

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

NOVEMBER 30, 2025 | FIRST 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 7 ISSUE 48

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 VERY REVEREND DOMINIC VAHLING
IN RESIDENCE

DEACON DAVID BEACH

DEACON IRVIN LAWRENCE SMITH

TARAH DAVIS
PARISH SECRETARY
TDAVIS@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

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

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.



Preparing for the Coming of Christ

As the Church begins a new liturgical year, the readings continue with the theme that characterized the end of the previous liturgical year, the Second Coming of Christ. We often associate the Season of Advent exclusively with the first coming of Christ in His Incarnation. This theme is taken up more intentionally in the final days of Advent, but it is the Second Coming of Christ that the Church invites us to reflect on with greater attention, for we do not know the day or the hour, thus the need to always be prepared. This has hit close to home over the past few weeks here at the Cathedral as we have had a

larger number of parishioners and family members of parishioners who have passed away, some of them rather unexpectedly. We keep all of them and their families in our prayers in a special way.

As I mentioned in my article two weeks ago, we find ourselves in the final few paragraphs of Pope Benedict's document on Christian Hope, *Spe salvi*. In the sadness of the loss of our loved ones, we look for that light of hope given to us in the promises of Jesus Christ who has conquered death through His death and Resurrection. In these final paragraphs, the Holy Father is reflecting on the Church's doctrine on Purgatory, a topic which many shy away from as being something negative, but when we truly understand the beauty of this teaching, we cannot help but be buoyed up with hope.

In the previous paragraph, the pope noted the two extremes of where people can find themselves at the end of their lives as they stand before the judgment seat of Christ. On the one hand, there are those who are utterly pure, filled with love for God and neighbor, and free from any sin, they enter immediately into Heaven. On the other extreme, there are those who have definitively rejected God, lived for hatred and suppressed all love. They have consciously chosen in life to be apart from God, and after death, they remain in that condition they have freely chosen. But as the Holy Father notes: "Yet we know from experience that neither case is normal in human life." (SS 46) He then offers the following explanation of what he (and really the Church) presumes for the majority of those people of faith who die in friendship with the Lord:

For the great majority of people—we may suppose—there remains in the depths of their being an ultimate interior openness to truth, to love, to God. In the concrete choices of life, however, it is covered over by ever new compromises with evil—much filth covers purity, but the thirst for purity remains and it still constantly re-emerges from all that is base and remains present in the soul. (ibid.)

He goes on to explain how the firm foundation of faith in Christ upon which these lives are built cannot be destroyed by death, giving a firm hope in the promise of sharing in the victory of Heaven. But those places of impurity need to be dealt with, and the pope appeals to the words of St. Paul who speaks of a sort of fire which burns away that which is not of God, so that souls can be fully pure and capable of being admitted into Heaven. This "fire" of purification after death is Purgatory. Though the image evokes fear and seems somehow at odds with a loving God, the Holy Father will explain in the next paragraph a way of understanding this fire in a way which is far more hopeful and consoling.

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 1

7am - Margaret Vaplon Miller
(Eric and Joanna Miller)
5:15pm - Special Intention for Candy Miloshevich (Richard and Kay King)

Tuesday, December 2

7am - Judith Ansell
(James and Billie Langfelder)
5:15pm - Cody Fringer
(Angela Ohl-Marsters)

Wednesday, December 3

7am - James A. Flatley
(Lou Ann Mack and Carl Corrigan)
5:15pm - Bill Vogt
(Kathy Howard)

Thursday, December 4

7am - Andrew F. McGee
(McGee Family)
5:15pm - Puring Garde
(Family)

Friday, December 5

7am - Thomas Conway, Sr.
(Family)
5:15pm - Tom McGee
(McGee Family)

Saturday, December 6

8am - Galli Family
(Elaine Galli-Brown)
4pm - For The People

Sunday, December 7

7am - Fr. George Radosevich
(Knoeppel & Shures Families)
10am - Deceased Members of the CCCW (CCCW)
5pm - Veronica DeRosa
(Bentel Family)



Psalm 63 is one of the most frequently prayed Psalms. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the liturgical prayer of the entire Church, which is prayed daily by all priests and religious, and many lay people, this Psalm is set for morning prayer for every major feast day. It begins with the Psalmist expressing a deep longing for God. God is like water for a desert land. It moves into a section of praise and then ends with deep sentiments of trust in God's providential care.

