

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

DECEMBER 25, 2022 | THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD



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 4 ISSUE 52

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

THE VERY REVEREND BRIAN C. ALFORD, V.E.
RECTOR

THE REVEREND PAUL LESUPATI
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND DOMINIC RANKIN
IN RESIDENCE

THE REVEREND DOMINIC VAHLING
IN RESIDENCE

DEACON ROBERT SGAMBELLURI

DEACON IRVIN LAWRENCE SMITH

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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.



O Come, Let Us Adore Him

For the past few years that I have been here as Rector of the Cathedral, one of the great highlights of the year is the Christmas celebration of Mass During the Night, which we often call Midnight Mass since that is the time at which we celebrate this Mass. Every aspect of this Mass is a source of great joy. First and foremost, we celebrate this Mass with all the clergy of the parish, under the leadership of Bishop Paprocki, for whom I have a deep respect and appreciation for as a father, a brother,

and a friend. What a great blessing it is to serve with the other clergy of the parish, including our Parochial Vicar, Father Paul Lesupati, celebrating his first Christmas as a priest! Although they are only technically In Residence, Father Dominic Rankin and Father Dominic Vahling are an integral part of our parish family, and truly a blessing to live with as brothers in the Cathedral Rectory. I am also profoundly grateful to have two excellent Deacons serving our parish so faithfully, Deacon Larry Smith and Deacon Rob Sgambelluri.

As the Entrance Procession begins, the music, under the direction of Mark Gifford and his choir and musicians, I am reminded of what a gift we have with our Sacred Music here, a comment I hear regularly. The music as we process in this night certainly lifts my heart to rejoice in this special night on which we remember Christ's birth.

As the procession nears the altar, I cannot help but notice the many familiar faces present in the congregation. While some are visitors, many are the families that make up our wonderful parish, and I give thanks to God for the privilege of being a part of this family. As I mentioned at Thanksgiving, I never really have the opportunity to celebrate holidays with my physical family, but as I am at these Christmas masses, I know that I am celebrating the day with the family that God, in His goodness, has blessed me with, and no gathering could be more important and beautiful than when we gather as a family for Mass.

As the liturgy proceeds, we get to listen to the Word of God, recounting the story of the Word becoming flesh in Bethlehem nearly 2000 years ago, which reminds us of the Good News of great joy that Our Messiah has come to save us! Then, right before our eyes, the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us in the Eucharist, of which we are able to partake, thus receiving the greatest of gifts. All serve to remind me of the gift of our Catholic faith in general, and the particular gift of being a priest to preach this Good News and bring the Eucharist to you each and every day.

Continued on next page

Mass Intentions

Monday, December 26

7am - Herbert Dulle
(Jen Rhoda)
5:15pm - NO MASS

Tuesday, December 27

7am - Mary Thompson
(Family)
5:15pm - Sophia Bartoletti & Family
(Estate)

Wednesday, December 28

7am - John Ansell
(Cour Family)
5:15pm - Maren Bowyer Gallagher
(Gallagher Family)

Thursday, December 29

7am - Sarah Alblinger
(Jeff & Julie Mitchell)
5:15pm - Bud O'Shea
(Peg McDermott)

Friday, December 30

7am - Special Intention for the Holy
Family (John Busciacco)
5:15pm - Mark Workman
(Carol West)

Saturday, December 31

8am - Mary Lynch Nicoud
(Tim Nicoud)
4pm - Eulalia & Raymond Ohl
(Angela Ohl-Marsters)

Sunday, January 1

7am - Living & Deceased Members
of the Wray Family (Family)
10am - John Ansell
(Dianne Cycholl)
5pm - For The People

Continued from previous page

After the Mass has concluded and everybody has departed to get some sleep, the church becomes quiet and peaceful. Whether it is before retiring for the night myself, or early the next morning before anybody arrives, I look forward to spending time in the dim light of the church, praying before the beautiful Nativity scene, adoring the newborn King. And while I have my own personal Nativity scene in my room, I prefer being here in the church, because the Lord is truly present in the tabernacle, there to adore Him in this local Bethlehem, which in Hebrew means "house of bread."

