

*Cathedral* OF THE  
*Immaculate Conception*

**MARCH 16, 2025 | SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**



524 EAST LAWRENCE AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703  
CATHEDRAL PARISH OFFICE: 217-522-3342  
[WWW.SPICATHEDRAL.ORG](http://WWW.SPICATHEDRAL.ORG)

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

# Cathedral Weekly

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 11

---

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

DEACON DAVID BEACH

DEACON IRVIN LAWRENCE SMITH

VICKI DHABALT COMPTON  
COORDINATOR OF FAITH FORMATION AND MISSION  
VCOMPTON@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

HALEY DUTTON  
COORDINATOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
HDUTTON@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

MARK GIFFORD  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC  
MGIFFORD@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

KIM GUNTER  
BUSINESS MANAGER  
KGUNTER@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

JULIA MAYFIELD  
PARISH SECRETARY  
JMAYFIELD@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

---

## 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.



## What is Eternal Life?

Beginning in paragraph 10 of Spe Salvi, Pope Benedict begins to explore the question: “Eternal life – what is it?” In this section, the Holy Father raises a rather provocative question: “do we really want this—to live eternally?” (SS 10) He notes how for many people, their understanding of eternal life is just a continuation of this present life. Because this life is all that we know, this becomes the focus of our desire. Only with faith can we look beyond what this present life has to offer.

As he is reflecting on this, he offers the following words that have stuck with me since the first time I read them almost 18 years ago, and I think it is worth quoting them in full:

*To continue living forever—endlessly—appears more like a curse than a gift. Death, admittedly, one would wish to postpone for as long as possible. But to live always, without end—this, all things considered, can only be monotonous and ultimately unbearable. This is precisely the point made, for example, by Saint Ambrose, one of the Church Fathers, in the funeral discourse for his deceased brother Satyrus: “Death was not part of nature; it became part of nature. God did not decree death from the beginning; he prescribed it as a remedy. Human life, because of sin ... began to experience the burden of wretchedness in unremitting labour and unbearable sorrow. There had to be a limit to its evils; death had to restore what life had forfeited. Without the assistance of grace, immortality is more of a burden than a blessing”[6]. A little earlier, Ambrose had said: “Death is, then, no cause for mourning, for it is the cause of mankind’s salvation”(ibid.)*

While indeed we want to delay death as long as possible to get the most out of this life, there is truth in acknowledging that just to go on living this life without end is not as desirable as it might sound.

For those without faith in the prospect of the gift that eternal life brings, the thought of death can be frightening, and it can prompt us to make efforts to prolong life as much as possible. There is the thought among some people that if we just figure out the right science, we can extend life indefinitely, without our bodies breaking down, conquering the problem of death. But such hope is unrealistic. To this, some might object: “Not yet!” But as Christians, we know that only in the Lord is death conquered, and in Him alone do we have a hope that has substance, for it has been revealed to us, and we are already sharing in a foretaste of it through the gift of grace. We know that while in this body we are not fully at home with the Lord. Only when we are with Him in Heaven will that hope reach its fulfillment. St. Paul expresses this well:

*So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. (2 Cor 5:6-8)*

Because this life is all that we know, and since what eternal life is remains somewhat a mystery, we can take comfort in knowing that whatever eternal life is like – what we will see, what we will know, how we will feel – all of those questions we ask – we can be assured of this: we will not be disappointed. (cf. Rom 5:5)

### Mass Intentions

#### Monday, March 17

7am - Mary Jane Kerns (Estate)  
12:05pm - Mary Dwyer (Barbara Bischenauer)  
5:15pm - Dan Sexson (Sharon Sexson)

#### Tuesday, March 18

7am - Esther Antonacci (Mike & Pam Burge)  
12:05pm - NO MASS  
5:15pm - NO MASS

#### Wednesday, March 19

7am - NO MASS  
12:05pm - NO MASS  
5:15pm - Brother Francis Skube (Friend)

#### Thursday, March 20

7am - Betty Rogers (Family)  
12:05pm - Margaret Lemanski (Ansell Family)  
5:15pm - Anna Geraldine Gasaway (Rob Gassaway)

