



**Diocese of Springfield in Illinois**  
*Office for Communications*

# **NEWS**

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## **CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL TO CLOSE AT END OF CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR**

**SPRINGFIELD** - In a Feb. 13, 2018 letter to school families and parishioners, Very Rev. Christopher A. House, pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, announced that the parish school will close at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 school year.

Cathedral School opened its doors in 1928 at 815 S. 6<sup>th</sup> St. in Springfield. Pre-K3 through eighth grade enrollment for the current school year is 126. Due to changing demographics, the school now has fewer families from which to draw enrollment in recent years which has resulted in serious difficulties in school finances.

“Coming to this decision has been extremely difficult and painful, and it has been preceded by much study, prayer and consultation,” said Fr. House. “I have said in each state of the parish address since becoming pastor in August 2014, the parish has been in a state of deficit spending since at least 2011. In spite of budget cuts and reduction in staff, this trend has not been broken.”

In November 2017, Fr. House discussed the issue with Bishop Thomas John Paprocki of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, Rev. Msgr. David J. Hoefler, Vicar General and the diocesan finance officer. Bishop Paprocki and Fr. House have held consultations with Cathedral’s pastoral and finance councils, school board, and hosted an open meeting with Cathedral parishioners.

“The love for the school was clear at these meetings, but what was and continues to remain unclear is any viable way forward given the gravity of the school’s financial situation,” said Fr. House. He said parishioner and donor giving have been analyzed to

determine if a new direction was available or if a fundraising solution existed. Once the school's sustainability and the parish's capacity for supporting it were examined, it became clear that overcoming yearly budgetary shortfalls would be impossible.

"We realize school closures have a difficult impact on families and we are committed to working with the students, families and faculty through this transition and assist in placing them in another Springfield Catholic school, said Brandi Borries, diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools.