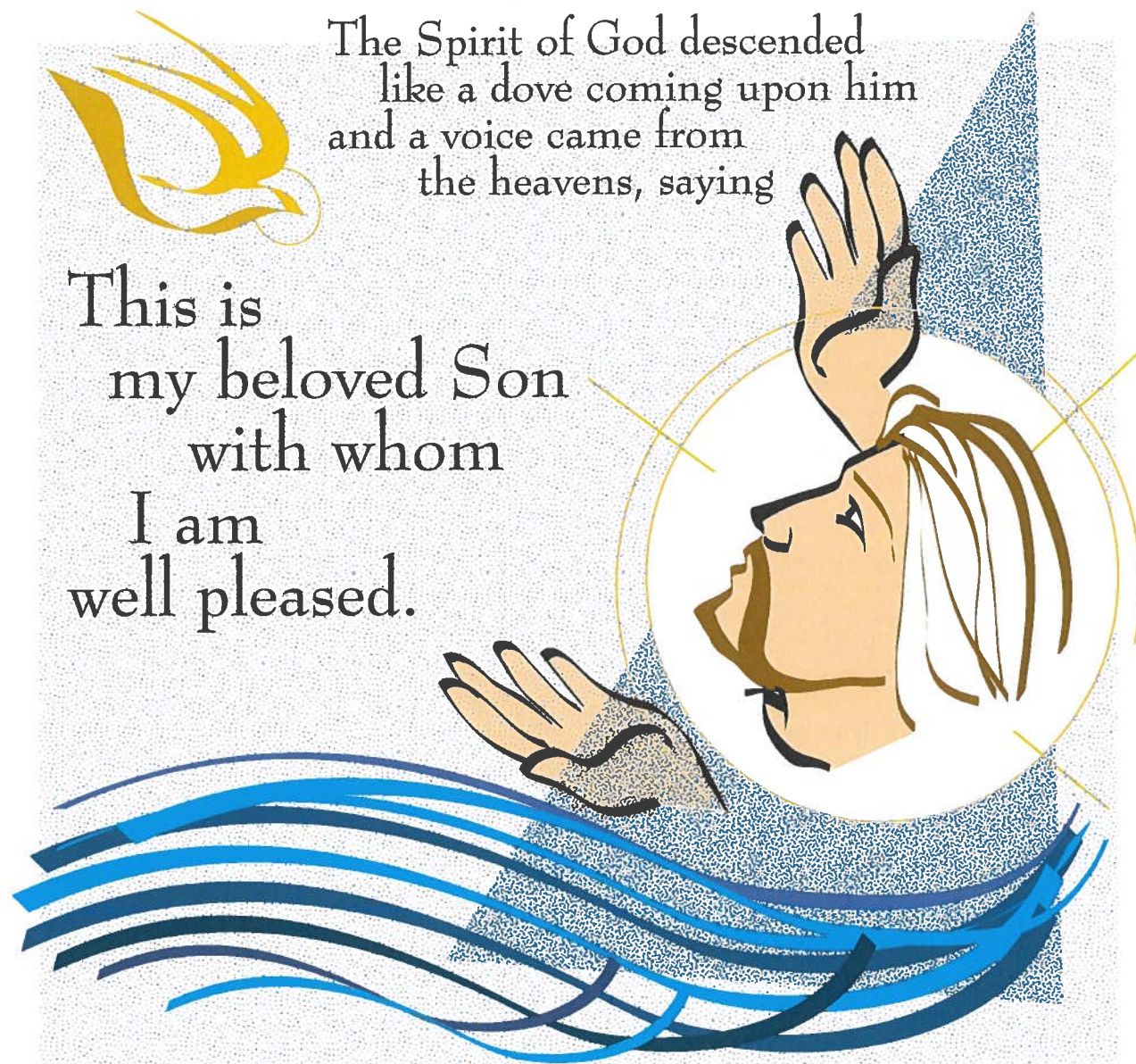


The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

JANUARY 10-11, 2026



©Religious Graphics, Ltd.