#### Friday, March 21

7am - Betty Fleck (Gregory & Marie Fleck)  
12:05pm - Tom McGee (McGee Family)  
5:15pm - John & Edith Bakalar (John Busciacco)

#### Saturday, March 22

8am - Deceased Members of the Lenn Family (Joann Lenn)  
4pm - Deceased Members of the Freeman Family (Paul Freeman)

#### Sunday, March 23

7am - For the People  
10am - Woody Woodhull (Fr. Tolton Council 16126)  
5pm - Eulalia & Raymond Ohl (Angela Ohl-Marsters)

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



## Pope Francis on the Communion of Saints (Part 2)

Just continuing from Pope Francis's reflection on the Communion of Saints that we began last week, and he gave in April of 2021:

Saints are still here, not far away from us; and their representations in churches evoke that “cloud of witnesses” that always surrounds us (cf. Heb 12:1). At the beginning, we heard the Reading of the passage from the Letter to the Hebrews. They are witnesses that we do not adore — certainly, we do not adore these saints — but whom we venerate and who, in thousands of different ways, bring us to Jesus Christ, the only Lord and Mediator between God and humanity. A “saint” who does not bring you to Jesus Christ is not a saint, not even a Christian. A saint makes you remember Jesus Christ because he or she journeyed along the path of life as a Christian. Saints remind us that holiness can blossom even in our lives, however weak and marked by sin. In the Gospels we read that the first saint to be “canonized” was a thief, and he was “canonized”, not by a Pope, but by Jesus himself. Holiness is a journey of life, of a long, short or instantaneous encounter with Jesus, but always a witness. A saint is a witness, a man or woman who encountered Jesus and followed Jesus. It is never too late to convert to the Lord who is good and great in love (cf. Ps 103:8)

The Catechism explains that the saints “contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. [...] Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world” (CCC, 2683). There is a mysterious solidarity in Christ between those who have already passed to the other life and we pilgrims in this one: our deceased loved ones continue to take care of us from Heaven. They pray for us, and we pray for them and we pray with them.

We already experience this connection in prayer here in this earthly life, this connection of prayer between ourselves and the saints, that is, between us and those who have already reached the fullness of life, this bond of prayer: we pray for each other, we ask for and offer prayers... The first way to pray for someone is to speak to God about him or her. If we do this frequently, every day, our hearts are not closed but open to our brothers and sisters. To pray for others is the first way to love them and it moves us toward concretely drawing near. Even in moments of conflict, a way of dissolving the disagreement, of softening it, is to pray for the person with whom I am in conflict. And something changes with prayer. The first thing that changes is my heart, my attitude. The Lord changes it to make an encounter possible, a new encounter, to prevent the conflict from becoming a never-ending war.

The first way to face a time of anguish is to ask our brothers and sisters, the saints above all, to pray for us. The name given to us at Baptism is not a label or a decoration! It is usually the name of the Virgin, or a Saint, who expects nothing other than to “give us a hand” in life, to give us a hand to obtain the grace we need from God. If the trials in our life have not reached breaking point, if we are still capable of persevering, if despite everything we proceed trustingly, perhaps, more than to our own merits, we owe all this to the intercession of many saints, some who are in Heaven, others who are pilgrims like us on earth, who have protected and accompanied us, because we all know there are holy people here on this earth, saintly men and women who live in holiness. They do not know it; nor do we know it. But there are saints, everyday saints, hidden saints, or as I like to say, the “saints next door”, those who share their lives with us, who work with us and live a life of holiness.

Therefore, blessed be Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the world, together with this immense flowering of saintly men and women who populate the earth and who have made their life a hymn to God. For — as Saint Basil said — “The Spirit is truly the dwelling of the saints since they offer themselves as a dwelling place for God and are called his temple” (Liber de Spiritu Sancto 26, 62: PG 32, 184A; cf. CCC, 2684)

*Fr. Dominic Rankin*

### Stewardship of Treasure

#### March 8th & 9th

Envelopes:	\$9,810.00
Loose:	\$3,534.90
Maintenance:	\$37.00
Total:	\$13,381.90

#### December Online Contributions

\$54,689.98

#### December Debt Reduction

\$690.20

#### December Second Collections

Immaculate Conception  
\$3,802.00

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 MARCH 17

<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	Adoration 4:00 PM Church  OCIA 6:00 PM School Library	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library  Rosary 4:45 PM Church  Lenten Soup Supper 6:00 PM Atrium  Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Room	Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM & 6:00 PM School Library  Adoration 4:00 PM Church  Vatican II Faith Formation 7:00 PM Atrium	Rosary 4:45 PM Church  Stations of the Cross 5:45 PM Church		