In the third verse of the Psalm (in the NRSVCE translation) we read these words, "Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you." This is a strong statement, to say the least. This "steadfast love," is also sometimes translated as "mercy" or simply, "love." The translation that Saint Augustine used when commenting on this verse in his Expositions of the Psalms goes like this: "Because your mercy is better than all possible lives, my lips will praise you." These words are slightly different, and even stronger! Essentially, there is nothing better than this mercy.

Saint Augustine's reflection on these lines mirrors a somewhat well-remembered phrase from the liturgy of the Mass. We hear in one of the prefaces for the Eucharistic prayer, "... although you have no need of our praise, yet our thanksgiving is itself your gift...." The very act of our giving thanks to God is a great gift to us from him. He grants us this gift of prayer, and it brings us blessings to thank him.

In a similar way, regarding Psalm 63:3, Saint Augustine wrote these beautiful words:

"My lips would not be praising you if your mercy had not taken the initiative with me. Thanks to your own gift I praise you, through your own mercy I praise you. I could not praise God if he had not given me the power to praise him."
(Translated by Maria Boulding, Exposition of Psalm 63, 12).

Praise of God is a type of prayer that is entirely other-focused. We lift our minds and hearts to God, and in praise, we kind of forget ourselves. Because of our self-forgetfulness, when we praise God, we experience a joy that is unmatched by almost any other type of prayer. This joy is a true gift from God. The praise we give him is a true gift from God. Each of these gifts come, in their own way, from the depths of God's heart.

God wants us to turn to him with our whole being. He knows that in this life we can never truly forget ourselves entirely. We are body/soul creatures affected by sin, so we will always experience distractions and inclinations to selfishness. Praise as a practice of prayer, however, can turn our hearts toward God. Praise of him and his greatness can begin to strip away the earthly desires we struggle against.

God has shown us mercy in our lives. We can thank him for that mercy, but we can also praise his Mercy. Your mercy is beyond all our understanding, O Lord. It is better than all possible lives. Your steadfast love is better than life itself. I praise your mercy, O Lord!

Fr. Daniel McGrath is a Parochial Vicar of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and serves as Chaplain of Sacred Heart-Griffin High School.

Stewardship of Treasure

November 15th & 16th

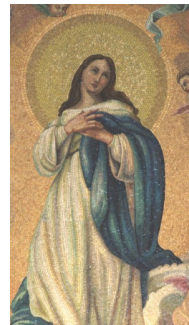
Envelopes:	\$3,256.84
Loose:	\$4,039.00
Maintenance:	\$215.00
Total:	\$7,510.84

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 1

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library	Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM & 1:00 PM School Library	Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church	Family of Faith & Faith & Science Series 6:00 PM Atrium
Spanish Bible Study 6:00 PM Parish Library	OCIA 6:00 PM School Library	Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church		
Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church	Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church	Cathedral Bible Study 6:00 PM School Library	Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church			Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church
		Immaculate Conception Novena 7:00 PM Church				

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



NOVENA IN HONOR OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

**NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 7
7:00PM
CATHEDRAL CHURCH**

Novena in Honor of the Immaculate Conception

Beginning November 29th through December 7th, the Cathedral will host the annual diocesan novena in honor of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States, our diocese, and the Cathedral Parish. The novena will be celebrated each evening at 7PM. Each night will be a holy hour consisting of exposition, a liturgy of the Word, homily, Rosary, and benediction with the novena prayer and the recitation of the Litany of Loreto after reposicion. Below are the themes with the accompanying readings.

Sunday, November 30 – The Angelus
Very Reverend Dominic Vahling, V.J.

Thursday, December 4 – Salve Regina
Deacon Larry Smith

Monday, December 1 – Memorare
Very Reverend Brian Alford, V.E.

Friday, December 5 – Sub Tuum Praesidium
Reverend Pius Nwiyi

Tuesday, December 2 – Regina Coeli
Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki

Saturday, December 6 – Ave Regina Caelorum
Father Jack Tierney, O.S.A.

Wednesday, December 3 – Magnificat
Reverend Monsignor David Hoeffler, V.G.

Sunday, December 7 – Alma Redemptoris Mater
Deacon David Beach



VATICAN II FAITH FORMATION SERIES & JUBILEE INDULGENCE

**SEPTEMBER 18, OCTOBER 23,
NOVEMBER 20, AND DECEMBER 11
7:00 PM
CATHEDRAL ATRIUM**

Documents of Vatican II, Continued

Mark your calendars for Dec 11, as Fathers Brian Alford and Daniel McGrath cover the remaining documents of the Second Vatican Council. In the Cathedral Atrium @ 7:00pm

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Thank You!