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 -4:45pm
-------------------	----------------------

Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street Herscher, IL 60941

Phone: 815-426-2550

Quotable: "Christ is baptized, not to be made holy by the water, but to make the water holy, and by his cleansing to purify the waters which he touched.... Christ is the first to be baptized, then, so that Christians will follow after him."

—Saint Maximus of Turin

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time			January 17-18, 2026	
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Jan. 17 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, Jan. 18 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, Jan 18 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Jan. 18 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Brett Buza Dave Emling Bob Schultz Gery Wright	Kyle Ferris Daryl Ferris	Dave Ladehoff Dan Forsythe Cathy Jensen Jerry Ogrentz	Brent Fulton Corinn Wheeler Erik Wheeler Joe Smolkovich
Lector	Bobbi Buza	Darlene Cipcich	Jeff O'Connor	Mary Hope Pleckham
Eucharistic Minister				Stacie Powers
Servers	Gavin Down			Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter—Donna Bernicky R. Leader—Reatta Gohlke	Stacie Powers

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, Jan. 12 (SMM)

8:00 am +Dr. Igor Dubravec (The Family)

Tuesday, Jan. 13 (SH)

8:00 am +Inez Crawford (Tim Buckley)

Wednesday, Jan. 14 (SJ)

8:00 am +Dan Scanlon (Tom Scanlon)

Friday, Jan. 16 (Mary Polvere (Mary Ann Wagner)

Saturday, Jan. 17 (SMM)

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

Sunday, Jan. 18

7:30 am (SH) +Genevieve Gruber, Alfred Denault, Vicki Hensley, Madeline Sullivan, Norma Denault, Elizabeth Fitch (The Family)

9:00 am (SJ) +Jacob Peters (Bruce/Lynette)
+Rhonda Harris (Bruce/Cathy Jensen)

10:30 am (SMM) +Rita Deany (Dale/Marilyn Pfeiffer)
+Bob Deany (Eileen/G. Weller)

A Look Ahead

Wed., Jan. 14—Adult Ed 7 pm at SMM

Thurs., Jan. 15—Community Quilters 9am at SJ

Sun., Jan. 18—No RE at SMM and SJ

Mon., Jan. 19—SMM CCW meeting at 7pm

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

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

Sacred Heart – Rhonda Berns – 426-5015

St. James—Tanhya Osenga tosenga81@gmail.com

Parish Nurse – Jackie Eberle – 815-421-4048

Prayer Line–

SMM -Janice 815-426-2574 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

Question of the week:

This coming week, in what way can I be a servant of the Lord with tenderness and compassion?

Collections Weekend of Jan. 3-4, 2026

St. Margaret Mary—\$4,864 Solemnity of Mary —\$720
St. James—\$2,069 Solemnity of Mary —\$228
Sacred Heart— \$ 1,050 Solemnity of Mary —\$525

Thank you for your generosity!

**If you are too busy to
pray, you are too busy!**

Reflection— Human Value

A person's true value consists in his or her likeness to God. What gives value to thoughts, feelings and actions is the extent to which they are inspired by God, the extent to which they express the thought, the will and the acts of God. Sometimes, it is God's power that is manifested in a person's courage, in the authority with which the person speaks and the strength with which the person acts. But sometimes, also, it is God's tenderness that we observe in the heart of one who is weak, God's creative suffering that we discover in a tormented soul.

A Stewardship Moment Feast of the Baptism of the Lord Weekend of January 10/11, 2026

Saint Matthew's story of the baptism of Jesus is an appropriate scripture reading to reflect on our own baptism. Jesus' baptism has been understood as a symbol of his death. Baptism is the sacrament by which we die to an old life of sin and enter a new life of grace. We "put on Christ." To be a good steward of one's baptism means to accept that one has new life in the risen Lord and is willing to be guided by the life of Jesus. As this year begins to unfold, reflect on the meaning of your own baptism, and how you might make an even deeper commitment to a new life in Christ Jesus.

