

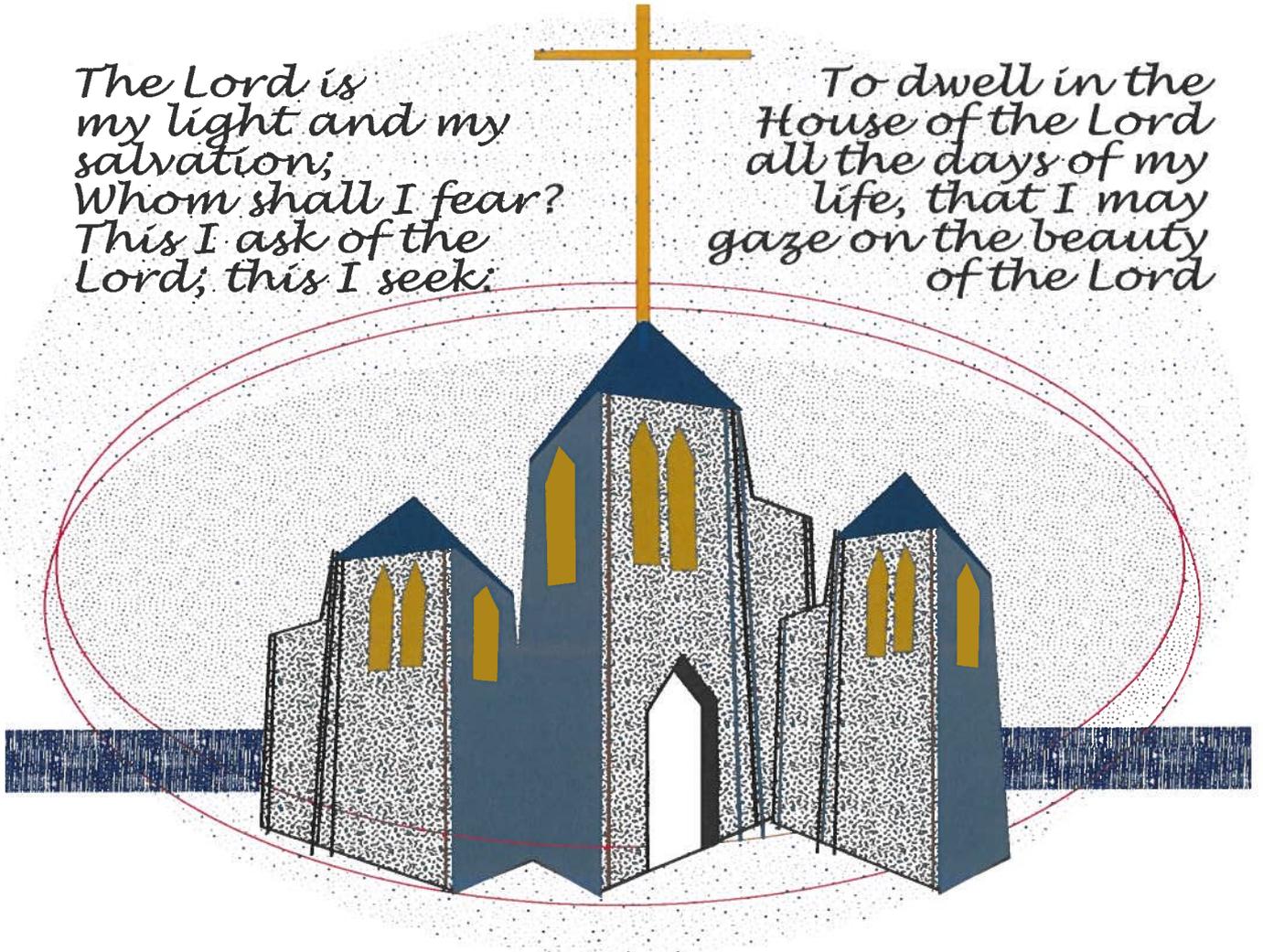
The Roman Catholic Parishes of
St. Margaret Mary, Herscher
St. James the Apostle, Irwin
Sacred Heart, Goodrich

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

JANUARY 24-25, 2026

*The Lord is
my light and my
salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
This I ask of the
Lord; this I seek;*

*To dwell in the
House of the Lord
all the days of my
life, that I may
gaze on the beauty
of the Lord*



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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 - 4:45 pm
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Church Mailing Address: 207 E. 5th Street Herscher, IL 60941 **Phone:** 815-426-2550

Quotable: "They who want to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come into conflict with it."