As we are at the beginning of this diocesan Year of the Eucharist, may we be renewed this Christmas in our love for this great gift which He offers to us, the gift of His very self in the Eucharist. May we make it our intention to come and adore Him here more frequently, letting His peaceful presence remind us of the Good News that His light is always present to shine in the darkness of our lives and our world, and to know that the darkness will never overcome His light, so long as we stay close to Him.

In addition to the individuals I mentioned above, I also want to take this opportunity, as I do each year, to express my profound gratitude for the following staff members who help to keep our parish running well, so that we can be that welcome home for our parish family: Bill Vogt, Kim Gunter, Vicki Compton, Jan Sgambelluri, Haley Dutton, Ryan Dufner, Rusty Overturf, and Sue Sandidge.

From all of the clergy and staff of the Cathedral, we wish all of you a very Merry Christmas!

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



Saint Stephen

Feast Day: December 26th | Titles: Deacon, Apologist, Martyr, Protomartyr | Patronage: Altar Servers, Bricklayers, Deacons, Masons, Casket Makers, Headaches | Attributes: Wearing Dalmatic; Holding Censer, Martyr's Palm, Gospel Book, Miniature Church; Surrounded by Stones.

Good King Wenceslas, it is said, looked out on the Feast of Stephen. The famous carol which begins with those words was composed in the 1830s by John M. Neale (an Evangelical Minister, who, loving Catholic Liturgy, Latin hymns, and religious life, was roundly persecuted by his congregation). The aforementioned Good King looked out

from his castle in Bohemia in the 930s, and if he had followed his usual routine, would have already attended Mass, perhaps helping to grind the wheat to make the hosts, and had probably given a few hours to prayer earlier that morning in the darkened and unheated church. The Feast of St. Stephen was celebrated throughout the Church by the 330s when we find him included by name (along with St. John, Ss. Peter and Paul, and often St. John the Baptist) in the Eucharistic Prayers of Rome, Egypt, and Byzantium. But St. Stephen himself barely made it into the 030s.

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Stephen, his name meaning “crown” or “wreath” (the word often used to describe someone of honor) was one of the first deacons of the Church, which in those early years had barely yet expanded past the city of Jerusalem. Certainly, many of those who had been converted by St. Peter’s words on Pentecost had carried the Good News of the coming of the Christ back to their homes, but the Apostles were still mostly just preaching in the Temple, and from house to house in the Holy City. It was because they were so busy preaching the Word that they enlisted the help of several men who had known Jesus Himself to be deacons, servants, of the Apostles, directed especially to the care of the poor, and one of those was Stephen.

How did St. Stephen celebrate Christ’s coming? Well, he was not there for Jesus’ birth, but being a friend and disciple of Our Lord, he certainly had pondered again and again the details of Jesus’ death, and the wonder of all the early disciples at His resurrection. Recall Stephen’s words in Acts 7, where he goes back through the entire history of Israel and points out how God had directed their steps all along – Abraham’s sacrifice, Joseph’s survival, Moses’ encounter at the Bush; the Tabernacle in the Desert and the Temple of David and Solomon – and now, Stephen proclaimed, God had intervened and saved, and directed and fulfilled again, in Jesus, and in an utterly unprecedented way. All those previous encounters with God were only a glimpse, an anticipation, of the closeness that He actually wanted to have with His people! God is not content with a relationship of bushes, and tents, and sacrificial lambs.

The Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands. He dwells in us. He dwells with us. He dwells among us. Jesus, Stephen knew, was real, and is real; was alive, and is alive; had come, and still comes. As that first deacon proclaimed this to the astonishment of the bystanders, the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to see heaven, the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. Stephen saw the veil pulled back, and the closeness of God revealed, and notice what happens next:

Not just his suffering, the hurled stones, and Saul standing by, but notice that Stephen plays out in his own life and death, the life and death of His Savior. He, like Jesus, spoke of the Son of Man at the righthand of God. He, like Jesus, for that claim, is made an outcast, and taken out of the city to die. He, like Jesus, begs the Heavenly Father to forgive his persecutors. And he, like Jesus, gives His Spirit over to God.

The coming of Christ is not just about God become like us. It is also about us becoming like God. We cannot embrace the child in the manger, if we will not embrace Christ upon the cross. But if we are willing to go to Bethlehem and Jerusalem, to the crib and the cross, to receive the Spirit and a share in Our Lord’s suffering, then we with Stephen, and Saul, and Wenceslaus and Abraham, will see God with us, not just in the past, nor just in heaven, but with us – with you, and me, and our families – today.