## What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



**VATICAN II FAITH  
FORMATION SERIES &  
JUBILEE INDULGENCE**

JANUARY 30, FEBRUARY 20, MARCH 20,  
APRIL 10, MAY 15, AND JUNE 19  
7:00 PM  
CATHEDRAL ATRIUM

### Vatican II Faith Formation Series & Jubilee Indulgence

In the Decree on the Granting of the Indulgence During the Ordinary Year Jubilee Year 2025, one of the ways for the faithful to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence is to "participate in popular missions, spiritual exercises, or formation activities on the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, held in a church or other suitable place, according to the mind of the Holy Father." With that in mind, the Cathedral will be hosting monthly faith formation sessions during which we will delve into the four major Constitutions from the Second Vatican Council. Please join us as we reflect on these important documents, that they might serve to renew our hope during this Jubilee Year, all while being able to also gain an indulgence!

**March 20, 7:00 pm in the Cathedral Atrium**



**ADORATION**  
FOR ILLINOIS MARCH FOR LIFE  
TUESDAY, MARCH 25  
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

EXTENDED CONFESSION HOURS  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM & 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

### Illinois March for Life Adoration and Extended Confessions

The Cathedral will be hosting extended confession and Adoration hours on Tuesday, March 25th. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Adoration from 12pm-5pm for the faithful to spend time before our Eucharistic Lord. Confessions will also be heard from 12pm-1pm and from 3pm-5pm. Please join us as we pray for all to honor the dignity of every human being.



*Cathedral First Friday Concert*

**APRIL 5, 2025  
7 PM - 8 PM**

*Featuring  
Annie Gregurich, Piano  
Kamen Petkov, Violin*

### April First Friday Concert Series

Join us on Friday, April 4, 2025 at 7pm in the Cathedral for a First Friday Concert! April's concert will feature Annie Gregurich, Piano, and Kamen Petkov, Violin. The First Friday Concert Series is sponsored by the Staab Family, directed by Mark Gifford, and is free and open to the public. All are welcome!

# SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



## CCCW/Knights of Columbus 2025-2026 Scholarships

The Cathedral Council of Catholic Women (CCCW) and the Fr. Augustine Tolton Council 16126, Knights of Columbus, are pleased to announce that the application period for the 2025-2026 academic year scholarships is open, effective February 10, 2025. Scholarships will be awarded and used to offset recipient costs of tuition at a Catholic High School and will be awarded to students who are members of registered active Cathedral parish families. The scholarships are competitive, so not every applicant may receive a scholarship. The application includes three parts: a one-page (250-300 words) essay on the topic listed (topic depends on grade level); documentation of a minimum of 20 service hours (of which a minimum of 15 hours must be in service to the Cathedral parish or parish organizations); and a Teacher Evaluation that will be submitted separately from the rest of the application. Applications will be available as follows: (1) Hard copies will be available at the parish office during parish business hours; (2) A PDF of the application form will be available at the Scholarship Application link on the parish website ([spicathedral.org](http://spicathedral.org)); or (3) The application may be completed completely online at the Scholarship Application link on the parish website. Both essays and documentation of service hours may be uploaded at the link. The final deadline for submission of all applications is 11:59 PM on Monday, March 31, 2025, either online or by hard copy. Hard copies should be placed in a sealed envelope and addressed to CCCW/Knights of Columbus Scholarship Committee and returned to the parish office in the rectory. Thank you for your interest, and good luck!

## SDCCW Scholarship Opportunity

The SDCCW (Springfield in IL Diocesan Council of Catholic Women) is pleased to give \$2,000 for education beyond high school to four 2025 female high school graduates from the Springfield Diocese in IL who exemplify the SDCCW's mission. The mission of the SDCCW is to support and empower all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. The SDCCW is affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). Applications are available in the Cathedral Atrium, and must be mailed to the SDCCW Scholarship Program by April 1.

