

The Roman Catholic Parishes of

St. Margaret Mary, Herscher

St. James the Apostle, Irwin

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1, 2026

You have been called to  
a holy life because of  
**CHRIST**  
**✠ JESUS**  
who destroyed  
death and  
brought life and  
immortality to  
light through  
the gospel

This is my  
**BELOVED SON**  
Listen to him!



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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 -4:45pm

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

Quotable: "Listen to Jesus and follow him. That's the message of the Transfiguration."

—Pope Francis

Second Sunday of Lent				March 7-8, 2026	
Liturgical Schedule	St. Margaret Mary Saturday, March 7 5:00 pm	Sacred Heart Sunday, March 8 7:30 am	St. James Sunday, March 8 9:00 am	St. Margaret Mary Sunday, March 8 10:30 am	
Celebrant	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	Fr. Ron	Fr. Ron Deacon Ron	
Ushers	Youth Mass	Dennis Pankey Jim Mallaney	Youth Mass	Erik Wheeler Corinn Wheeler Dustin Truetner Darren Lovell	
Lector	Youth Mass	Ann Marie Kieffer	Youth Mass	Steve Jacob	
Eucharistic Minister			Carrie Abrassart		
Servers	Youth Mass				
Greeters	Youth Mass		Greeter—Youth Mass R. Leader—The Peerboltes	The Wheelers	

### Mass Intentions for the Week

#### Monday, (SMM) March 2

8:00 am +JR Matern (Greg & Kay)

#### Tuesday, March 3 (SH)

8:00 am +Inez Crawford (Therese Phillips)

Wednesday, March 4 8:00 am +Deceased members of Stevenson & Daley families (Larry & Birdie Stevenson)

#### Friday, March 6

8:00am (SH) +Tom Buckley (Dale & Donna Rabideau)

#### Saturday, March 7 (SMM)

5:00 pm For All the Parish Family

#### Sunday, March 8

7:30 am (SH) +Harry Phillips (Knights of Columbus & Ladies Aux)

9:00 am (SJ) +Karen Batdorf (The Hertz Family)

+Virginia Gadbois (Gerald & Mary Offerman)

10:30 am (SMM) +Mary McDonald (Valerie Wright)

+Adam Andrzejewski (Tom & Bev Buckley)

### Looking Ahead

Sunday, March 8—SJ Spring Forward Donut Sunday

Monday, March 16—SMM CCW meeting 7pm

Thursday, April 9—SH CCW Spring Luncheon

Thursday, April 16—SMM Night in Italy

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 [Jdstreeffarms@aol.com](mailto:Jdstreeffarms@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:** How can I see myself transfigured between now and Easter? How will accepting my cross and following Jesus more closely help transform my life?

## Collections Weekend of Feb. 21-22, 2026

St. Margaret Mary—\$ 1,909

St. James—\$ 1,209

Sacred Heart— \$ 941

Thank you for your generosity!

## Sacred Heart Kids Helping Kids Fundraisers

The Sacred Heart Religious Ed students will be selling 50/50 raffle tickets after mass on March 1 and March 8.

There will be a "Donut Sunday" on March 15 in the Hall after 7:30 mass. We will be serving donuts, coffee cake, muffins and bagels. There will be a "free will" offering for this with 100% of the proceeds benefiting Ronald McDonald House. There will also be raffle baskets and the drawing for the 50/50 winner. Please join the kids in helping raise money for Ronald McDonald House.



### 1<sup>st</sup> Friday Adoration

First Friday Mass and Adoration will be on March 6<sup>th</sup> at Sacred Heart. We will conclude Adoration with Benediction at 3:00

*"There is no other food for the soul than the Eucharist."*

-Blessed Jean Baptiste Fouque (1851-1926)

Please pray for the repose of the soul of

**+Edward Boudreau**

**Husband of Kaylee Boudreau**

**Son-in-law of Don and Marie Feller**

May he and all the faithful departed rest in eternal peace.

Our sincere sympathy to Edward's family.

## Parish News:

### All Parishes—

- ⇒ Herscher Council of Churches is looking for drivers to deliver meals in Herscher please call Jackie Eberle 815- 421-4048
- ⇒ Tri-Parish Office Hours— Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am—12 pm.