—Saint Titus Brandsma

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 31-February 1, 2026

Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, Jan. 31 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, Feb. 1 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, Feb. 1 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, Feb. 1 10:30 am
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron
Ushers	Todd Datweiler Dave Emling Roger Jensen Gery Wright	Kyle Ferris Daryl Ferris	Dave Ladehoff Dan Forsythe Jerri Ogrentz Mary Offerman	Wayne Bisailon Brent Fulton Erik Wheeler Corinn Wheeler
Lector	Bobbi Buza	Mike Hertz	Mary Peerbolte	Steve Jacob
Eucharistic Minister				
Servers				Caroline Fulton
Greeters			Greeter—Jerry Ogrentz R. Leader—Rita Thiesen	Julie Splear

Mass Intentions for the Week

Monday, Jan. 26 (SMM)

8:00 am +John & Adam Andrzejewski (Jackie Eberle)

Tuesday, Jan. 27 (SH)

8:00 am +John & Dorine Schafer (Don/Marie Feller)

Wednesday, Jan. 28 (SJ)

8:00 am Special Intention of Rita Thiesen (Pam Cuchiara)

Friday, Jan. 30 +Lionel & Loretts Schneider (Joanne Hart)

Saturday, Jan. 31 (SMM)

5:00 pm +Tom Buckley (Michelle/Monica Ruder)

+Bill Fritz (Dennis/Sue O'Connor)

Sunday, Feb. 1

7:30 am (SH) +Carson Cross (Jackie Cross & Family)

+Tom Buckley (Craig Crawford)

9:00 am (SJ) +Marie Costigan (Michael Costigan)

+Diane Costongue (John/Bev Schneider)

10:30 am (SMM) For All the Parish Family

A Look Ahead

Mon., Jan. 26—SMM Parish Council Meeting 7pm

Wed., Jan. 28—Adult Ed 7pm at SMM

Jan. 31/Feb. 1—K of C Food Drive

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: The first disciples left their old lives behind to follow Jesus. What is Jesus calling me to leave behind?

Collections Weekend of Jan. 17-18, 2026

- St. Margaret Mary—\$1,929
- St. James—\$1,549
- Sacred Heart— \$ 1,270

Thank you for your generosity!



The next Knights of Columbus next Food for Families collection will be held Jan. 31/Feb. 12 at all three parishes. This is a great way to give to help those in need. We thank you for your support!!

"For I was hungry and you gave me food..."
"Matthew 25:35"

Reflection- No Exceptions

Most people want to be neighborly but find themselves thwarted by personal likes and dislikes. The Scripture is aware of this. That's why it says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It does not say you have to like him, nor does it say, "See footnote 1 regarding color, shape of nose, texture of hair, ethnic classification." No exceptions!

Gospel Shorts The Message of the Kingdom

Matthew 4:12-23 deals with the establishment of God's Kingdom, a process, Matthew argues, that took place in time and history in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus' message is daunting for it hits us where we live. We are urged to repent and turn to God, accepting his solution for our sinfulness. Jesus' declaration that "the Kingdom of heaven has come near" means that in his person, God's Kingdom of transforming power is accessible to all. Finally, when Jesus called the disciples to "follow me," He was calling them to missionary activity on behalf of God's Kingdom among humankind.

These three things: repentance, acknowledgment of God's kingdom, and call to missionary activity should challenge us to fulfill the spiritual and moral demands of Christ in a contemporary, commercial society.



1st Friday Adoration

"Every consecrated host is made to burn itself up with love in a human heart."

-St. John Vianney

First Friday Mass and Adoration will be held on Friday, February 6 at St. Margaret Mary. Adoration will conclude with Benediction at 3:00.

*In a land overshadowed by death
a great light has arisen*



Parish News:

All Parishes—

- ⇒ Adult Ed class, January 28 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 Mondays at 7pm at SJ.
- ⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

St. Margaret Mary-

St. James-

Sacred Heart—

- ⇒ The week of January 25th, the Blessed Virgin Mary candle burns in prayer for John Brennan and the St. Joseph candle burns in memory of Carson Cross.