## SDCCW Meeting - March 18

All women parishioners are invited to attend the Springfield in IL Deanery, Council of Catholic Women meeting on Tuesday, March 18th, 10am at St Cabrini in Springfield. Guest speakers Erica Smith and Sr. Ann Pitzenberger will discuss the Hospital Sisters Health System's Mission Outreach Program. Lunch will be served! A \$5 donation to cover food cost is suggested. Come and meet women from many different parishes in our deanery! RSVP to Deb Pilapil at [debpil@yahoo.com](mailto:debpil@yahoo.com) or join our Facebook page for more information!

## CCCW Lenten Soup Suppers

Looking for dinner options during Lent? Join the women of CCCW for Lenten Soup Suppers throughout this season of Lent! Seven homemade soups with bread & crackers will be served. All are welcome! Wednesdays, March 19, 26 and April 2, 9, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium

## Save the Date!

Join Two Hearts Pregnancy Resource Center and Springfield Right to Life for our Annual Fundraising Breakfast featuring keynote speakers Jim and Annette McDermott!  
When: March 29, 2025, 8:30 AM  
Where: Erin's Pavilion, Southwind Park, Springfield  
Attend this free event and help raise funds to support life-affirming work in our community. Table Hosts are needed! Reserve your table today—call 217-523-2700, email us at [springfieldrtl@gmail.com](mailto:springfieldrtl@gmail.com) or visit [springfieldrtl.org](http://springfieldrtl.org) for details.

## Free Online Course: Come, and You Will See: Images and Invitations in the Gospel of John

Each of the evangelists has a particular purpose for sharing the good news of Jesus with the Church and the world. In the fourth gospel, John tells his audience that his purpose for writing is "that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). John wants to share with those who read and hear his words what he has come to believe: Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6). But how exactly do John's words and the images they evoke lead people to believe today? In this course, we will examine John's use of imagery throughout the Gospel as a way of inviting you to know Jesus better. Come to know Jesus as "Lord and God" (20:28) so that you might also invite others to "come and see" (1:39) all that Jesus wants to reveal. This course is not intended to be academically strenuous but to provide a shallow-entry point for those who have busy lives and need flexibility. This course is designed for personal enrichment and does not count towards any academic credit at Sacred Heart Major Seminary or for any certification in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Visit <https://equip.shms.edu/courses/come-and-you-will-see> to enroll now.

## All About the Cathedral

Atilla the Hun in our Cathedral? 3 Bishops buried behind the altar! 10 things you didn't know about our Cathedral. Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lpReuiv248>

## Feed the Hungry

A good Lenten practice is to pick up a few extra items when you go to the grocery store and donate them to Holy Family Food Pantry. The pantry is currently in great need of peanut butter, jelly, and crackers. Drop off your donations in the blue bin in the atrium. Thank you for your generosity!

## PAYING IT FORWARD AS A LEAD MOTHER IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, over 25 million people are experiencing extreme food insecurity due to climate change, poverty and conflict. Because of violence in their hometown, Amina and her family were forced to flee and start life over again in a new village. Learn how Amina's participation in a Catholic Relief Services program helped her prepare nutritious meals for her family and support other families in her community to overcome the challenges of hunger and malnutrition. Visit [csr.ricebowl.org/week-2](http://csr.ricebowl.org/week-2) to read this week's Story of Hope.

## Extended Confessions

The Cathedral will be hosting extended confession on hours on Friday, April 11th from 12:30pm-6:30pm, and Saturday April 12th from 9:00am-4:30pm. Please consider joining us so as to prepare well for the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

# AROUND OUR DIOCESE AND BEYOND



## Lent at the Cathedral

This Lent the Cathedral parish will be focusing on the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We will be hosting an Adult Faith Formation session on Confession in conjunction with a CCCW Soup Supper on March 26. The session will be repeated the following day after the 12:05 Mass. We will invite folks to return the following Wednesday, April 2 for conversation about the book; again during the CCCW Soup Supper and after the 12:05 Mass.

I've always loved analogies when trying to understand or explain concepts and reading *The Fountain of Youth* had one that truly resonated with me.