### St. Margaret Mary-

- ⇒ CCW meeting March 16 at 7pm

### St. James-

- ⇒ Our St. James Lenten Project is Georgie's Closet. Georgie's Closet is an organization that is dedicated to providing children in foster care and their foster families the essentials needed to feel loved and supported. We will be collecting monetary donations to aid in scholarships for families to cover kids' sports, extracurricular activities, hair care and other random expenses. Donations can be dropped off in the hall or in the Sunday collection. Checks should be written out to Georgie's Closet.
- ⇒ The Spring Forward Donut Breakfast will be Sunday, March 8 after mass at St. James. All are invited!

### Sacred Heart—

- ⇒ "SPRING IS COMING" and that means so is Sacred Heart C.C.W.'s Spring Luncheon with Bunco. The date is Thursday April 9th, 11:00 a.m. in Sacred Heart's parish hall. There will be a delicious lunch, bunco with prizes, cash & basket raffles, 50/50 and door prizes. There are envelopes with members names on them and raffle tickets inside at the entrance of the church. Thanks so much for your support.

## THE SEASON OF LENT

### Prepare your heart for the Lord

Every Friday of Lent is an obligatory day of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. Fasting is required for individuals between the ages of 18 and 59. On fasting days, a person may eat one full meal and two smaller meals, which together should not equal the amount of the full meal.

The obligation of abstinence from meat applies to all Catholics age 14 and older. Those who are exempt from fasting and abstinence outside the specified age limits include individuals who are physically or mentally ill, such as those with chronic conditions like diabetes, as well as pregnant or nursing women.

During Lent bring in your old palms and we will use them for the Easter Fire at the Vigil.

### Lenten Activities for the Second Week of Lent

Tuesday March 3<sup>rd</sup> Evening Prayer 7PM at Sacred Heart.

Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup> Scriptural Stations of the Cross 7PM at Sacred Heart.

Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> First Friday Mass followed by Eucharistic Adoration at Sacred Heart.

Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> Stations of the Cross and Benediction 3:00 at Sacred Heart.



**Obscure saint of the week: St. Agnes Cao Guiying (March 1)** was raised in a Catholic family. Agnes was a teenager when her parents died, and she moved from her home village to Xingyi. She married a young farmer at age 18. She was widowed two years later when her husband was martyred. Agnes then devoted herself to teaching catechism. At the request of Saint Auguste Chapedelaine, she moved to the Guangxi province to help with missionary work there. Along with teaching the catechism, she taught young women to cook, care for children and manage a home. For her work with the missionaries, she was imprisoned and tortured, then locked in a tiny cage and given a chance to save herself by renouncing her faith; she refused and she was martyred.



**Other obscure saint of the week: St. Albinus of Vercelli (March 1)** was the bishop of Vercelli, Italy in 452. He took over a diocese in turmoil and ruin and spent the rest of his life working to put it back in working order. Over the ruins of the old cathedral and the tomb of Saint Teofrasto, he built a new cathedral.

### Questions Catholics Ask

#### Why do older folks keep quoting the Baltimore Catechism?

U.S. Catholics brought up between 1885 and the Second Vatican Council in 1964 learned their religion lessons from this ubiquitous text. The concept of a catechism—in Q&A format reviewing doctrine and belief—is attributed to Martin Luther in the 16th century. Luther's invention worked so well for the Reformation that the Catholic Church embraced the catechism as an educational tool for the next four centuries. Two Jesuits, Dutchman Peter Canisius and Italian Robert Bellarmine, wrote influential catechisms in the following century. These were joined by French, Spanish, English, and Irish versions. The proliferation of national catechisms ignited debates on the need for a universal text. Until the 20th century, no such document was attempted.

As the U.S. church coalesced under Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore in the late 18th century, the need for an American catechism became apparent. Immigrant Catholics were learning their faith from a multiplicity of foreign texts. "The Carroll Catechism" (sponsored but not written by the Bishop) was based largely on catechisms from England, embracing the introductory questions familiar to anyone who remembers the final text: "Who made you?" and "Why did God make you?" In use through the 19th century, the Carroll Catechism was never mandatory; it merely joined the European texts preferred by local bishops.

American bishops argued for a catechism until the Third Plenary Council, which finally produced a serviceable version in 1885 under Cardinal James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. Known by the unwieldy title *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, Prepared and Enjoined by the Order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore*, it ran 72 pages, included 421 questions and answers, and was organized in groupings covering the Creed, Sacraments, and Commandments.

