

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

DECEMBER 22, 2024 | FOURTH 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 6 ISSUE 51

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

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

THE REVEREND DANIEL MCGRATH
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND PIUS CHIDOZIE NWIYI
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND DOMINIC RANKIN
IN RESIDENCE

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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!

The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is to build a fervent community of intentional and dedicated missionary disciples of the Risen Lord and steadfast stewards of God's creation who seek to become saints. Accordingly, the community of Catholic faithful in this Diocese is committed to the discipleship and stewardship way of life as commanded by Christ Our Savior and as revealed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition. (Synod Declaration 1a)

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.



Watchful in Prayer

When I was writing my series in the bulletin on the Mass, one of the things I tried to encourage us to do is to reflect not just on the power of the Word of God in the readings at Mass, but also to consider the other prayers of the Mass as fruitful material for our mediation. In that regard, I find the prayers that the Church offers to us during the Advent season to be particularly beautiful and worth our attention. In the final days leading up to Christmas, the Church has us use a special Advent Preface, which takes place after the Offertory, and before entering the Eucharistic Prayer. I would like to share a part of that prayer and offer a few thoughts, which I

hope can be helpful to us in these final days before Christmas. After the normal introduction found in every Preface, we hear the following:

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him,
the Virgin Mother longed for him
with love beyond all telling,
John the Baptist sang of his coming
and proclaimed his presence when he came.
It is by his gift that already we rejoice
at the mystery of his Nativity,
so that he may find us watchful in prayer
and exultant in his praise.

As we read these words, perhaps we can do a sort of final examination of ourselves to see how prepared we are for Christmas, spiritually that is! Can we say that, as we are in these final days, that our hearts are longing for Him “with love beyond all telling” as was the case with Mary? Or, have we exhausted ourselves with Christmas preparations and parties that we are actually just looking forward to getting past Christmas? Are our hearts longing more for the gifts we hope to receive than to receive Him, who is our greatest gift, in the Eucharist?

Consider how St. John the Baptist sang of His coming. Have we planned for which Christmas Mass that are going to attend, and are we resolved to rejoice at the birth of our Savior, singing of His coming through our full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy? It always saddens me a little bit when I see the many dreary faces at Mass, as though coming to Mass is somehow an imposition and a burden, something to just get out of the way. Our hearts should be flooded with joy, and it should be seen in the eagerness with which we participate in Mass.

Finally, can it be said of us that we have taken time this Advent to be “watchful in prayer”? Or, have we let ourselves be consumed with so many other things? If we have not been as watchful as we would like, we might think that we have missed the chance to prepare our hearts to welcome Christ fully at Christmas. But the good news is that it is not too late! Even if we start now, intentionally dedicating 15-30 minutes to silent prayer, free of distractions, we will be doing ourselves a great service. We can ask Mary to help us to long for Her Son with that love beyond all telling. We can ask St. John the Baptist to intercede for us, that we might have the joy he had at the coming of the Messiah.

Time is running out, the Lord is coming soon! May these final hours be a time during which we set aside some time for silence so that, when Christmas finally comes, the Lord will find us “watchful in prayer” and ready to celebrate with joy the memorial of His birth.

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 23

7am - James Conkrite
(Litina Carnes)
5:15pm - Mass of Thanksgiving
(D.A. Drago)

Tuesday, December 24

7am - Mary Conway
(Tom Conway)
4pm - Eulalia & Raymond Ohl
(Angela Ohl-Marsters)
7pm - Deceased Members of the Rocco
Piccinino Family (John Busciacco)

Wednesday, December 25

12am - Don Smargiassi
(Dcn Larry & Bev Smith)
9am - Betty L. Rogers
(Family)
5:15pm - NO MASS

Thursday, December 26

7am - Helen & Charles Baker
(Kathy Howard)
5:15pm - NO MASS

Friday, December 27

7am - Don Smargiassi
(Fr. Tolton Council 16126)
5:15pm - Anita Bates
(Nancy Schrenck)

