

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

DECEMBER 12, 2021 | THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



524 EAST LAWRENCE AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703
CATHEDRAL PARISH OFFICE: 217-522-3342
WWW.SPICATHEDRAL.ORG

FOUNDED IN 1839 | DEDICATED IN 1928 | BUILT ON FAITH, RENEWED IN HOPE IN 2009

Cathedral Weekly

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 50

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
NINTH BISHOP OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

THE VERY REVEREND BRIAN C. ALFORD, V.E.
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THE REVEREND PETER CHINEKE
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND DOMINIC RANKIN
IN RESIDENCE

THE REVEREND DOMINIC VAHLING
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Sunday Masses

Saturday - 4:00pm

Sunday - 7:00am, 10:00am, & 5:00pm

Weekday Masses

Monday through Friday - 7:00am & 5:15pm

Saturday - 8:00am

Reconciliation

Monday through Friday - 4:15pm-5:00pm

Saturday - 9:00am-10:00am & 2:30pm-3:30pm

Sunday - 4:00pm-4:45pm

Adoration

Tuesday & Thursday - 4:00pm to 5:00pm

Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, we welcome you to the mother church of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.

The seat of the diocese was moved to Springfield from Alton in 1923. In the same year, "Old St. Mary's" church of Immaculate Conception Parish was named as the pro-cathedral of the new diocese until this cathedral church was built and dedicated in 1928. Currently, our diocese comprises twenty-eight counties in central Illinois, serving over 140,000 members of the Catholic faithful.

We hope that your visit to our Cathedral is one of grace and beauty and that you feel at home in the mother church. We also hope that you will find this edition of the Cathedral Weekly to be both informative and spiritually enriching. May God bless you and yours!

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call 217-321-1155.
Please remember that if you or a loved one is in the hospital, a nursing home or homebound, to contact the Parish Office at 217-522-3342.



Embrace the Future with Hope

This week we turn to the third and final point of reflection inspired by Pope Francis and Pope St. John Paul II. Having looked to the past with gratitude and having recommitted ourselves to living the present with passion, we now **embrace the future with hope**.

To aid in our reflection for this week, we can turn to the Pope who served in between the two already mentioned, Pope Benedict XVI. Pope Benedict wrote a very beautiful reflection on the topic of Christian hope in his second encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (Saved in Hope). At the conclusion of the first section, the Holy

Father writes about the day-to-day hopes that we have, none of which are bad. But they are limited. He then provides the following key understanding of Christian hope:

[W]e need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God, who encompasses the whole of reality and who can bestow upon us what we, by ourselves, cannot attain. The fact that it comes to us as a gift is actually part of hope. God is the foundation of hope: not any god, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us and humanity in its entirety. His Kingdom is not an imaginary hereafter, situated in a future that will never arrive; his Kingdom is present wherever he is loved and wherever his love reaches us. His love alone gives us the possibility of soberly persevering day by day, without ceasing to be spurred on by hope, in a world which by its very nature is imperfect. His love is at the same time our guarantee of the existence of what we only vaguely sense and which nevertheless, in our deepest self, we await: a life that is "truly" life. (31)

It can be an interesting exercise to notice how often we use the word "hope" in our daily vocabulary. We have so many hopes that help to keep us moving forward. We must, however, not fall into the trap of thinking that the fulfillment of these hopes will ever be enough. Only in God can our deepest hope be fulfilled, and only in Him can we truly live. When we embrace that truth, our future becomes so much brighter.

Look back at the quote above and notice the following sentence: "God is the foundation of hope: not any god, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us and humanity in its entirety." It is this mystery of God who has a human face that we celebrate at Christmas. God, the source of our hope and life, has come down into our human condition to become one of us, such that we can look upon Him face to face. This is truly remarkable! Many of us will be setting up our nativity sets in our homes soon, and I encourage you to practice the custom of keeping the baby Jesus hidden away until Christmas. In the days leading up to Christmas, as you look at the scene, let your hearts be filled with hope as you look forward to finally seeing Him lay in the manger on Christmas morning. Let that be the driving hope in these final days, surpassing other hopes such as what you might get for Christmas presents, or being able to see family members. All of those are good, but they all fall short of the hope that we have in seeing our God face to face. When you finally are able to place Christ in the scene, why not give Him some sign of your affection, for in doing so, you are embracing the one who is the fulfillment of our hope. May that embrace spur us on to persevere on this journey with joy as we look forward to the final goal of our hope, seeing Him face to face in Heaven.

Father Alford is the Rector of the Cathedral and serves in the diocesan curia as the Vicar for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations.

Mass Intentions

Monday, December 13

7am - Sophia Bartoletti & Family
(Estate of Sophia Bartoletti)
5:15pm - Special Intention for Elmo & Francis Kistner Family (E. John & Debra Beltramea)

Tuesday, December 14

7am - Barb Copeland
(John Busciacco)
5:15pm - Anne Gustafson
(Jeanette Giannone)

Wednesday, December 15

7am - Drew Dhabalt
(Bill Vogt)
5:15pm - Ben Garde
(Family)

Thursday, December 16

7am - Anna A. Eleyidath
(Augustine Eleyidath)
5:15pm - Dr. John & Adele Karle
(Mary Karle)

Friday, December 17

7am - Sophia Bartoletti & Family
(Estate of Sophia Bartoletti)
5:15pm - J. R. Weakley
(Doris Drago)

Saturday, December 18

8am - Barbara Conkrite
(Litina Carnes)
4pm - For the People

Sunday, December 19

7am - Mary Ann Midden
(William Midden)
10am - Carl Layendecker
(Becky & Woody Woodhull)
5pm - Frank Coffey
(Family)



St. Ambrose, Again

Feast Day: December 7th

Last week, we were able to recount the dramatic shift that happened in the life of Theodosius and Ambrose when, between the years of 374 AD and 381 AD, they both went from being young, popular Roman civil servants to becoming Emperor and Bishop respectively. But climbing the social ladder-of-power was not the most substantial change that occurred in their lives during those years. Nor was the political promotion they each received the shift that would have the greatest consequences for later history. The most impactful event in either of their lives during those years was that they each were baptized. They were set free from original sin; they were made sons of God; and they were given the gifts of Faith, Hope, and Love.

This month we are investigating the topic of the virtues, and so we look to these men as examples of how the theological virtues can operate in someone's life. (We will save the other virtues, specifically the cardinal ones, for next week). Both Ambrose and Theodosius, in an age that was debating whether Jesus was God, and with all the pressures of the world on their shoulders, chose to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and with that interior transformation complete, they then began to practice in their actions and demeanor the exterior transformation that befits a Christian.

I don't mean to argue that both of them suddenly were perfect, and yet in the months after receiving this first sacrament, what do we see them doing: upholding the fullness of the faith and responding to the horrors of their day with an exceptional amount of vision, patience, even mercy. (Theodosius convenes the council of Constantinople, and promulgates the Codex Theodosianus, calling for faith in the Trinity. Ambrose convokes the synod of Aquileia, and writes *De Fide* defending the orthodox faith). In the moment, neither man could have quantified how much grace had changed them, and yet their actions – in retrospect – depict individuals who had allowed themselves to be redirected by those theological virtues. The question would be whether they stayed true to those virtues in times of testing that would come.

In 383, Gratian (the emperor of the West) was killed by Magnus Maximus, placing Gratian's 12 year old heir, Valentinian II, on the throne. The boy, and his mother (who acted as his regent), were Arian, and within two years were attempting to takeover Catholic Churches for the use of the Arians. (She, Justina, still hated Ambrose for his helping to appoint an orthodox bishop to Sirmium, whom they had clashed with years before, and couldn't stand his strident defense of Jesus' divinity and all the corollaries from that). Ambrose stubbornly barricaded himself inside the Church, and sent this scathing reply to the Emperor who had soldiers at his door:

"If you demand my person, I am ready to submit: carry me to prison or to death, I will not resist; but I will never betray the church of Christ. I will not call upon the people to succour me; I will die at the foot of the altar rather than desert it. The tumult of the people I will not encourage: but God alone can appease it."

Valentinian backed down and Ambrose continued to teach his congregation the simple songs that upheld the full-faith he had so boldly defended. The political situation being what it was, Valentinian and Justina's schemes were derailed further by Maximus coming for them with an army. They fled, and were only rescued by the happily orthodox Theodosius sweeping in from the East. This year, 388, seems to also be the time when our two characters first meet in person! It was not the last.