Almost immediately, this effort was labeled an educational and theological failure, incomprehensible to children, dull, and monotonous. Among its problems was the lack of priority assigned to beliefs. (Incongruously, a single question addressed the Resurrection, central to our faith, and that weakly: "On what day did Christ rise from the dead?") Yet for fifty years it endured, before receiving a considerable revision. The revised Baltimore Catechism of 1941, which is the one folks of a certain age love to quote, arrived on the scene in three versions: for very young children, those receiving First Communion, and adults. After the Second Vatican Council, faith formation took another direction, and the Baltimore Catechism became a footnote of history.

#### Scriptures:

Exodus 24:12; Proverbs 1:1-7; Wisdom 3:11; Isaiah 2:3; Mark 4:2; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 14:6; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 1:5

### The Sunday Gospel in Everyday English

Jesus took Peter and the brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. His appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. Sunlight poured from his face. His clothes were filled with light. Then they realized that Moses and Elijah were also there in deep conversation with him.

Peter broke in, "Master, this is a great moment! What would you think if I built three memorials here on the mountain—one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah?"

While he was going on like this, babbling, light-radiant cloud enveloped them, and sounding from deep in the cloud a voice: "This is my Son, marked by my love, focus of my delight. Listen to him."

When the disciples heard it, they fell flat on their faces, scared to death. But Jesus came over and touched them. "Don't be afraid." When they opened their eyes and looked around all they saw was Jesus, on Jesus.

Coming down the mountain, Jesus swore them to secrecy. "Don't breathe a word of what you've seen. After the Son of Man is raised from the dead, you are free to



Catholic Snacks, Get Fed  
What will heaven be like?



Some wonder whether heaven might be dull since suffering and struggle will be gone. But Scripture offers images of worship, rejoicing, celebration, and the “Marriage feast of the Lamb”.

Heaven is the deepest hope written into every human heart. Long before we had theologians or catechisms, humanity sensed that earth was not our final dwelling place. The longing for something more, something eternal, is built into us by the God who made us.

But if that longing is real, what exactly *will* heaven be like? Is it a place? A state of being? A reunion? A crowd? A solitude? These questions have shaped Christian reflection for two millennia.

Scripture is our first guide.

Jesus said of himself, “I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am you may be also” (John 14:2–3). He also promised that the saints “will shine like the brightness of the sky forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3). The Book of Revelation gives glimpses of heaven’s wonder: “The dwelling place of God is with man... he will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more” (Revelation 21:3–4).

These images are not meant to be cold abstractions, but invitations to trust that what God has prepared for those who love him is beyond any earthly imagination.

The Church’s teaching helps us organize these truths. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that heaven is our ultimate end and fulfillment, “the resurrection of the body and life everlasting,” when we see God face to face (CCC 1024).

The Catechism goes further:

“For all the elect, their joy will be full in the vision of God, as we are told: ‘Therefore they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and he who sits on the throne will shelter them.’”

Catechism of the Catholic Church §1036

This “vision of God” is called the *beatific vision*, the foundation of all our happiness for eternity. It is not merely knowledge about God, but a direct, loving gaze upon Him.

Heaven will be intensely personal. Every soul will be perfected in love and truth. Pain, fear, and sorrow will be gone. But heaven is also communal. The saints are not angels in isolation; they are family. Scripture calls them “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” standing before the Lamb (Revelation 7:9). In heaven we are united not only with God but with all those who have gone before us in faith.

Another truth that surprises many is that heaven is not just about the soul. The Church teaches that at the end of time, all the dead will rise and be reunited with their bodies in the resurrection promised by Christ (CCC 988). Our bodies, made in God’s image and destined for union with the soul, are not accidental accessories to our personhood. They, too, share in the glory of redemption.

Jesus defined eternal life not as stagnation, but as relationship: “This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). Heaven is an everlasting friendship with God. It is intimacy without end. It is love that neither tires nor fades.

Some wonder whether heaven might be dull since suffering and struggle will be gone. But Scripture offers images of worship, rejoicing, celebration, and the “marriage feast of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:7). If the life of the Trinity is communion, participation in that life surely overflows with purpose, delight, and unending discovery.

Heaven is not a distant fairy tale. It is the goal toward which every sacrament, every act of virtue, and every prayer turns. The saints lived as people already on pilgrimage toward eternity, finding joy even in suffering because they saw beyond it.