We've all had the experience of standing in line for confession and I know I personally feel joy, just anticipating the mercy that awaits me behind the confessional, but when I read *The Fountain of Youth's* suggestion to compare this waiting in line to me standing in line for my particular judgment, I have to admit...my joy waned.

God is merciful but we have some skin in the game because mercy works best with contrition --- that is where we come in. With this analogy in mind, it makes me really ponder the words within the Act of Contrition such as "...I am HEARTILY sorry.....I FIRMLY resolve...." This Lent, I plan on taking a cue from Our Lady and PONDER the real meanings behind these two words and ask myself: Does my contrition signify a complete and unreserved remorse? Am I determined to have a strong will to do something, even when faced with challenges?

Because my participation in God's grace is imperfect, I tend to slide back into the same sins repeatedly despite, what I feel, is my best effort. Knowing sin is the real prison, I anticipate the freedom and peace that confession offers to my tepid, thirsty soul.

His mercy is beyond our comprehension.....sit with that for a moment, I know I will be.

Litina Carnes

---

## Around the Diocese

- **Lenten Men's Catechesis with Fr. Peter Chineke.** A powerful opportunity for spiritual growth and empowerment. In a rapidly changing secular world, let's deepen our faith together, strengthening bonds, and equipping ourselves with the knowledge to navigate life's challenges with confidence and purpose. No payment, no signup, just show up! Thursdays, March 20, 27, and April 3, 7pm, St. Jude's Parish Center, 633 S Walnut, Rochester, IL
- **Taize Prayer: To the Desert, Follow Me;** Sunday, March 16, 6:30pm, St. Frances Cabrini Church, 1020 N Milton Ave. An ecumenical, common, contemplative prayer for peace and healing, celebrated in candlelight with Scripture, prayer, music, and silence for choir, instruments, and assembly. Please bring a gift of food for the poor.
- **Catholic Women's Prayer Breakfast at St. Paul Catholic Church, Highland, IL** March 22, 8a.m.-noon. Adoration/7 a.m., Rosary/7:30, Mass/8:00 a.m., catered breakfast /guest speaker Bishop Thomas John Paprocki. For more information: email [womensbreakfast2025@gmail.com](mailto:womensbreakfast2025@gmail.com) or text Rose Wascher at 847-274-3916. Pre-registration is required for breakfast. Register at [stpaulhighland.org](http://stpaulhighland.org). Deadline to register is March 15.
- **Come join the SHG Music Department in the Merry Old Land of Oz!** Featuring the talent of SHG students (as well as some local grade school talent rounding out our cast of munchkins!) in revisiting this timeless classic. Join Dorothy on her journey over the rainbow, where she will meet all of your favorites...Glinda the Good, the Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion, and everyone's favorite villain...The Wicked Witch of the West! Featuring all of the nostalgia of the 1939 MGM film and some fun updates for the stage, we can't wait for you to join us for this magical production. Tickets are on sale now. Get them at [weareshg.org/WizardofOzTickets](http://weareshg.org/WizardofOzTickets). Show dates are March 21 - March 23 and March 28 - March 30
- **SDCCW Lenten Retreat "Walking with Jesus through Holy Week"**, at Villa Maria in Springfield, March 25th - 26th with Deacon Jeff Beals of our diocese, as retreat master. Retreat begins with lunch at noon on Tuesday March 25th and concludes at 3:30 pm on Wed. March 26th, We encourage you to begin the retreat with the March for Life Mass at Sangamon Auditorium at UIS at 10:00 am on Tuesday the 25th with required registration for this Mass found at [dio.org](http://dio.org). All are welcome! Registration deadline: March 15th. Contact: Mary Ann Sullivan: [gma.sullivan80@gmail.com](mailto:gma.sullivan80@gmail.com)
- **Majestic Germany Pilgrimage with Fr. R. Dean Probst,** August 18-28-2025. Visiting Frankfurt, Cologne, Hanover, Potsdam, Berlin, Nuremberg, Rothenberg, Munich, Oberammergau, Lindau, Lake Titisee, The Black Forest, Heidelberg and Mainz. Cost \$4599 per person from St. Louis, Mo. Call/text Fr. Dean 217-494-6326 or email [rdprobst@gmail.com](mailto:rdprobst@gmail.com).