In 390, after a riot took place in Thessalonica (in which, it seems one of his military leaders was killed), Theodosius sent in troops to punish the city, and they brutally murdered thousands of the Thessalonians as they were gathered in their town circus. This, just as much as Valentinian's heresy, was contrary to the Catholic faith, and so we now find Theodosius outside Ambrose's Cathedral, not with an army threatening to storm the altar, but humble and contrite for his sins. Ambrose forced the Emperor to wait 6 months before accepting his contrition as forthright and allowing him to return to Holy Communion.

Theodosius would eventually become the last single person to rule the entire Roman Empire, dying in 395, in Milan, repentant and faithful to the end. Ambrose would die 2 years later, still archbishop of that same city, where so many of the crises and characters of the previous decades had crossed. Both men were sorely tried in the virtues of their baptism, we should expect the same for ourselves. Regardless of the trials we face, God will provide the courage, and clemency, we need to remain faithful.

*Fr. Dominic Rankin's favorite songs are Advent hymns. There is something so gentle and powerful in their heralding the coming of Christ. Ambrose composed one of the greatest of these hymns, *Veni Redemptor Gentium*. Here are the final 3 stanzas (translated into English). The divinity of the Christ child has not been forgotten here!*

5. From God the Father He proceeds,
To God the Father back He speeds;
His course He runs to death and hell,
Returning on God's throne to dwell.

6. O equal to the Father, Thou!
Gird on Thy fleshly mantle now;
The weakness of our mortal state
With deathless might invigorate.

7. Thy cradle here shall glitter bright
And darkness breathe a newer light,
Where endless faith shall shine serene,
And twilight never intervene.

*Why does the Catholic Church recognize baptisms performed by other non-Catholic churches?
I read recently that "anyone" can baptize.*

You are correct that anyone can baptize, even people who are not themselves baptized. This can be surprising to hear at first, because bishops, priests, and deacons are the ordinary ministers of baptism in our Church. The reason that anyone can baptize is because God wants his salvation to be offered to as many people as possible. A person simply has to intend what the Church intends when they perform a baptism, while invoking the three persons of the Holy Trinity. As Jesus told Nicodemus, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit" (John 3:5). Jesus is referring to the sacrament of baptism in this conversation with Nicodemus. Since baptism is necessary for salvation, it is fitting that it be validly celebrated even in communities who do not share the fullness of the Catholic faith. Of course, we never despair of a person's salvation, and God has ways of reaching even the hearts of people who were not baptized in ways that we cannot understand.

One situation where I can think of a non-Christian baptizing somebody would be in a Catholic hospital, where a nurse may administer the sacrament at the request of a parent in an emergency. I have personally never heard of this happening, but it is possible. Also, in parts of the world where Christians do not have a stable presence, it is possible that someone could come to faith in Christ with no Christians around to baptize him. So, in danger of death, he could ask a friend to pour water over his head while saying the correct words, and it would be a real baptism.

We recognize that we share a common baptism with Christians of other traditions. Baptism is sacrament which gives all Christians a unity in Christ. Our unity is not complete, however, which is why we do not partake of Communion at other Christians' liturgies. The Catholic Church has a different understanding than other Christian communities of the role of baptism in the Christian life. We believe that in baptism, even of a baby, a person is restored to friendship with God through the infusion of sanctifying grace into the soul. Other Christians may think that Baptism is a nice ceremony which marks the occasion of someone's conversion, but nothing more. However, even if the understanding is not there, we believe that God's grace is still effective through the baptism.

The Vatican ruled several years ago that the baptisms of the Mormon Church (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) is invalid. This means that they are not Christians, and their baptism is not a sacrament. If a Mormon hears you say this, they will probably be offended (this happened to me once), but it is simply what our Church teaches. The reason for this teaching is that Mormons do not believe in very basic Christian beliefs such as who God is, who Jesus was, and what salvation is. However, any other group that celebrates baptism we would consider to be Christians who have received the sacrament of salvation.

To receive all of the gifts that Jesus left for his Church, we need to have the sacrament of Holy Orders. Only a validly-ordained priest can celebrate the Eucharist, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders. So, Protestant and other Christian communities only have two of the seven sacraments: Baptism and Marriage. A priest does not technically celebrate a marriage as its minister; he is simply the official witness of the Church.