**A Stewardship Moment Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Weekend of January 24/25, 2026**

In today's gospel we hear Jesus calling Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow him. Following Jesus was a difficult journey for these first disciples. It is difficult for us today. Jesus wants to teach us his way of thinking, acting and encountering the world. But it is not easy for us to embrace his teaching. Good stewards of Jesus' teachings realize they are on a spiritual journey, and must learn from their experiences of being open or resistant to the gospel. They realize the need to be liberated from those actions that keep them from enjoying a closer friendship with Jesus. What is it in our lives that we need to reform? What keeps us from revealing God's glory to others?



Welcome into the faith to
Maeve Rebecca Culver
daughter of Sean and Sarah Culver
who was baptized at St. James
on January 17, 2026

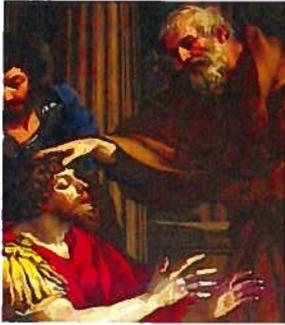
ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

**ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL,
DEFEND US IN BATTLE.**

**BE OUR PROTECTION AGAINST THE WICKEDNESS
AND SNARES OF THE DEVIL.**

**MAY GOD REBUKE HIM, WE HUMBLY PRAY,
AND DO THOU, O PRINCE OF THE HEAVENLY HOSTS,
BY THE POWER OF GOD, THRUST INTO HELL SATAN,
AND ALL THE EVIL SPIRITS, WHO PROWL
ABOUT THE WORLD SEEKING THE RUIN OF SOULS.**

AMEN.



Obscure saint of the week: St. Ananias of Damascus (Jan. 25) was a Christian in Damascus, Syria. Ananias received a vision of Jesus in which he was ordered to find Saul (aka Paul the Apostle). Ananias found Saul, blind and staggering into the city after his encounter with Christ on the road. He cured Saul of the blindness, baptized him into the faith, supported him while he prepared, and helped him begin his missionary work. Ananias evangelized in Damascus, then went on his own mission to Eleutheropolis. He was a martyr.



Obscure saint of the week: St. Dwynwen (Jan. 25) was the beautiful, pious and virtuous daughter of the 5th century Welsh king, Brychan of Brecknock. A certain Maelon fell in love with her and wished to marry her. Though Dwynwen returned his love, her heart was set on becoming a nun, and she rejected him. She dreamt she was given a sweet drink which saved her from his attention, but which turned the poor young man to ice. Realizing that Maelon couldn't help his love for her, she prayed that he be restored to life, that all lovers should find happiness, and that she never have the desire for marriage. Dwynwen became a nun and lived on Llanddwyn Island on the western coast of *Ynys Mon* (Anglesey), an area accessible only at low tide.

Her well, a fresh-water spring called *Ffynnon Dwynwen*, became a wishing well and place of pilgrimage, particularly for lovers because of the story above. The tradition grew that the eel in the well could foretell the future for lovers – ask questions and watch which way they turn. Women would scatter breadcrumbs on the surface, then lay their handkerchief on water's surface; if the eel disturbed it, her lover would be faithful. All this led to her connection with animals, which eventually led to the tradition that her intercession could heal injured animals.

There are churches dedicated to her in Wales and Cornwall. In recent years, her feast day has become increasingly popular among the Welsh with cards being sent just as on Valentine's Day, and her well continues to be a place of pilgrimage; there's a tradition that if the fish in the well are active when a couple visits, it's the sign of a faithful husband.

The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

When Jesus got word that John had been arrested, he returned to Galilee. He moved from his hometown, Nazareth, to the lakeside village Capernaum, nestled at the base of the Zebulun and Naphtali hills. This move completed Isaiah's sermon:

Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
road to the sea, over Jordan,
Galilee, crossroads for the nations.
People sitting out their lives in the dark
saw a huge light;
Sitting in that dark, dark country of death,
they watched the sun come up.

This Isaiah-prophesied sermon came to life in Galilee the moment Jesus started preaching. He picked up where John left off: "Change your life. God's kingdom is here."

