

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

MARCH 23, 2025 | THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



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 7 ISSUE 12

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 Do We Really Want?

As Pope Benedict continues his consideration on the topic of eternal life, he brings to our awareness an inner contradiction that so many of us face this side of eternity. He writes:

On the one hand, we do not want to die; above all, those who love us do not want us to die. Yet on the other hand, neither do we want to continue living indefinitely, nor was the earth created with that in view. So what do we really want? (SS 11)

From that question, the Holy Father asks a deeper question – what is eternity? and what is life? Then, citing some of the writings of the great St. Augustine, the pope offers this important point:

looking more closely, we have no idea what we ultimately desire, what we would really like. We do not know this reality at all; even in those moments when we think we can reach out and touch it, it eludes us. "We do not know what we should pray for as we ought," he says, quoting Saint Paul (Rom 8:26). (ibid.)

Perhaps we can find this logic somewhat confusing, and even maybe a little frustrating. How is it that St. Augustine can suggest that we do not know this reality at all? Is God in some way hiding the truth from us? Is that the way a loving Father should treat His children?

I am reminded of an analogy that somebody proposed to me at some point that helps me in grasping this somewhat confusing point made by St. Augustine. We can consider married couples, and how certain couples cause us to scratch our head. How can that relationship work? What do they see in one another? They seem so opposite! For us who stand outside of the relationship, it seems to make no sense. But to the couple, who are inside of the relationship, it makes all the sense in the world. Their love for one another is special and unique, in a way that those on the outside may never appreciate, but which to them is a source of great joy and peace.

Outside of Heaven, we can never fully appreciate what awaits us. We are outside of that relationship, in a sense. Only when we get to Heaven will we fully appreciate its beauty and its goodness, how life there far surpasses any experience of life here. This is at the heart of St. Paul's words: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Cor 2:9)

This analogy is not perfect, but I find it helpful when we struggle with looking forward to the unknown of eternal life, wondering if somehow we might be let down, and if it would be better to just remain with what is familiar and comfortable. As I have said before, when we get to that place, we will not be disappointed.

Thankfully what awaits us in eternal life is not totally hidden from us, for through the gift of our baptism and the life of grace, we already begin to share in the relationship of love with God. After all, Heaven, more than anything else, will be about just that, our resting in the fullness of the Father's love for eternity. Let us pray that the Lord will increase our desire for this gift, and while we struggle with not yet seeing what awaits us, be at peace knowing that when we do see Him face to face, we will no longer question, no longer fear, but rest in His peace.

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, March 24

7am - Donald Borre (Family)
12:05pm - Jim & Sandy Bloom (Bev Hoffman)
5:15pm - Ron & Jean Borre & Family (Richard and Kay King)

Tuesday, March 25

7am - Roy F. Rhodes Sr. (Rhodes Family)
12:05pm - Marian Olivero (Family)
5:15pm - Barbara McGee (McGee family)

Wednesday, March 26

7am - George Hovanec (Bev Hoffman)
12:05pm - Mary Conway (Conway Family)
5:15pm - Jan Cobb (Friend)

Thursday, March 27

7am - Ben Garde (Family)
12:05pm - Charles Linderman (Linderman Family)
5:15pm - Bridget Geraghty (Family)

Friday, March 28

7am - Sean Brauer & Family (Barbara Brauer)
12:05pm - Jack Ely (Ely Family)
5:15pm - Anna Geraldine Gasaway (Rob Gassaway)

Saturday, March 29

8am - Wayne Bradd (Eva Fesi)
4pm - For the People

Sunday, March 30

7am - Dan Sexson (Sharon Sexson)
10am - Don Smargiassi (Fr. Tolton Council 16126)
5pm - Mercedes & Charles Nesbitt (Kathy Frank)



St. Rafqa Pietra Chobok

Feast Day: March 23rd

She was named Boutrossieh at her baptism on July 7th, 1832, that being the feminine form of “Peter” in Arabic (because she had been born on the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul some 8 days before.) The word “butrus” is the Arabic word for rock, not so different from the Greek word, “petros” that we derive the name Peter from, and the endings “-ieh” is like our suffixes “-ite” or “-ian”/“-ine”, an ending that allows a word to be used to name something. It does not work quite as well in English, but we do say “petrine” to connect something to Peter, and you could make up a word like “peterite” or “peterian” and we can kind of make sense of it. In any case, she was blessed as a little girl with parents who loved the Lord in many ways, including to the point of naming their only child after the feast day on which she was born.