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for the New Year

Good and gracious God,
a new year of grace is upon us,
giving us impressions of
crisp beginnings
new goals, a fresh sense of hope.

Though we cling to our own
expectations
for the year ahead,
we know you alone
are the sovereign of our future,
Lord of our lives, and the source
of whatever good we may do.

We thank you, O Lord,
for the gift of the days and weeks
you have entrusted to us.
Teach us to be good stewards
of our time ahead,
that we go about our days
keeping you
at the center of our lives.

In the midst of our daily pursuits
and activities,
focus our eyes on the needs of others
help us respond with compassion
to the poor;
and open our hearts
to a suffering world.

We ask for a year of peace,
a year that brings an end
to hatred and strife,
and a year where we find
a deeper joy
that can only be found in you.

We ask this through Christ your Son
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Parish News:

All Parishes—

- ⇒ Adult Ed class, January 14 at 7pm at SMM.
- ⇒ Envelopes are in the back of the church, if you don't see yours please call the office and we will get them to you.
- ⇒ Prayer meetings on Monday at 7pm at SJ.
- ⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

St. Margaret Mary-

- ⇒ SMM CCW will meet on Monday, Jan. 19 at 7pm. Please bring a non Christmas gift valued around \$20 to exchange.

St. James-

Sacred Heart—

- ⇒ The week of January 11th, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns in prayer for healing of Adalynn TenEyck and the St. Joseph candle burns in prayer for healing of Annette Chandler.

Gospel Shorts Creation and New Creation

Jesus, coming from Galilee, appeared before John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to refuse him with the protest, "I should be baptized by you, yet you come to me!" Jesus answered, "Give in for now. We must do this if we would fulfill all of God's demands." So John gave in. After Jesus was baptized, he came directly out of the water. Suddenly the sky opened and he saw the Spirit of God descend like a dove and hover over him. With that, a voice from the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son. My favor rests on him."



Obscure saint of the week: St. Salvius of Amiens (Jan. 11) was probably born to a wealthy family as he had much time to study in his youth; through these studies Salvius became dedicated to theology and was drawn to religious life. He became a monk and later abbot at the monastery of Our Lady in Montreuil-sur-Mer, France. He became the ninth bishop of the Amiens, Neustria (in modern France), serving in the early 7th century. We have little information about his time as bishop, but he did discover the relics of Saint Firminus of Amiens and had them enshrined. Salvius was reported to be a miracle worker.



Obscure saint of the week: St. Theodosius the Cenobiarch (Jan. 11) St. was born to a pious family. He began his studies at an early age and became a lector while still a youth. The example of Abraham led him to leave home to properly follow God. He met Saint Simeon Stylites in Antioch; Simeon recognized him as a holy man and leader, and invited Theodosius onto his pillar for prayer, blessing, and advice. Theodosius traveled to Jerusalem where legend says he worked with Saint Longinus the Centurian, who would have been nearly 500 years old at the time. Theodosius became the head of a church near Bethlehem.

He became a hermit in the desert of Judah, living in a cave. Word of his holiness began to attract disciples, and Theodosius built a monastery at Cathismus to house them. There were so many there that he had to have a section for Greeks, for Armenians, for Persians, but they all happily worked and prayed together. Next to the monastery he built a hospital for the sick, a hospice for the aged, and a mental hospital. A friend of and co-worker with Saint Sabbas, he was appointed visitor to all cenobitical communities of Palestine the patriarch of Jerusalem.

He opposed heresies, including Eutychianism and Monophysitism. Emperor Anastatius, a supporter of Eutychianism, sent Theodosius a large bribe, hoping to sway the influential monk to his thinking; Theodosius distributed the money to the poor and continued to preach against heresy. Because of his orthodox views, Anastatius removed him from his position in 513, but he soon resumed his duties under emperor Justinian.