Saturday, December 28

8am - Esther Antonacci
(Mike & Pam Burge)
4pm - Archie Harmon Sr.
(Archie Harmon)

Sunday, December 29

7am - For the People
10am - The Holy Family
(John Busciacco)
5pm - Woody Woodhull
(The Coffee Guys)



All the Saints of December 22nd

Most days of the year have several, if not dozens, of saints who are all remembered on that day. The Church has a long history, and a long memory, and has treasured the saints since the beginning, so there are good odds that we have amazing stories of heroism and holiness to portray the Gospel for us each and every day.

December 22nd is no different, though we do not have many saints, and we do not have many details about them. Here's what the martyrology recounts:

—At Rome, between the two bay trees on the Lavican road, the birthday of thirty holy martyrs, who were all on one day crowned with martyrdom, in the persecution of Diocletian.

—In the same city, St. Flavian, ex-prefect, who, under Julian the Apostate, was condemned to be branded for Christ, and banished to Aquae Taurinae, where he gave up his soul to God in prayer.

—At Ostia, the holy martyrs Demetrius, Honoratus and Florus.

—At Alexandria, the holy martyr Ischyron. Because he despised all the cruelties they made him suffer to force him to sacrifice to idols, they transpierced his bowels with a sharp-pointed stake, and thus put him to death.

—In Egypt, the Saint Chaeremon, bishop of Nilopolis, and many other martyrs. Some of them fled whilst the persecution of Decius was raging, and wandering in different directions through deserts, were killed by wild beasts; others perished by famine, cold and sickness; others again were murdered by barbarians and robbers, and thus all were crowned with a glorious martyrdom.

—At Nicomedia, St. Zeno, soldier, who derided Diocletian for sacrificing to Ceres, wherefore he had his jawbones fractured, his teeth plucked out and his head struck off.

These are the sufferings borne by our predecessors in the faith. We know little more than where, and how, they were killed for the sake of Christ. But perhaps this puts our own lives in context. Two thousand years from now, God willing, people will be praying for our intercession on the day of our death. Our graves may have long since been forgotten, the ups and downs and victories and defeats of our lives will have vanished into history, but maybe billions of Christians will look up which of their predecessors in the faith died on that day, and your name or mine will be before them. Maybe they'll just know the place, and century, and that you or I lived and died for Christ. Does anything else matter?

Secondly, I'd like to briefly connect this to these final days of Advent. On the last week before Christmas, the Church centers her Evening Prayer upon a set of antiphons drawn from all throughout the Old Testament, how Christ fulfills all the hopes and hungers of the world. On December 22nd that antiphon goes like this: "O King of the Gentiles, and the Desired of all nations; the Cornerstone who makest both one: Come and save man, whom Thou formedst from the dust of the earth." If our world is divided, it is only because of sin, and only needs Christ to heal and make-whole. And the saints are a witness to us not only of persevering with Christ in the face of absolute violence and division, but also of the unity that He does bring. Look back at their names, and the cities where they died, these are individuals from all over the world, and from every possible level of society. Such is Christ's Body in all ages, and such is the promise He offers us, and our world, as well.

Fr. Dominic Rankin got off easy this week! The Church had already compiled the list, and essential details, for him. BUT, this gives more time for the Christmas article, so – trusting on the Holy Spirit there as well – get ready for something splendid.

Stewardship of Treasure

December 7th & 8th

Collection numbers were unavailable at the time of publication. Please check back next weekend for these collection numbers.

October Online Contributions

\$51,103.80

October Debt Reduction

\$1,526.00

October Second Collections

World Mission Sunday
\$2,929.00

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!

WEEK OF DECEMBER 23

<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Christmas Masses 4:00 PM 7:00 PM Church	Christmas Masses 12:00 AM 9:00 AM Church NO 5:15 PM MASS	Carols at Noon 12:00 PM Church NO 5:15 PM MASS	Rosary 4:45 PM Church		

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?

CHRISTMAS MASSES

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 PM
7:00 PM

CHRISTMAS DAY

Midnight (12:00 AM)
9:00 AM

Christmas Masses

Join us for any of our Christmas Masses at the Cathedral.

Christmas Eve (12/24) - 4:00 PM & 7:00 PM
Christmas Day (12/25) - 12:00 AM & 9:00 AM

Carols at Noon

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26

CATHEDRAL OF THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
524 EAST LAWRENCE AVENUE
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

Carols at Noon

Join us at the Cathedral as Mark Gifford plays an hour of Christmas Carols on the Cathedral Pipe Organ!
Thursday, December 26th - 12:00PM

Sharing Our Gratitude

What are you thankful for at the Cathedral?

The beautiful community of faith-filled women I have found here and the many people who prayed me back to good health.



Journey through Advent with the Hallow app!

Download the Hallow app from the Apple App Store or the Android Google Play Store, tap the Community Tab, and tap Friends. Then, choose Join a Church, Find a Church, and then search for our parish by name and city.

Holy Family Food Pantry Donations Needed

Each year, the Springfield Catholic Charities Holy Family Food Pantry serves hundreds of families in need through their Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets. In preparation for the holidays, we are in need of donated food items and volunteers to create these much appreciated Thanksgiving and Christmas blessings. Wish list items for our food pantry include: cereal, boxed macaroni and cheese, baked beans, muffin mix, dessert mix, pasta, pudding mix, pancake mix, sugar, peanut butter, soup, breakfast bars, canned yams, potatoes, canned fruit, egg noodles, Jell-O mix, hot cocoa mix, syrup, brown sugar, jelly, crackers. Other useful/practical items include personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies, or paper supplies. More information is available at 217.523.4551. Donations can be dropped off in the Atrium or at 120 S 11th St. in Springfield Illinois. Thank you for making a difference in our community!

CCCW and K of C Scholarship Reminder

This is a reminder to all SHG students and parents wishing to applying for one of the scholarships from the CCCW and Knights of Columbus Council #16126. All students who wish to apply must have a total of 20 hours in service to the parish. Students can only accumulate these hours by completing the following services to benefit either the parish liturgically or the groups that sponsor the scholarship:

- Altar Serving at any Mass at the Cathedral
- Ushering, Greeting, Livestreaming and Mass at the Cathedral
- Helping Sister M. Clementia F.S.G.M. with the Sacraments
- Helping with any CCCW or Knights of Columbus Council #16126 event

Students may log hours accumulated from May to the time the applications are due. Application will be going out in January. Any questions please contact the Scholarship Chair Maureen Horstman at maureenhorstman@hotmail.com or CCCW President Angelic Thompson at email roxyada77@hotmail.com

Keeping in Balance for Women

Come along on a journey throughout Scripture as we discover the relevance of Old and New Testament wisdom to our daily challenges. In this study, we'll explore biblical ideas for managing life's pace and pressure while living with calm and steadiness. Your lifestyle of health and holiness awaits. To register and order your workbook call 217/522-3342 or email vcompton@cathedral.dio.org. Thursdays @ 1:00 at the Cathedral, starting Jan 2, 22 weeks, \$45

Pray with Hallow!

We're excited to announce that Hallow, the #1 Catholic prayer platform in the world, is partnering with the Cathedral to journey through the Advent season through shared prayer within our local community. Our parish has received a unique promo code, granting all parishioners access to the full version of Hallow for 120 days for just \$1. This can be redeemed at hallow.com/parish. This includes the Advent Pray25 Challenge, themed "For God so loved the world." Over the course of four weeks, we will dive deeper into the heart of Christ, unified as a community as we prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus this Christmas. This is a great offer for a great app! The discount code is CATHEDRALICILADVENT24