Baptism is the doorway to salvation and to the other six sacraments. We need to continue to pray for the unity of all Christians so that we can share the gifts that Christ has given to each of us. We have five more sacraments to offer to other Christians, and they have their own gifts to share with us, too. A lot of the renewal of healing prayer in our country and other ministries has come about through non-Catholics in the past fifty years or so. God's grace is certainly present through their baptism, and we are all blessed through it.

*Father Dominic Vahling serves as parochial vicar at the Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception and as co-chaplain of
Sacred Heart-Griffin High School.*

Stewardship of Treasure December 4th & 5th

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|--------------|-------------|
| Envelopes: | \$8,239.00 |
| Loose: | \$2,932.00 |
| Maintenance: | \$915.00 |
| Total: | \$12,086.00 |

November EFT: \$21,066.25

Online Giving: If you would like to extend a special gift to the Cathedral, please visit our website.

Our parish is grateful for your continued support.
Thank you!

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Around the Cathedral

CCCW Cookie Walk and Raffle

Calling all bakers... CCCW will have a Cookie/Candy Walk on Saturday, December 18th and we need cookies!!! Donations of homemade cookies and candy will be accepted Friday, Dec 17th from noon to 6pm. You can bring them to the school hall or atrium and one of our members will be there, happy to help. Then make sure you come Saturday from 9am to 1pm to fill cartons full of a wide assortment of cookies and candy. Masks and gloves will be provided. We will also have a Resale Table of new and gentle used gifts.

Calling All Young Artists

Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) has an annual Christmas Art Contest competition for students from K-8th grade. Artwork for national winners will be on display in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Throughout Advent and Christmas. General information and entry form can be found in the atrium.

Rorate Caeli Mass

Join us for Cathedral's Rorate Caeli candlelit Mass in honor of Our Lady during Advent. The Rorate Mass is lit only by candlelight. In the dimly lit setting, priests and faithful prepare to honor the light of the world who is soon to be born and offer praise to God for the gift of Our Lady. As the Mass proceeds and sunrise approaches, the church becomes progressively brighter, illuminated by the sun as our Faith is illuminated by Christ. All are welcome to join us for this special Mass! Saturday, December 18th – 6:30AM @ Cathedral

The Women of The Genealogy of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel

The Gospel according to St. Matthew begins with a rather confusing list of names that lays out the genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham. While most of the names are those of men, there are five women mentioned. During this series, we will look at the story of these women and learn some important lessons about how to prepare to welcome Christ into our lives more fully in preparation for the celebration of His Nativity at Christmas.

Thursday, December 16th at 7:00pm @ Cathedral Atrium

Sacraments

Please keep Charles Harris and Abigail McLaughlin in your prayers, as they joined together and received the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony here at the Cathedra last weekend on December 4, 2021.

Extended Confessions and Advent Adoration

The Cathedral will be hosting extended adoration hours on Friday, December 17 from 12pm to 8pm, and Saturday, December 18 from 7am to 6pm. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration for the faithful to spend time before our Eucharistic Lord. Confessions will also be heard during those hours. Please consider signing up for an hour during that time to pray so as to prepare well for the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas. The signup form can be found here: <https://spicathedral.flocknote.com/signup/71586>

Advent Lessons and Carols

On the evening of Gaudete Sunday, in the holy season of Advent, join Mark Gifford and a select ensemble, including Julia Kay Jamieson on harp, for an evening of Scripture, music, and prayer as we reflect on the two promised comings of Christ.

Sunday, December 12th - 7:00PM @ Cathedral

Catholic Charities Christmas Toy Drive

Catholic Charities will once again be helping local parents provide Christmas gifts for their children. Please place NEW, unwrapped items in the collection bin in the atrium between now and December 6. Gifts for toddlers to teens include: Sports equipment and outdoor games; Baby dolls and Barbies of all races; Trucks, cars, Legos and action figures; Arts and crafts supplies, books, puzzles and educational toys; Gifts for teens and pre-teens. THANK YOU!