Walking along the beach of Lake Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon (later called Peter) and Andrew. They were fishing, throwing their nets into the lake. It was their regular work. Jesus said to them, "Come with me. I'll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I'll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass." They didn't ask questions but simply dropped their nets and followed.

A short distance down the beach they came upon another pair of brothers, James and John, Zebedee's sons. These two were sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, mending their fishnets. Jesus made the same offer to them, and they were just as quick to follow, abandoning boat and father.

From there he went all over Galilee. He used synagogues for meeting places and taught people the truth of God. God's kingdom was his theme—that beginning right now they were under God's government, a good government! He also healed people of their diseases

Catholic Snacks, Get Fed

Why do we call Our Lady “Star of the Sea”? This ancient and beautiful title of Our Lady points to one of her chief roles.

Catholics have been addressing Our Lady as *Stella Maris*—Star of the Sea—for well over a thousand years. Ancient hymns (*Ave Maris Stella* and *Alma Redemptoris Mater* are just two examples) lovingly address her under this title.

The image of a star shining on the sea is certainly an inspiring and beautiful one—a fitting description for this majestic, celestial Lady that recalls her identity as the Queen of Heaven, crowned by twelve stars.

But the title *Star of the Sea* has an even deeper meaning.

Star navigation is an essential seafaring skill. The stars guide sailors through vast expanses of the ocean, where—with no landmarks and no sun—it is easy to become lost or get off-course. The stars are the perfect guides: bright and visible in the darkness, reliable in their movements, unshaken by the tumults of the world yet somehow firmly connected to it.

Our Lady, too, guides us on the tumultuous sea of life. She is never dimmed by clouds or storms but shines bright no matter the weather. In times of difficulty—be it severe temptation, personal loss, physical suffering, or a time of spiritual aridity—she is our guiding star, lighting the way to a safe haven.

As one of Our Lady’s great devotees, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, said:

“If the winds of temptation arise, if you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary. If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, of envy, of rivalry, look to the star, call on Mary. Should anger, or avarice, or fleshly desire violently assail the frail vessel of your soul, look to the star, call upon Mary.”

The Church as a whole is also referred to as a ship, the “barque of Peter,” navigating through the seas of the mortal world towards her heavenly home. Our Lady—the Mother of the Church—is Her constant guiding Star.

Our Lady seems to particularly resemble the North Star, Polaris, which is the only star in the Northern Hemisphere that doesn’t move. All the other stars appear to rotate around it. It might be beyond the skill of the average non-sailor to correctly trace the paths of moveable stars, but the North Star is simple to locate. Like the North Star, Our Lady is near us always, easy to find, steadfast and unmoving.



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Experience something

MORE

SUNDAY

JANUARY 25, 2026

1-3 PM

IRISH 2026 EXPO

ACADEMICS

We will be showcasing all we have to offer, including a wide range of athletic programs, diverse clubs, enriching extracurricular activities, and a strong academic curriculum. Our commitment to faith formation, leadership opportunities, and financial aid ensures every student has the chance to thrive. Additionally, we encourage parental involvement through various parent committees, creating a supportive and collaborative community for all. Find out what we are all about!

ATHLETICS

TECHNOLOGY

VISUAL ARTS

PERFORMING ARTS

CLUBS & MORE



BISHOP MCNAMARA
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

BISHOP MCNAMARA KANKAKEE SITE
550 W. BROOKMONT BLVD.



MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

Monday, January 26, 2026

St. Lawrence Church

135 E. Rice Road in South Wilmington

4-5:30pm

(Or until food runs out)

RAIN OR SHINE!

The Northern Illinois Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry delivers healthy food (meat, produce, and nonperishable items) to people in need. **No identification is required. This event is open to anyone in need of food!**

Mobile Food Pantries use a “drive thru” method to distribute pre-packed groceries. Please clear space in your trunk or backseat so volunteers can load boxes of food directly into your vehicle.

**This Mobile Food Pantry is sponsored by:
St. Lawrence Giving Tree Donors**



Catholic Charities is a faith-based organization providing service to people in need and calling others of good will to do the same.

Questions Catholics Ask

Where does the Catholic teaching on abortion come from?