Sadly, Boutrossieh lost her mother at the tender age of seven and only a few years later with her father experiencing financial difficulties, our young saint-in-the-making went to Damascus to work as a domestic servant. She was blossoming into a lovely and pleasant young lady and at the age of 15 came back home to find her father remarried, and her new step-mother and aunt proposing different men from their families as her future husband. She turned to God to solve the dilemma – as she would many times in the years to come, perhaps the single most important practice that led to her tremendous holiness – and found a tug in her heart towards a religious vocation. Traveling to the convent of Our Lady of Deliverance, she entered their chapel and placed this hope before the Lord. Immediately the quiet voice of God affirmed her – “You will become a nun” echoed in her heart – and His hand opened door after door and shielded her from the arguments from her family to come out and get married.

Our young postulant, while temporarily assigned to the Jesuit mission at Deir-el-Qamar (on mount Lebanon), saved the life of one of the children in her catechism class by hiding him under her skirts while soldiers massacred thousands in the nearby towns. Most of those early years were less eventful with her working various simple jobs and continuing her formation before receiving the habit and name, Sr. Anissa (Agnes) and taking her temporary vows in 1862. She continued to teach, eventually spending several years in Ma’ad to establish a school for girls.

It was there, in 1871 (she was now 10 years a sister, about 39 years old), that her own congregation, the “Mariamettes”, merged with another order to form the Order of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It was a time of great upheaval for all the sisters, with the difficult choice before them of joining the new congregation, transferring to another order, or returning to the lay state. She, as always, turned to the Lord. The same voice returned from years before “You will remain a nun.” But where, and how? She again went deep into her own heart to discover what desire and longing was already there – part of her loved the idea of joining a more rigorous, more monastic order. And then the Lord began opening doors as always: the same benefactor who had helped finance the school offered to pay whatever would be necessary if she decided to take that road. Continuing to pray, she had a dream that very night of a bearded man, a soldier, and an old man; the first one – she identified him later as St. Anthony of the Desert himself – speaking to her “Join the Lebanese Maronite Order.” Joy flooded her heart as she awoke, a joy undimmed by the challenge, at age 39, of returning to the status of postulant, and now in the arduous (and frigid) Monastery of St. Simon Al-Qarn. It had been founded in the 6th century, and is proximately perched on the horn (“al qarn”) of the mountains at Aito Lebanon.

There she received another name, Sr. Rafqa (Rebecca) and began the arduous work of cultivating silkworms and sewing vestments amidst the life of prayer of a nun. Years rolled by and her sanctity increased. In 1885 she refrained from a time of recreation with her sisters to stay back and pray for them. She spontaneously begged the Lord “Why, O my God, have you distance yourself from me and have abandoned me. You have never visited me with sickness! Have you perhaps abandoned me?” It was the courageous prayer of someone who trusted God completely. Shortly thereafter pain erupted behind her eyes, and paralysis began to spread through her limbs. An American doctor was visiting down the mountain and attempted a surgery on one of her eyes (for which she refused anesthesia) and during which the eye was lost. Sr. Rafqa prayed “in communion with Christ’s passion.” She was eventually limited to knitting socks for her sisters, and joining for prayer, and later to just the knitting, on one occasion with her sisters unable to even carry her to the chapel, she received the miraculous grace to crawl there one final time. Another miracle was given her right before her death when her prayer was answered to see again for one more hour.

Most of the miracles given her by the Lord would come after her death though. She had received the Last Rites and Apostolic Pardon, and on March 23rd 1914 – just months before guns erupted across Europe that August – entered her heavenly reward. Many have been healed from her intercession, and many who are similarly limited in their final years have been inspired by her heroic example of suffering with Christ.

Fr. Dominic Rankin

Stewardship of Treasure

March 15th & 16th

| | |
|--------------|------------|
| Envelopes: | \$3,840.00 |
| Loose: | \$3,124.00 |
| Maintenance: | \$45.00 |
| Total: | \$7,009.00 |

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!