Seminarian Tree

You've heard of an Angel Tree, but we would like to introduce you to a Seminarian Tree. In the Atrium you will find a tree with seminarian cards on it. We invite you take a card and commit to praying for that seminarian all year. If you have the time, you can mail him a birthday card or Christmas card letting the seminarian know he is in your prayers. You may even be lucky enough to meet your seminarian at the Cathedral and can tell him in person. Thank you for your prayerful support of our future priests!

The Word Among Us

Over the past four months copies of The Word Among Us have been available to assist you in develop or nurture the practice of reading and reflecting on the day's Mass readings. We were able to receive these at a special discounted rate. The Advent book marks the last month that these books will be available. If you enjoyed them, please consider subscribing - it's a perfect Christmas gift from you to you or for someone you love. Don't forget we have more upcoming sessions of Encountering Christ in the Word where we read and contemplate and discuss what God might be saying to us in Scripture. You are welcome to join us on December 14 & 21 at 7:00 in the Cathedral atrium.

CCCW Gift Card Raffle Tickets

Gift Card Raffle Tickets will be sold at all Masses now through December 12! The winner will be announced at 1pm Saturday, December 18th at the CCCW Cookie Walk. Good luck, and thank you for supporting the CCCW!

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Around the Diocese

"Night of Pause" - A Celebration of the Winter Solstice

Come and go - as you wish - to the Church of the Little Flower for the night of "Silence and Light" on Tuesday, December 21 from 5pm-10pm. 800 Stevenson Drive, Springfield, IL

Dominican Family Teach-In

On Saturday, January 29, 2022, from 9 to 2, Sacred Heart-Griffin High School is hosting "Dominican Family Teach-In", a day of spiritual reflection for future and current Sacred Heart-Griffin Parents to learn how to live the Four Pillars of the Dominican Order charism. Learn how to pray, study, live, and serve like a Dominican! Led by Springfield Dominican Sisters and Dominican Associates, \$20 registration donation includes lunch. Email carlson@shg.org to register today!

Go On An ADVENTure

This Advent, join us as we go on an ADVENTure! Where are we going? Get on board to find out. Head to dio.org/adventure to sign up and secure your ticket. Reflections, articles, stories, and activities to prepare you for Christ. Are you ready?

Join the Gospel Choir

The Diocesan Black Catholic Commission is planning to have a Gospel Mass February 27, 2022, St. Aloysius Church, Springfield. Those interested in singing in the Gospel Choir for this Mass should contact Donna Moore at dmoore@dio.org, or 217-321-1161.

Jesus: The Way, the Truth, and the Life - Bible Study at Christ the King Parish

Jesus is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Lord, and our God. While many of us already know a lot about him, how well can we say we really know him? Filmed on location in the Holy Land, this study is a new and fresh look at Jesus—who he is, what he is really like, what he taught, what he did for our salvation, and what all of this means for us as Catholics today. 10 Sessions, 30-Minute Videos from ascensionpress.com \$31.00--This Study Set includes: The Full-Color Jesus student workbook, the Jesus Timeline Chart, the Jesus Book and online access for one year. Begins January 18, 2022 in the Parish Hall, from 9:30-11. Please contact Mary Kay Hinkle at 217-899-2599 or mbhinkle75@comcast.net. Due to shipping concerns, deadline to join the study is December 31, 2021.

Scholarships Available at Quincy University

Quincy University recently celebrated 160 years of providing an exceptional educational experience that prepares students for lives of purpose and service to others, guided and shaped by Franciscans encouraging Catholic students to consider QU among their college options and ultimately enroll. The Bishop's Scholarship is a \$10,000 scholarship awarded to one student on the recommendation of the Bishop of Springfield. To be eligible for consideration, a candidate must belong to a parish in the Diocese of Springfield, apply to Quincy University and receive admission by December 15, 2021, and choose to enroll and submit a statement describing their involvement in their local parish, the Diocese, or the Catholic Church by January 15, 2022. The Diocesan Scholarship is a \$500 scholarship awarded to any student who is a member of a parish in the Diocese of Springfield. To receive this scholarship, candidates must belong to a parish in the Diocese of Springfield, apply to Quincy University and receive admission by March 15, 2022, and choose to enroll and submit a letter from a parish official confirming membership by April 15, 2022. For more information on these scholarships and other financial aid information at Quincy University, please visit www.quincy.edu/apply