Fr. Dominic Rankin was ordained a deacon, like St. Stephen dedicated to service of the Church, 5 years ago. It was on the feast of St. Wenceslaus, on September 28th 2017. He was not martyred after giving his first homily, nor has he hiked miles in the snow to deliver food to the hungry. Thankfully, God can make a saint of him yet.

Stewardship of Treasure December 10th & 11th

Envelopes:	\$4,286.00
Loose:	\$8,810.00
Maintenance:	\$65.00
Total:	\$13,161.00

November EFT \$21,733.80

November Second Collections

Breadline Sunday	\$5,137.00
Calvary Cemetery	\$1,087.00
Campaign for Justice & Hope	\$3,353.00

November Debt Reduction \$691.00

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!



Christmas and Family

The two holiest people in the history of the Church were not priests, deacons, nuns, or hermits in the desert. No, they were a married couple – Mary and Joseph! I recently saw a quote to this effect by St. Josemaria Escriva. I can't seem to find the exact quote at the moment, but you get the drift. Sometimes people wrongly assume that the clergy and religious are the holiest people in the Church. While it's true that being called to the priesthood or religious life is a great gift from God, and a sign of the kingdom of heaven, this does not mean that married or single lay people are called to holiness any less than the clergy.

In the last part of this semester, I showed a short video series by Sr. Miriam James Heidland to my students at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School. It was called Behold and was a series of meditations about encountering God in family life. I was struck by the meditations which centered on the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. One of the most profound aspects of the Incarnation is that Jesus chose to become a baby in the context of a family, growing up with a mom and dad, and being obedient to them. Maybe this is the lesson that our generation needs to learn from the Christ child. Nobody's family is perfect, and that's ok. Our families are an immense gift from God, and our parents are the ones who teach us what God is like – as tender and caring as our mother, as strong and protective as our father. Love starts in the family, and having a faithful family is the best way to pass on the faith to the next generation.

This is my third year of priesthood, and in some ways, it seems like a long time ago that I was ordained and assigned to the Cathedral as a new priest. I probably would not have guessed that I would be here for more than two years, but here I am, and happily so! I am so blessed to be here at the Cathedral with our bishop and three brother priests. We have a great parish staff and parish community to walk with on this journey of faith every day. This year, some of you may have noticed that my responsibilities have shifted a bit. I don't celebrate quite as many parish Masses as I used to, as I focus my time on ministry at SHG along with studying some canon law online. I still do my best to be present at as many parish events as I'm able to.

Speaking of families, I have been especially grateful for my family this year. My brother and his wife welcomed their sixth child in November, and I had the privilege of baptizing him on Thanksgiving Day at my home parish! This is now the third niece/nephew that I have baptized. One challenge is that my brother was away for much of this year with the military, so I have had to be more intentional about staying in touch via phone calls. I am blessed to have a sister who lives in town, but I could always be more intentional about staying in touch with family.



As we celebrate Christmas this year, let's give thanks for our families, even if they aren't perfect. Maybe some forgiveness or even some good boundaries could improve relationships. Whatever the case may be, I invite you to consecrate your family to God in your heart. As you pray, imagine yourself with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in the stable in Bethlehem. Allow them to draw you into their communion of love, centered on Jesus. Mary brought Jesus into this world, and Joseph protected them on their flight into Egypt. They intercede for us now from heaven. May Mary and Joseph pray for us to experience healing and wholeness in our families. Parents – don't be afraid to let some activities go to focus more on family time, especially time together at Mass and in prayer. If your children don't experience closeness in the family, where will they experience it? If you don't teach them to pray, then who will? Don't be afraid to be who God wants you to be. He will help you to do it with his grace!

May the Lord Jesus bless you all in this new year of growing in his love.

On Thanksgiving day, Fr. Vahling baptized his newest nephew, Raphael. Fr. Vahling is pictured here in his home parish of St. Francis of Assisi in Teutopolis after the baptism. With him are his family including grandparents, parents, siblings, and brother's family!

Fr. Dominic Vahling serves as a teacher and chaplain at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield.