The Cathedral Council of Catholic Women extends a "thank you" to the Cathedral parishioners for their generosity in contributing to our Socktober clothing collection for the homeless. We live our faith by showing compassion and helping to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community - children, elderly, poor and homeless. Programs that Cathedral parishioners participate in embrace the following Corporal Works of Mercy: Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Clothe the Naked, Shelter the Homeless, Visit the Sick, Bury the Dead. As we learn in Matthew 25:40, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

T-Shirt Fundraiser - Sacred Heart in Virden

Celebrate the canonization of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis and support diocesan vocations! 100% of profits from sales will support vocations to the priesthood in our diocese! Art by Fr. Daniel McGrath! 100% Cotton Navy T-shirts (Gildan - Heavy Cotton T-shirt, Unisex) Fundraiser hosted by Sacred Heart Church in Virden, IL. For questions, contact the parish office at secretary@sacredheart.dio.org or 217-965-4545. To order, visit www.sacredheartvirden.com

Lucy's Lenses Reading Glasses Collection

If you depend on reading glasses, you know how important they are for daily life - reading, cooking, sewing, and other basic tasks are impossible with poor vision. The reading glasses you no longer use can change someone's life. In honor of the Feast of St. Lucy on December 13, the Knights of Columbus Council 16126 is hosting a Lucy's Lenses Reading Glasses Collection from December 8-14 for Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach. The glasses will be distributed to people in low-resource countries throughout Africa and Central/South America where people who are farsighted need glasses to read, but don't have access to this basic health resource. Only non-prescription reading glasses ("cheaters") are needed, all strengths. Glasses should be in good condition (no broken or missing parts), clean, and undamaged. Drop them in the Lucy's Lenses Collection box in the atrium. For questions please email info.kofc16126@gmail.com.

CCCW Happenings

With the holidays fast approaching, the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women is jumping into high gear with upcoming events:

- Our **Annual Bake Sale** benefitting the Bishop's Seminarian Fund will be held the weekend of December 13-14 after all Masses or until we run out of goodies. We appreciate donations of breads, cakes, candy, cookies, pies, and anything else to help make the holidays merry. Drop off days for donations are Friday, December 12 from 9am-6pm and Saturday, December 13 from 9am-12pm. We have been blessed over the years by generous donations from Cathedral Parish bakers and appreciate your continued support.
- **Gift Card Raffle** - We will be selling raffle tickets for a chance to win a variety of gift cards totaling \$500.00. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5 and will be available before and after Masses beginning the weekend of November 22. The winner will be drawn at our bake sale after the 10am Mass on December 14.
- **Cleaning of the Church** - In order to make our Church shine to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we have scheduled a cleaning of the pews. Monday, December 15 from 9am until 12pm, a crew of volunteers will be washing and sprucing up the pews. What we don't finish in the morning, we will return after the 5:15pm Mass (around 6pm) to finish. This is an open invitation to parishioners wishing to donate some time and elbow grease to brighten up our Cathedral for Christmas. All cleaning supplies will be provided.

Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest

Do you have young artists in your family? Cathedral's Father Augustine Tolton Knights of Columbus Council invites them to display their skills in the K of C's annual Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest! Children between the ages of 5 and 14 will have until December 20th to design their own poster celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. Winners in each of 3 age groups will receive a \$25 gift card and their entry will advance to the next level in this national contest. All entries will be displayed in the Atrium. Paper and registration forms will be available in the atrium over the next several weeks. During the Contest, if additional poster paper is needed for your children or there are questions, please reach out to the council at info.kofc16126@gmail.com.

OCIA Update

Thanks be to God we are walking with 20 beautiful souls toward baptism or full communion with the Church! Please pray that our candidates and catechumens accept the invitation Christ is extending to them through power of the Holy Spirit. And please pray for the team members who are accompanying them. If you are interested in serving on the team, or in providing a meal for an OCIA meeting, please contact Vicki by emailing vcompton@cathedral.dio.org or by calling the parish office. Thank you for your prayers!

Cathedral Meal Train

Thank you to everyone who has brought in meals for the Bishop and Cathedral Clergy over the past year! If you are interested in volunteering in this ministry, keep an eye out for available dates for the first half of 2026 (January-June). In an effort to allow multiple volunteers to participate in this ministry, we ask all volunteers to limit sign-ups to no more than 4 dates per month. We also ask that meals be delivered to the rectory by 3:00pm on the chosen dates. Entrees should feed 5 to 6 people; sides are welcome, but not necessary, and please, no desserts.

Did You Know?

