

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

DECEMBER 7, 2025 | SECOND 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 49

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

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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.

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please call 217-321-1155.
Please remember that if you or a loved one is in the hospital, a nursing home or homebound, to contact the Parish Office at 217-522-3342



Encountering the Gaze of Christ

As Pope Benedict continues his treatment of this sometimes confusing and difficult topic of Purgatory, he offers a consoling and hopeful explanation of what this purifying fire of Christ might be like. He writes:

Some recent theologians are of the opinion that the fire which both burns and saves is Christ himself, the Judge and Saviour. The encounter with him is the decisive act of judgement. Before his gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves. (SS 47)

Perhaps our first thought of what encountering the gaze of Christ at our judgment might be like is something frightening to us. We might think of a disappointed, disapproving gaze, similar to what we may experience from others in our lives when they are not pleased with something we have done. Let us recall, however, that when admitted to Purgatory, we have died in the state of friendship with the Lord. We are not His enemies. Rather, who we encounter is the God who is love. Therefore, His gaze, thought it may be penetrating and perhaps painful, is a gaze of love and a gaze of mercy. Of this gaze, the pope continues:

His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation "as through fire". But it is a blessed pain, in which the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God. (ibid.)

An image from the Gospel comes to mind as I reflect on the effect of the gaze of Christ. It comes in the context of the Passion after Jesus had been arrested. Jesus had told Peter that before the cock crowed the following morning, he will have denied Him three times. Though Peter insisted that he would remain faithful, when faced with the prospect of suffering persecution for his association with Jesus, he indeed denied the Lord three times. In Luke's Gospel, the moment after this third denial is described in this way: "Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.' He went out and began to weep bitterly." (Lk 22:60b-62)

The look of Jesus on Peter was not a look of condemnation or ridicule, but a look of mercy, a look of love, which penetrated Peter's heart, melting away the falsehood of his own strength, his thinking he would remain faithful to the Lord in the face of trial. The gaze of Jesus helps to burn that pride away so that Peter can begin again from a place of humility and trust in the Lord, giving him the strength to continue following the Lord. It was a painful experience for Peter, but it was transformative, and one that would prepare him to love Christ more.

When we go to confession, we would do well to pause and consider the love with which Jesus looks upon us, purifying our hearts with His gaze and words of mercy, giving us the strength we need to begin again and follow Him with greater humility and trust in His grace.

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 8

7am - Mary Jane Kern
(Estate)
12:05pm - Leza Ulrich
(Pamela Hargan)
5:15pm - William F. Logan
(Lisa Logan & Lori Logan Motyka)

Tuesday, December 9

7am - Betty and Gene Barish
(Family)
5:15pm - Mary Celine Sestak
(Steve and Vicki Stalcup)

Wednesday, December 10

7am - John Montgomery
(John Busciacco)
5:15pm - Mathias Bates
(Rosemarie Bates)

Thursday, December 11

7am - Barbara McGee
(McGee Family)
5:15pm - Karen Bucari
(Alan Bucari)

Friday, December 12

7am - Thomas R. McGee
(McGee Family)
5:15pm - Intention for Bianca
(DA Drago)

Saturday, December 13

8am - Judith Ansell
(James and Billie Langfelder)
4pm - Simon R. Ortiz
(Gracie Ortiz)

Sunday, December 14

7am - Mary Ann Midden
(Bill Midden)
10am - Dan Sexson
(Sharon Sexson)
5pm - For The People



I was recently asked about the Vatican's November 4 publication about Mary, the Mother of God. This document, called *Mater Populi Fidelis*, was published from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. I was asked, "Did this change the Church's teaching about Mary? Can we still ask for her intercession in the same way?"

The short answer to those questions is "No, this did not change Church teaching," and "Yes, you can still ask for her intercession like before." Instead of changing a teaching, the document made a clarification about two proposed titles for the Blessed Mother: Co-redemptrix, and Mediatrix of all graces. The rest of this article will be a fuller (but still brief) explanation of what this document said.