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Carols at Noon

Join us for Carols at Noon, at the Cathedral, featuring Mark Gifford on the organ.
Monday, December 26, 2022 - 12:00 PM

Second Collection - Catholic Children's Home

For the past 143 years, the Catholic Children's Home (CCH) has served as a beacon of hope for thousands of children in need of safe harbor and a place to call home. The CCH continues this mission by meeting the emotional, social, academic and basic material needs of all the children sent for residential care or special education services. In the spirit of Christ's incredible love for all children, we ask that you continue to support the work of the Catholic Children's Home and generously contribute to the special Christmas collection. "Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:14) May God fill your hearts with love, grace and a spirit of giving during these blessed days of Advent and Christmas.

Free Episode of "The Chair" Highlights the Rich Story of our Diocese from Yesterday to Today

The story of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is featured in an episode of The Chair, a television series celebrating the best of Catholicism in the United States. From the physical beauty of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield to the history of our diocese from our founding to the present, you'll learn things about our region you never knew before and see Bishop Thomas John Paprocki in his role of bishop. This intimate portrait of our diocese is an opportunity to see our history and the journey of Bishop Paprocki from his youth to our shepherd of today. To watch the FREE episode and others, go to thechair.com/watchnow. Note, you'll have to create a FREE account to watch.

Parish Directory Update

The parish directories were damaged during shipping, so we are currently waiting for new ones to be printed and shipped. We apologize for any inconvenience, but will be sure to notify you when the replacements arrive.

SEEK Conference in St. Louis Jan. 2-6

"SEEK23: You Are Called" invites souls seeking holiness to St. Louis Jan. 2 - 6. FOCUS (The Fellowship of Catholic University Students) is inviting all people in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois to leave old things behind and answer a new call to greatness, holiness, joy, and mission by experiencing "SEEK23: You Are Called." This five-day event takes place at the America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis. Through fellowship, prayer, world-class speakers, and entertainment, participants will be inspired to "Fear not; rise, He is calling you" (Mk 10:49). Registration is open at seek.focus.org. Catholics in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois also receive a discount as a neighboring diocese of the Archdiocese of St. Louis (you will receive it when you type in your zip code).

Ordering Your Priorities - Women's Bible Study

Ordering Your Priorities: Building a Life Well Lived is an immensely practical Bible study that will help you put the most important things first. We'll begin by paying attention to the One who made us, because He can best tell us what we need for our lives to run well. Contact Vicki to register and order your workbook, vcompton@cathedral.dio.org or 217/522-3342
Thursday evenings @ 6:00pm, January 19-March 9. Cathedral School Library. Cost for the study book is \$20.

Calling All Young Artists!

The Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) has an annual Christmas Artwork Contest for students from K-8th grade. Entries should be sent to the Office for the Missions, 1615 W. Washington St, Springfield, IL 62702 no later than January 31, 2023. Local, diocesan winners will be submitted to the National Office of the Missionary Childhood Association. National winners will be on display in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC throughout Advent and Christmas 2023. General information, guidelines and entry form can be found at: MCA Artwork Contest Entry Form (missio.org). Please share this information with school principals, art teachers, and DREs.

Global Emergency Update: 2022 Impact

Catholic Relief Services is pleased to share highlights of our emergency response and recovery activities of 2022. Our work is possible thanks to the generous support of private and public donors, the dedication of our local partners, and the unwavering presence of Caritas and the Catholic Church. Visit <https://www.crs.org/stories/global-emergency-update-december-2022>.

Men's Bible Study

"Iron is sharpened by iron; one person sharpens another." (Proverbs 27) Exploring God's Word together allows men to learn from one another, be challenged, and encourage each other as we live out our faith in everyday life. We meet on Wednesdays at 6:00 a.m. No experience or pre-reading is required. Coffee is available. All men are welcome. Join us in the Cathedral School Library (enter through the atrium doors off 5th street parking lot). Contact: Deacon Rob, (217) 836-7900 or rsgambelluri@dio.org.

Save the Date - February 18-19, 2023

"Live the Mass" is a weekend reflective retreat which leads us to a deeper experience of the Mass and all its power, beauty, and wonder. This adult retreat will be held at the Villa Maria overlooking Lake Springfield. For more information, contact Deacon Rob at (217) 836-7900 or rsgambelluri@dio.org.