Lectio: Eucharist: Discovering the Mass in the Bible, for Women

Acclaimed author and teacher Dr. Brant Pitre digs down to the biblical roots of the Eucharist, through its foreshadowing in the miraculous events of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and Apostolic teaching. "The Lamb of God," "The Bread of Life," "The Body and the Blood of Christ"... these are phrases we know from the Mass. But do we understand what they mean in the greater and deeper context of Scripture and Church teaching? We'll discover firsthand how Christ's Body and Blood are an integral and wondrous part of God's plan for our salvation. To register and order your workbook call 217/522-3342 or email vcompton@cathedral.dio.org. Thursdays @ 6:15pm at the Cathedral, starting on Jan 30, 10 weeks, \$20

Send Christmas Joy to Those Who Need It Most

Catholic Charities has been working very hard all year to serve those in need in our local communities. It is time for the annual Christmas Appeal fundraiser that helps fund the many life-enhancing programs throughout the 28-county Diocese. Please consider making a donation so you can help make a difference. Go to cc.dio.org to donate now. Select Christmas Appeal under the program options. You can designate the area office of your choice. Thank you!

Helping Hands Volunteer Meeting

You are invited to be part of a team that provides a meal on the 4th & 5th Saturdays of each month to individuals at the Helping Hands Homeless Shelter. 2025 marks the 20th year that members and friends of Cathedral have provided meals for the homeless! Those who do not cook can help in other ways. If you are interested in participating in this ministry to "feed the hungry", please join us for a 9:00 am breakfast meeting on Saturday, January 4 2025 in the Cathedral School Hall. Teams are formed and menus are developed for the entire year at this planning breakfast. RSVP required by January 1st by calling or texting 217-494-4241

The Hidden Truth

If you have ever been visibly pregnant, chances are that someone, somewhere, whom you do not know, has reached out to touch your stomach.

I've had this happen to me, and sure, it's a little strange. Generally, I prefer people to ask before they touch me. But it's also very sweet, this great mystical excitement inspired by a pregnant belly. We know that belly is special. We know enclosed within it is hope and potential — the very future of our world. Hidden, but real. How can we help but venerate it?

It's why the pregnant Madonna is my favorite devotional image. I even prefer it over the depictions of the Madonna and Child because I find in the sight of Mary's swollen belly more to meditate upon than I find in the unveiled face of the Christ Child. Salvation and redemption, enclosed in flesh, moving, and growing and breathing, but I cannot see it. It's real and it's true and it's there.

And it is hidden.

There is much about God that we know with certainty. But there is so much that remains beyond our sight, beyond our comprehension. Questions of evil and sorrow. Pain and tragedy. Life and death. Why don't we have all the answers? We grow very impatient about this. We're like teenagers who want to be trusted with all the family secrets. We hate feeling left out of the loop.

But truth, like life, does not come to us showing its face. Perhaps this is because we could not bear its terrible beauty. Perhaps it's because we would not recognize it if it was laid bare for us to see.

But it's there, right in front of us. We can reach out and touch it. We may not see it. We may not understand it. But we can know it.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman
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Around the Diocese

- **State lawmakers are expected to vote on physician assisted suicide legislation in early January.** Illinois residents deserve excellent pain management, not assisted suicide. Illinois has excellent, modern, palliative care programs to alleviate suffering - no one's pain should be unmanageable in our state. Hospice care is paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance. We deserve the best in pain management and quality care, not suicide drugs. Tell your state legislators to VoteNO on SB 3499 - assisted suicide. Visit www.ilcatholic.org for additional information and resources.
- **25 Not Impossible Christmas Trivia Questions** - Dive Deep presents 25 not impossible Catholic Trivia questions about Christmas! Go to youtube.com/diospringfield or search "Dive Deep" on all the major podcast platforms to listen and subscribe. Dive Deep is the podcast of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.
- **Fr. Tolton Religious Award** - Our local Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting has created a new patch award for Venerable Fr. Augustine Tolton! The award requirements are patterned after similar programs from the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and Scouts of any national program may earn the award. Details are online at dio.org/scouts/.