Our faith acknowledges God as the author of life. This understanding makes all life deserving of welcome and respect. As moral theologian James Hanigan explains: "Conception, pregnancy, and birth are not, in the Church's eyes, private matters as the Supreme Court would have it, but matters of fundamental concern to God and to the entire human community."

Early church documents (see the Didache and the Letter of Barnabas) categorically prohibited abortions. Christian writer Athenagoras (2nd c.) compared any abortive measures to homicide. Not all church fathers agreed. Jerome and Augustine taught that human life begins when the "scattered elements" form a discernible body, while Basil dismissed distinctions based on fetal development. As late as the first codified canon law (ca. 1140), the gravity of abortion was measured by whether or not the fetus was formed and "ensouled". The abortion of an unensouled fetus was considered a serious sin, but not grave enough to require excommunication. By 1869, the biology of fertilization was better understood, and canonical distinctions of ensoulment were dropped.

Today, three principles frame the church's argument against abortion. The first two are not derived from revelation but from science. First, it's scientifically conceded that a fertilized egg is a genetically unique life. If its progress is not interrupted, this life will eventually be universally identified as a human being. This defines abortion as the evident taking of a human life—a clear violation of the fifth Commandment.

Second, science cannot distinguish a moment in the developmental process in which this genetically unique life departs some preliminary or potential nature to "cross the line" into full humanity. Therefore, attempts to draw that line at a given stage are mere decisions, not actual determinations of humanity. Third, we hold that the fundamental value of human life is not measured by personal achievements, but by our origin and destiny in God. Life in the womb is as valuable to God as the person at life's end. This is, to God, the same person.

These arguments aren't about civil rights but about the meaning of life altogether. They don't pretend to address the social and economic realities faced by women and girls who conceive in undesirable or unsupportive circumstances. Nor do they speak to the real jeopardy sometimes faced by the other inestimably valuable life in the equation of birth, the mother herself. More teaching is needed.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:13; 21:22-23

Friendly Visiting Program Volunteers Needed:

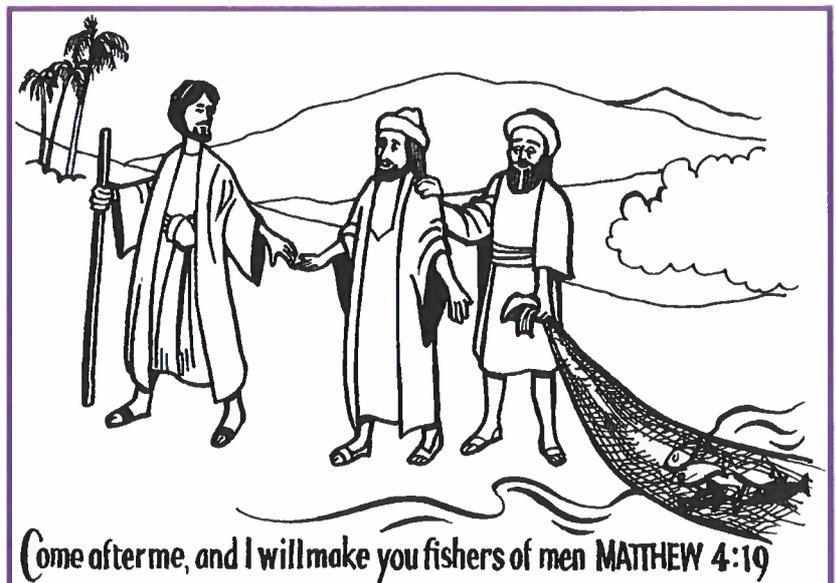
Catholic Charities is seeking volunteers to provide free friendly visits, virtual calls, and phone calls to older adults who are homebound or socially isolated, experiencing loneliness, and seeking companionship.

As a volunteer you will:

- Build friendly and caring connections
- Make a positive impact on the lives of older adults
- Share common interests and have good conversations.

Be the reason someone smiles today!