Sacraments

Baptisms

George Louis Kahle
Child of Edward and Kylie Kahle
Baptized on March 16, 2025

Weddings

Kevin O’Lone & Zoe Noles
Married on March 15, 2025

WEEK OF MARCH 24

| <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 for IL March for Life Adoration 12:00 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 CCCW Meeting 6:00 PM School Hall K of C Meeting 6:00 PM School Classroom | Rosary 4:45 PM Church Stations of the Cross 5:45 PM Church | | |

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



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.



**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!

April 10, 7:00 pm in the Cathedral Atrium



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



EXTENDED CONFESSIONS

APRIL 11 - 12:30PM-6:30PM

APRIL 12 - 9:00AM-4:30PM

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.

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 or visit springfieldrtl.org for details.

All About the Cathedral

Atila 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=31pReuiv248>

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!

Eternal Rest-The Art of Dying Well

The art of dying well is also the art of living well. By understanding who we are and what we are made for, we can order our lives and values according to God's design for our true fulfillment. Knowing we will die someday allows us to live as prudent stewards of the time we're given, and it grants us the ability to joyfully anticipate eternal life. Eternal Rest presents the Church's teaching about death and God's response to it with wisdom and truth, gentleness and compassion, so that participants may think about and prepare for death in the light of Jesus Christ, the Author of life. RSVP by calling Vicki at 217/522-3342 or by emailing vcompton@cathedral.dio.org. Cathedral Women's Bible Study, 4 Thursdays, April 24-May 15 @ 6:00pm, \$15.

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 26 and April 2, 9, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium

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.

NUTRITIOUS MEALS HELP CHILDREN GROW HEALTHY IN GUATEMALA

In Santa María Chiquimula, Guatemala, over half the community is affected by malnutrition. Amid rising food prices and job loss, Ana Belén and her husband were struggling to provide for their growing family. But they saw a ray of hope through their participation in a Catholic Relief Services' program that helps them ensure their children are healthy and have the nutrition they need to thrive and play. Visit crsricebowl.org/week-3 to read this week's Story of Hope.

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); 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!

AROUND OUR DIOCESE AND BEYOND



Adult Faith Formation - The Fountain of Youth, Confession: The Only Key to Living Forever, Pt. 1

Few experiences in our Catholic faith bring more anxiety than going to Confession. But, when we have a profound encounter with God's mercy in this sacrament, few things in our Catholic faith bring greater peace! Come and learn about how to prepare well to receive this sacrament and so experience the remarkable gift of freedom that the Lord offers us from going to confession. Please join us for an Adult Faith Formation session on Confession in conjunction with a CCCW Lenten Soup Supper this Wednesday, March 26, at 6pm. For those who are unable to attend on Wednesday, the session will be repeated after the 12:05pm Mass on Thursday, March 27.

As Taylor Swift says, "Hi. It's me. I'm the problem, it's me." That's the main takeaway I got from Fountain of Youth. Essentially, I need to get over myself. If that sounds harsh, maybe it is. But how many times have we stood in our own way of holiness or justified our bad decisions? We know we should get to confession but the times aren't "convenient" (even though our very own Cathedral offers it every day) Or maybe as the book mentions, we think "I'm not a murderer so I don't need confession." Yet, when we sit and think about our actions at the end of the day, did everything we did or didn't do lead us to holiness? Did every interaction with others exhibit virtue – or did we fall into sin? Maybe we don't see the point of confession in our spiritual life.

Fountain of Youth helped me to take a look at my own excuses and justifications as well as consider the fruits that would come from frequenting confession more often. Holiness is not easy, and we live in a culture that, unfortunately, has lost its moral compass. However, our own moral compass may need recalibration. Fountain of Youth was a quick read that helped me examine my own excuses and ultimately got me back in the confessional trying to point to true north.

We're all sinners. Maybe that's harsh again. But it's true. Consequently, we need the Sacrament of Reconciliation to bring us into right relation with our Lord. Hence, I say this with love and charity, get over yourself – get right with God.

Teresa Gray
Cathedral Parishioner
Mom
Co-Chair, Donut Committee

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 sign-up, just show up! Thursdays, March 27, and April 3, 7pm, St. Jude's Parish Center, 633 S Walnut, Rochester, IL
- **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. 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. All are welcome! Registration deadline: March 15th. Contact: Mary Ann Sullivan: 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.