In poor health in his old age, he was stricken with a condition that made his skin dry as stone. He continued to work until his health gave out, and then he spent his time praying for his community. He died at age 105.

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptize him. John objected, "I'm the one who needs to be baptized, not you!"

But Jesus insisted. "Do it. God's work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this Baptism." So John did it.

The moment Jesus came up out of the baptismal waters, the skies opened up and he saw God's Spirit—it looked like a dove—descending and landing on him. And along with the Spirit, a voice: "This is my Son, chosen and marked by my love, delight of my life" (from Matthew 3).



After Jesus was baptised.. the heavens were opened MATTHEW 3:16

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed
Why did our Lord choose to be baptized?
He obviously wasn't a sinner, so why be baptized?

When Our Lord came to the River Jordan to receive baptism at the hands of His cousin St. John the Baptist, John asked the question that any of us would have asked:

"I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

—Matthew 3:14

Our Lord answered:

"Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness."

—Matthew 3:15

So John obeyed and baptized Jesus, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, yet Who was guilty of no sin Himself.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in his work *Jesus of Nazareth* has some profound insights into why Our Lord underwent baptism. One of the Holy Father's central points is the identification of Jesus with sinners and the anticipation of His sacrifice on the Cross.

Although the baptism John offered to the people of Israel was not the same as the true Baptism Our Lord would bring, it was a prefigurement of it. Like the Sacrament it anticipated, John's baptism involved a deep-seated conversion of heart, a confession of sins, and a rising out of the water to new life.



As Jesus goes into the waters of the Jordan to receive this baptism, He is identifying Himself with sinners, taking our sins upon Himself, and submerging Himself—in our place—into the waters of purification. His rising up shows the new life that He will gain for us.

This, of course, is directly related to His Passion, death, and Resurrection. In fact, as Pope Benedict points out, He refers to His Passion as His "baptism." In His death, He fully shoulders our sins, washing them away in His own Blood.

Our Lord rises from the waters of the Jordan as He would rise from the tomb three years later, glorified and victorious. At the Baptism, we see the heavens opened and the Trinity manifested: the Father proclaims the identity of His Son—"This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased"—a proclamation which, Pope Benedict says, foreshadows the Resurrection.

His rising from the dead was the most definitive proclamation of His divinity and His power over all things, even sin and death. Because of Christ's actions, the heavens are opened, and we—through our own Trinitarian Baptism and participation in Christ's death—can pass through.

-reprinted with permission The Catholic Company www.thecatholiccompany.com

A Very Exclusive Church

One of the New York churches was notorious for its exclusiveness. A homeless man with dreadlocks and multiple piercings took a fancy to the church, and promptly told the minister he wished to join. The minister sought to evade the issue by suggesting that the man reflect more carefully on the matter, and make it the subject of prayers for guidance. The following day, the homeless man met with the minister once again.

"I spent all night praying sir, just like you suggested," he said, beaming. "And the Lord sent me an answer last night."

"And what was it?" queried the minister, somewhat at a loss. "What did the Lord say?"

"Well, The Lord asked me what church I wanted to join, and I told him it was this one, the Northwest South Central Eastern Community Church. The Lord laughed and said, "That church! You can't get in there. I know cause I've been trying to get in that church for ten years and I haven't been able to do it yet."

We are baptized in the SPIRIT of the LORD



©Religious Graphics, Ltd.