That for each Sunday mass we need 2 servers, 2 lectors, 1-2 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, 6 ushers, 4 greeters and at 10:00 Mass, 2 livestreamers? That's 15-18 volunteers for each mass! That's at least 60 volunteers every weekend! For daily Mass we need 1 server and 1 lector. That's 22 volunteers each week. To be a volunteer you need to love Jesus and love having the opportunity to attend Mass. You also need to be able to read, or smile, or walk while carrying a basket. How would you like to serve your parish? A brief training session will prepare you for service. Contact the parish office to volunteer. Your parish needs you.

Watershed Moments

In every life there are watershed moments.

I think of our time on this earth as resembling, in the beginning, a fine, firm sheet of metal, suspended with perfect balance in time and space. If a drop of water falls upon the sheet, it remains precisely where it lands.

But life goes on. We see things, we feel things, and in the seeing and the feeling, the flat, smooth metal sheet is nicked. The impacts created by those experiences are like BB pellets riddling armor; before long, the surface is pockmarked. A falling drop of water will drain or pool either in one way or the other, its action determined by the closest indentation.

A watershed has been created, a summit or valley that disrupts the smooth flatness of life.

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks about the end of the world. I'm no Biblical scholar, but I suspect the topic at hand is the Apocalypse (capital A). The big one. The explosion that upends the sheet itself and sends every drop of water crashing down. But I think, in a smaller way, it's also about all the indentations on the plane: those little apocalypses (lowercase a), the things that felt like the end of the world (or the beginning of a new one).

The loss of a job. The breakup of a relationship. The suffering of a loved one.

Of course the world is ending. It has been ending forever. And the Son of Man is coming — but don't forget, he was already here, too. And his Spirit, even now, is renewing the face of the earth.

"But how?" we ask. "And when? And where?"

Without the chinks in the armor — without the watershed moments — there is tremendous smoothness, certainly. But there is also no movement.

So look to the watershed moments, these little (and big) apocalypses. In these moments that change us, for better or worse, God is there, working, waiting.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

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Around the Diocese

- **St. Cabrini Nativity Festival**, Friday, December 5, 9am – 11am, Saturday, December 6, & Sunday, December 7, 2025, 10:30am– 3:30pm, Free admission and refreshments and entertainment on Saturday and Sunday. If you wish to loan your Nativity Set to St. Cabrini for the Nativity Festival, drop off is this week - Sunday, November 16, 10:30am-noon, Wednesday, November 19, 9am-noon, Friday, November 21, 3pm-6:30pm. If you have any questions, please call St. Cabrini at 217-522-8555.
- **Rejoice!** Join the Springfield Choral Society on Saturday, December 6 at 7:30pm at Blessed Sacrament Church, under direction of Jacobsen Woollen, together with members of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, for one of Springfield's most cherished musical traditions and Rejoice! This year's concert weaves together the radiant majesty of Handel's Messiah (Part I) with the luminous joy of J.S. Bach's Christmas Oratorio (Selections), creating an unforgettable celebration of hope, faith, and renewal.
- **St. Joseph Catholic Church, Springfield, 2025 Cookie Walk with Raffle Baskets**, Sunday, December 7, 2025 After 7:30am Mass to 12:00 pm. K of C Parish Breakfast from 8:00 am to 11:00 am, lovely raffle baskets - \$1.00 a raffle ticket or 6 chances for \$5.00. The Cookie Walk will be sold in bulk and other delights packaged such as pizzelles, delicious homemade popcorn balls, etc., of an amazing variety! Proceeds benefit our Centennial Campaign. Questions - contact the parish office direct line 217-303-5805 or email: mebackes@stjoseph.dio.org
- **The 25th annual St. John Vianney Cookie Walk, Raffle and Christmas Gift Gala** will be on December 13, 2025, at the St. John Vianney Activity Center, 902 St. John Drive in Sherman, IL. Hundreds of beautifully decorated homemade cookies, candies and breads will be available for purchase. A raffle with top notch prizes from local merchants will be going on throughout the morning. Direct Sale Vendors will be available to help you finish your holiday shopping with cash and carry purchases. The jolly ole man himself, Santa, will be on hand from 8:30 -10:30 for "Selfies with Santa" with free will offerings being donated to the Holy Family Food Pantry. And for all our shoppers – complimentary refreshments will be served. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. For more information, contact Cindy Trainor (217) 414-4279.
- **"Peace in the Womb" Christmas Caroling**, December 13, 2025 at 4pm at Two Hearts PRC, 529 N Bruns Lane, Springfield. Song sheets will be provided, as well as refreshments and an open house. Sponsored by Pro-Life Action League, Locally by Two Hearts PRC Civic Committee.