Interested in becoming a Friendly Visiting Volunteer? Call 815-221-6020, or email FVP@cc-doj.org



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January 25, 2026

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 8:23—9:3 | 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17 | Mt 4:12-23

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

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

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For most of my life, any time I have heard these words of Jesus, the emphasis has always been on “*Repent*.” Recently, I’ve started to pay more attention to the second half of Jesus’ proclamation: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Through his coming into our world and the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus’ reign has begun. The signs of his kingdom’s arrival are striking and immediate; we see Jesus “curing every disease and illness among the people.” This is cause for great rejoicing, like the rejoicing we hear of in today’s reading from Isaiah: “Anguish has taken wing, dispelled is darkness ... upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shown.” Jesus’ miracles reveal that the reign of darkness, sin, and death is coming to an end; this is good news, indeed! It’s also a major part of our call as disciples. We’re called to pray (“thy kingdom come”) and to work to advance Jesus’ reign on earth.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Like the Apostles Peter, Andrew, James, and John in today’s Gospel, we, too, have been called to help build God’s kingdom on earth. We do this in a particular way by continuing the works of Jesus here on earth. As Pope Leo XIV reminds us in *Dilexi Te*, “The signs that accompany Jesus’ preaching are manifestations of the love and compassion with which God looks upon the sick, the poor and sinners ... The Church, if she wants to be Christ’s Church, must be ... a place where the poor have a privileged place.” (2) Part of the way we bear witness to the inbreaking of God’s kingdom on earth is to put those who are ill and marginalized at the center of our concern. Then the kingdom of God will be manifest and visible in the world, drawing others to Christ.

SERVE

This week, spend some time researching ways you can work with other Christians to serve the sick and the poor of our world. As we conclude this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (which ends Jan. 25, 2026), there’s no better witness we can offer to the dawn of the kingdom of God than being “united in the same mind and in the same purpose” (as Paul calls us to be today) in serving those in need.

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Matt 4:23

℟. Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom and cured every disease among the people.

℟. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Matt 4:12-23; L67A

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.

He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,

that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

*Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,
the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light,
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death
light has arisen.*

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say,

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers,

Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen.

He said to them,

“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

At once they left their nets and followed him.

He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John.

Reflecting on the Gospel

In the Gospel of Matthew, the account of Jesus’s forty days in the desert—fasting, resisting the temptations of the devil, quoting Scripture, and being ministered to by angels—immediately precedes the passage that we hear proclaimed as our gospel reading today. These preparations in the desert make him ready to begin his prophetic ministry.



The Gospel of John notes that after Jesus’s baptism, he spent time baptizing in the Judean countryside, while John was baptizing at Aenon near Salim (John 3:22-23), a location likely in Samaria. Matthew’s Gospel picks up the story with John having been arrested, which prompts Jesus to return to Galilee. It is likely that John had moved on to Galilee with his baptizing ministry, since it is Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, who imprisons him (Matt 14:1-12). The reason for Jesus’s return to Galilee may have been to pick up where John left off. This is an ominous move. Jesus does not go to his hometown of Nazareth, a sleepy village of a few hundred families, but to Capernaum, a bustling fishing town on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was located at the crossroads of the territories of Herod and Philip, along the Via Maris, the “Way of the Sea,” the international trade route that connected Damascus

and Syria with Phoenicia and Egypt. This was a strategic choice by Jesus. The light he would ignite with his preaching, teaching, and healing would have a far greater reach from such a locale.

One of the first things the gospels recount is that, like moths drawn to a light, others are attracted by Jesus’s invitation to share in “catching” people in the net of the reign of God that is now at hand. It is a communal endeavor. In today’s gospel, two pairs of brothers are called. In Luke’s Gospel, Mary from Magdala, another important fishing village on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, follows Jesus and ministers along with Joanna, Susanna, and many other Galilean women (Luke 8:2-3); their healing has prompted them to join Jesus to be agents of healing for others. The response of the disciples in today’s gospel also initiates radical changes in their lives. They leave their occupation, though they bring their skills with them to be used in a new way. There are also changes in their family relationships, as the relationship with Jesus and devotion to his mission becomes their primary focus. While it is said that James and John left their father, later episodes in the gospel imply that in the case of Peter, his family home becomes a hub for the mission, in which his family members play an important role (see, for example, Matt 8:14-17).

Together, Jesus and his disciples spread the light of hope for those who struggle against the despair of disease, illness, and sin. The forces that tried to extinguish this light in John will be no more successful in doing so with Jesus and his followers.

*Continued in Appendix A, p. 270, or
Matt 4:12-17 in Appendix A, p. 270.*