Catholic Charities is Seeking an Experienced Executive Director

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet, is seeking an experienced, mission-driven professional to serve as its Executive Director. This is a senior-level leadership role requiring a Bachelors degree from an accredited college or university, extensive professional experience and a strong background in managing large teams and complex organizations. Preference will be given to those who reside in the Diocese. The annual salary range for this position is \$140,000–\$160,000, based on qualifications and experience. Catholic Charities offers the opportunity to participate in a group health plan, 403(b) retirement plan and a short-term disability plan to eligible individuals. Qualified candidates should email their resume to Beka Deja at bdeja@cc-doj.org



Tri-Parish Prayer Group

God invites each of us to develop a deeper prayer life, to listen for his voice, and seek his guidance. In our busy lives, this can be hard to do, especially when

we feel alone, anxious, or discouraged. Perhaps the TriParish Prayer Group could be your opportunity to spend an hour in communal prayer beyond the Sunday Mass celebration. Together we can be schooled in St. Paul's entreaty to "pray without ceasing." 1 Th 5:17. Praying with and for others is an experience guiding us to include different forms of prayer: song, adoration, thanksgiving, and intercession. The TriParish Prayer Group meets each Monday evening at 7 pm at St. James Hall. YOU are invited.

Questions Catholics Ask

What is canon law and why do we have it?

I didn't do well in canon law class, so here's a chance to redeem myself. Canon comes from the Greek word for rule; the church applies it to its own unique law. The early church began to develop codes and standards as early as the household codes recommended by St. Paul. Church fathers in the first several centuries added their recommendations. Church Councils throughout history augmented these. Different regional bishops assembled their own regulations, and for a long time, the church had competing laws in different places. Then came Gratian, an Italian canonist of the twelfth century. He organized and reconciled some 4000 rulings in a compilation that remained in wide usage until 1917. In that year, the first codified universal canon law was put into effect. While intended for periodic updating, such evolution was neglected until the present code of 1983.

The use of the word canon in regard to church law can be confusing. The canon of Scripture, for example, doesn't change, and canonized saints are presumed to be in place for good (but remember what happened to poor St. Christopher!) Canon law, by contrast, is obviously not permanent. Much of canon law concerns church discipline, which certainly does evolve over time. Even laws presently in force can be dispensed for "due cause". Some laws, however, are considered representative of "natural law": reasoned according to the created order. Some follow "divine positive law": revealed by God, as in Scripture. These latter two kinds of law within canon law are considered unchangeable.

What territory

is governed by canon law? Norms for the sacraments, worship, preaching, clerical and religious life, Catholic education, the use of church property, how to resolve internal conflicts, when to administer penalties, and both the rights and obligations of the faithful. It's a big book, and if you're intent on viewing it, my recommendation is to go to a library, and get a volume that includes the very helpful commentary.

Pope John XXIII called for the revision that emerged by 1983. Pope Paul VI oversaw ten guiding principles for that new version. Three are especially helpful for our understanding: Law is necessary so long as it's employed pastorally. Law is subsidiary; that is, rulings are not created equal and some are clearly more urgent. And finally, protecting the rights of the faithful is paramount.

Scripture: Exodus 20:22—24:18; 34:17-27; Deuteronomy 5:6-21; Matthew 5:17—6:8; 15:1-9; Luke 10:25-28; Galatians 2:21; Romans 2:12-24; James 2:8-13

January 11, 2026

The Baptism of the Lord

Is 42:1-4, 6-7 | Acts 10:34-38 | Mt 3:13-17

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

We hear in today's Gospel that at the moment of Jesus' baptism, "a voice came from the heavens, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" We can hear these words as a simple proclamation of who Jesus is — the beloved Son of God — but also as a proclamation of who we are called to be: the beloved adopted sons and daughters of God. I sometimes forget that I am also called beloved. I mistakenly think that my value depends on my accomplishments or on my faithfulness, but the truth is that my status as beloved is due to being made in the image of my Creator. If I allow myself to absorb the full meaning of that, it will not only affect how I view myself but also how I relate to others. But Christ didn't come only to show us the truth about who we are. His coming also invites us to see one another as beloved. As Peter reminds us in our second reading, "God shows no partiality." May we strive to see the belovedness that God bestows on us and on all people.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Jesus entered fully into our humanity, including entering into communion with each of us through our common baptism, to allow for us to one day share in the perfect exchange of love of the Trinity. Our call is to take on Christ's mission of love here on earth — to speak and act in a way that proclaims the truth of who God is and who he has made us to be. How can we remind our families, our neighbors, and even our enemies of their nature as beloved children of God? And by recognizing our own nature as beloved, we allow God's grace to flow through us. We then trust that God will make himself known as the source of love itself.