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I would like to extend a huge thank you to all who helped make the Knight of Columbus Council 15032 Lenten Fish Fry a great success. Special thanks to:

- |                           |               |                |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Dennis & Mary Beth Pankey | Mark May      | Ellen Emling   |
| Mike & Shelly Hertz       | Gery Wright   | Rick White     |
| Bill & Stacie Powers      | Greg Sanders  | Todd Datweiler |
| Bob & Colleen Schultz     | Dallas Ferris | Brian Frerichs |
| Darren & Hollie Lovell    | Fran Feller   | Mark Weidner   |
| Steve & Donna Jacob       | Bob Rushman   | Julie Bisailon |
| Larry Wolles              |               |                |

Many hands make for a successful Lenten and community event. Thanks to all for the support!  
Dave Emling

**Reflection- True Leadership**

To please an official, Abraham Lincoln, once signed an order transferring certain regiments. Secretary of War Stanton, convinced that the President had made a serious mistake, refused to carry out the order. And for good measure he added, "Lincoln is a fool!"

When this was reported to Lincoln he said, "If Stanton said I am a fool then I must be one, for he is almost always right. I think I'll step over and see for myself."

That is exactly what he did. Stanton convinced him that the order was a mistake and Lincoln promptly withdrew it. Everyone knew that part of Lincoln's greatness lay in the way he welcomed criticism.

# DO YOU HAVE concerns about falling?



**A MATTER OF BALANCE**

MOVING (LIVING) WITH FALLS

Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A MATTER OF BALANCE is an award-winning program designed to increase fall and exercise safety levels through practical strategies.

**YOU WILL LEARN TO**

- How to assess fall risks
- Strategies for increasing safety
- Make changes to your home
- How to plan for impact
- Consider the emotional and physical

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

- To gain a new level of confidence
- To gain a broader perspective on fall prevention
- To gain a better understanding of the emotional and physical

**DATES:** Monday afternoons  
March 2<sup>nd</sup> through April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
**TIMES:** 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm  
**LOCATION:** St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Church  
410 N Main St., Merscher IL, 60941

To register, call Nuala at (815) 233-7793 ext. 9954  
A free program for adults 60+



For more information, please contact Nuala at (815) 233-7793 ext. 9954. This program is free of charge. If you are unable to attend, please contact Nuala at (815) 233-7793 ext. 9954. This program is for adults 60+. There may be a small fee for materials. Please contact Nuala at (815) 233-7793 ext. 9954 for more information.

A Matter of Balance is a program of the National Institute on Aging. For more information, please visit [www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-in-place](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-in-place). This program is free of charge. If you are unable to attend, please contact Nuala at (815) 233-7793 ext. 9954. This program is for adults 60+. There may be a small fee for materials. Please contact Nuala at (815) 233-7793 ext. 9954 for more information.

Please plan on attending this event that supports our future priests - this event is open to all. Please complete the dinner reservation below and return to Deacon pat skelly prior to March 6,2026. Please see Deacon Ron for additional reservation forms.

## VOCATIONAL DINNER & AUCTION

Saturday, March 14, 2026

CMA Hall \* 187 S. Indiana Ave. \* Kankakee, IL

Cocktails: 6:00 p.m. Dinner 7:00 p.m. \* RSVP Deadline -- March 6th, 2026

\$25.00 Per Person for Dinner -- Auction Will Follow

Please enclose check, and make payable to: McNamara Assembly 202

Name: _____	Phone: _____		
Address: _____	City: _____, IL Zip: _____		
Name: _____	Stuffed Chicken	Pork Chop	Beef
Name: _____	Stuffed Chicken	Pork Chop	Beef
Name: _____	Stuffed Chicken	Pork Chop	Beef
Name: _____	Stuffed Chicken	Pork Chop	Beef

Please send any donation or payment to: Deacon Pat Skelly, 1403 Guildford Dr, Bourbonnais, IL 60914



March 1, 2026

## Second Sunday of Lent

Written by  
THE  
FAITHFUL  
DISCIPLE

Gen 12:1-4a | 2 Tim 1:8b-10 | Mt 17:1-9

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

What struck me when I first read this passage from the Book of Genesis, in which the Lord speaks to Abraham, is God's proclamation that it is through *his will* and *his work* that the blessings and goodness of Abraham's future will come about. It is not a vague statement, in which the subject is omitted. God clearly says, "I will make your name great." Abraham was a faithful servant of God and sought to obey God's will, but that is not what made his name memorable. It is due to God's will and generosity that Abraham's blessings came about. I sometimes struggle with giving up credit for the good things in my life. I want to believe that *my work*, *my talents*, and *my dedication* have brought about these good things. But the reality is that all of who I am and the skills that I have is a gift. I was created by God and formed by others to hone certain dispositions and talents that have led to my accomplishments. When we come to realize that all we have is a gift, we are able to offer our lives back to be transfigured and glorified by God, who creates and gives all things.