REFLECT

Take time this week to reflect on what it means to be a beloved son or daughter of God. What would it be like to hear, "You are my beloved child, with whom I am well pleased"? Once we root ourselves in this truth we can ask ourselves, "What act of kindness, what consoling word might I offer, what goodness might I do for others around me to help them experience a glimpse of their own belovedness?" Then, do it!



SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Mark 9:7

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.
The heavens were opened and the voice of the
Father thundered:
This is my beloved Son, listen to him.
R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matt 3:13-17; L21A

Jesus came from Galilee to John
at the Jordan
to be baptized by him.

John tried to prevent him,
saying,

“I need to be baptized by you,
and yet you are coming to
me?”

Jesus said to him in reply,
“Allow it now, for thus it is
fitting for us
to fulfill all righteousness.”

Then he allowed him.

After Jesus was baptized,
he came up from the water
and behold,
the heavens were opened for him,
and he saw the Spirit of God
descending like a dove
and coming upon him.

And a voice came from the heavens,
saying,

“This is my beloved Son, with whom
I am well pleased.”

Reflecting on the Gospel

In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis explores the necessity of Jesus's humanity for the salvation won by his crucifixion. Echoing the sentiments expressed by Saint Athanasius in *On the Incarnation of the Word*, Lewis explains the predicament of humanity's need for justification and salvation but our inability to repay the debt of our sinfulness perfectly on our own. Our justification is predicated on repentance, or a surrendering of our selfish ways to instead embrace the will of God. He writes that the “only person who could [repent] perfectly would be a perfect person—and he would not need it.” Therefore, Christ took on human

flesh in the incarnation. Through his full humanity, he took on the debt of sinfulness that humans incurred throughout our history. And on behalf of all humanity, he surrendered his will, perfectly and even unto death, for the justification of all.

In today's gospel, John questions Jesus's need for baptism. As Christians, we might hear John's objection through the lens of our baptismal theology; for example, that in the sacrament of baptism, a person is forever claimed by God as an adopted son or daughter, joined to the Body of Christ that is the church, and that person is cleansed from the original sin that stains all of humanity. From this perspective, Jesus seemingly has no need for baptism as the Son of



God. However, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is Emmanuel, “God is with us” (Matt 1:23), and he humbly and willingly submits himself to be baptized and united fully with the humanity that he will save. Jesus responds that his baptism is necessary to “fulfill all righteousness,” a term that is defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as “the rectitude of divine love” (1991). At Jesus's baptism, all three persons of the Trinity are present with humanity, harkening back to the presence of the Trinity at creation, when God the Creator spoke life onto earth through the Word while the Spirit was “sweeping over the waters” (Gen 1:2). So too in our own baptism: Christ not only offers us freedom from a life of sin but the grace of divine love is present and poured upon us, so that in our humanity we might participate in the love that the Trinity shares.

As the baptized, we have been initiated into Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Through God's grace, the sin and the selfishness we experience within us is no longer a death, and we are promised the gift of Christ's life now and being risen to eternal life in Christ. However, sin and evil continue to forge their way into the world and into our hearts. The sign of the cross, with or without holy water, can be a prayer that reminds us that we have been chosen by God, claimed as God's own, through the death and life of Jesus Christ. As we accept the gift offered by Christ through his sacrifice and join our imperfect repentance to his perfect repentance, we can also hear the words of the Father, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”