### **GO EVANGELIZE**

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

Many scholars identify this moment of the Transfiguration as the climax of the narrative arc of the Gospels, after which Christ's actions lead to his suffering and death. In his passion, Christ demonstrates the ultimate submission to the will of God, taking on the weight of human sin in order to redeem us. In this moment of Transfiguration on the mountain, we glimpse the beauty of the glorification that will result from this perfect obedience to God's will. We, too, are called to surrender ourselves fully to God. Following Jesus' model of humble submission to the Father's will does not involve false humility, in which we are self-deprecating or overly critical of ourselves. Instead, we are called to acknowledge and celebrate our gifts and accomplishments, while also recognizing that who we are and the gifts that we have come from our generous and loving God.

### **REFLECT**

Reflect on the gifts and talents you have been given, as well as the accomplishments that have come about because of these gifts. Take a moment to thank God for all that he has given to you, and ask him to reveal how you can be a witness to his goodness through the prudent use and celebration of these gifts.

**SPIRITUALITY**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

cf. Matt 17:5

From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard:

This is my beloved Son, hear him.

**Gospel** Matt 17:1-9; L25A

Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother,  
and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them;  
his face shone like the sun  
and his clothes became white as light.

And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them,  
conversing with him.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply,  
"Lord, it is good that we are here.

If you wish, I will make three tents here,  
one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, behold,  
a bright cloud cast a shadow over them,  
then from the cloud came a voice that said,

"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;  
listen to him."

When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate  
and were very much afraid.

But Jesus came and touched them, saying,  
"Rise, and do not be afraid."

And when the disciples raised their eyes,  
they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain,  
Jesus charged them,  
"Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

**Reflecting on the Gospel**

What really happened at the transfiguration? Each of the evangelists tells the story slightly differently, with his own theological emphases. Was it a miraculous glimpse of Jesus's heavenly glory? A temporary unveiling of his divine nature to give hope to his disciples? Or was it a recasting of a resurrection appearance story placed in the middle of the gospel? These and other theories have long been entertained by biblical scholars.

Matthew highlights the radiance of Jesus's face and clothing and the brightness of the cloud that overshadows the disciples. Coming on the heels of Jesus's teaching that he must suffer and die before being raised up (16:21), the brilliance underscores that Jesus, although executed as a criminal, is righteous. As Jesus had told his disciples, at the end of the age "the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (13:43). The voice from the cloud likewise reaffirms Jesus's identity as God's beloved Son, upon whom divine favor rests. The admonition "listen to him" echoes Deuteronomy 18:15 and emphasizes that Jesus is the authentic interpreter of the Mosaic Law and the prophets.



The presence of Moses and Elijah recalls their powerful mountaintop experiences of God. On Mount Sinai God spoke to Moses face-to-face, entrusting to him the commandments that would guide his people to live in faithfulness through the desert days ahead. The glory of God is reflected on Moses's own face as he returns to the difficult task of leadership (Exod 34:29). Elijah flees to the same mountain, when trying to escape the murderous intents of Jezebel. There God speaks to him in a "light silent sound," giving him the courage to go forward to anoint a new king and Elisha as his successor (1 Kgs 19). Likewise, Jesus is at a turning point in his mission. There are those who seek his life, as well as those who try to live faithfully God's law that he teaches. On the mountaintop, he is able to see with God's own vision the way forward in faithfulness.

Jesus's transforming experience also resonates with that of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., who on the night before he was assassinated declared that he had been to the mountaintop and had seen the Promised Land. He set aside all fear and assured his followers that even if he were killed, as a people they would get to the Promised Land. God's transformative love radiates through a face determined to love no matter what the other's response. As Jesus had taught his disciples from a mountaintop about transforming enmity through love, so King reminded his followers to disarm police forces through loving, nonviolent confrontation and to answer fire hoses with "a certain kind of fire that no water could put out."

King urged his listeners to continue to struggle for justice here and now, not only to wait for "long white robes over yonder." So, too, for Jesus, nothing would have been more tragic than to stop with teaching, preaching, and healing in Galilee. To bring transfigured life to completion for all, he continues on toward Jerusalem.