This document comes as a response to a (decades-long) request from theologians that these two titles would be approved as dogma by the Church. This approval would look much like the dogmatic proclamations of the title "Mary, Mother of God" at the Council of Ephesus in 431 or the title "Immaculate Conception" in 1854. The two titles in question, then, had been proposed as additional titles to be given this dogmatic affirmation - they have been used by saints and theologians historically and have found some use among more contemporary theologians.

The primary difficulty with both terms - Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix - is the difficulty in precisely defining what they truly mean. In a very indirect sense, both are true. Mary cooperates in salvation history by giving the "Yes," that brings about the birth of Christ. From Jesus comes redemption and all grace. In this sense, Mary is both a cooperator in God's redemptive work and one through whom God's greatest blessings have come into the world.

In a more direct sense, however, both titles take on a meaning that is not true. Only Jesus Christ is the redeemer of the world. Mary certainly cooperated in God's work, but Jesus redeemed us, not Mary. Because of this ambiguity, this title is forbidden from being used. The document states, "...it is always inappropriate to use the title 'Co-redemptrix' to define Mary's cooperation. This title risks obscuring Christ's unique salvific mediation..." (22).

While the title "Mediatrix" is not forbidden from being used, it is more strictly defined. Again, Christ himself is shown to be the one unique "mediator" between God and man. This term, however, the document calls "inclusive," meaning that Jesus does draw others into the work of mediation in a way he does not draw them into his work of redemption. The document quotes Pope St. John Paul II in his own Marian document *Redemptoris Mater*, when he writes that Mary "puts herself 'in the middle,' that is to say, she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother. She knows that, as such, she can point out to her Son the needs of mankind." Therefore, while she can be said to be a "mediatrix" (Latin for mediator), she cannot be said to be mediatrix of all graces. God can give grace apart from her, and he chooses to give some (and many) graces through her intercession.

Although the document, *Mater Populi Fidelis*, refuses to accept these two terms as dogma, it does offer a beautiful reflection on the motherhood of Mary. This motherhood embraces Mary's cooperation in the redemptive work of Christ and reveals to us how exactly she acts as a mediator of Grace from the Trinity to us. Through her faith, she becomes the mother of the redeemer and our mother. It is in a motherly way that she acts as a mediator - taking away nothing from the priestly mediation of her son. We may go to her with confidence as our mother and trust in her unfailing intercession.

Mary, mother of the Church, pray for us!

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 22nd & 23rd

Envelopes:	\$4,237.00
Loose:	\$5,499.00
Maintenance:	\$125.00
Total:	\$9,861.00

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

Deaths

Richard "Dick" Allender II
Date of Death: November 11, 2025

WEEK OF DECEMBER 8

MONDAY

Rosary
4:45 PM
Church

Spanish Bible
Study
6:00 PM
Parish Library

TUESDAY

Adoration
4:00 PM
Church

OCIA
6:00 PM
School Library

WEDNESDAY

Men's Bible
Study
6:00 AM
School Library

Rosary
4:45 PM
Church

Choir Rehearsal
7:00 PM
Choir Room

THURSDAY

Women's Bible
Study
10:00 AM
& 1:00 PM
School Library

Adoration
4:00 PM
Church

Vatican II Adult
Faith Series
7:00 PM
Atrium

FRIDAY

Rosary
4:45 PM
Church

SATURDAY

CCCW Bake
Sale
After 4:00 PM
Mass

SUNDAY

CCCW Bake
Sale
After 7:00 AM,
10:00 AM, and
5:00 PM Masses

Advent Lessons
and Carols
7:00 PM
Church

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



**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



Advent Lessons & Carols
MARK E. GIFFORD, DIRECTOR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT 7:00 PM
CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
524 E LAWRENCE AVE
SPRINGFIELD, IL

Advent Lessons and Carols

In the holy season of Advent, join Mark Gifford for an evening of Scripture, music, and prayer as we reflect on the two promised comings of Christ.



EXTENDED CONFESSIONS

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19
12:00PM – 6:00PM**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20
7:00AM – 4:00PM**

Extended Confessions

The Cathedral will be hosting extended confession hours this Advent. Please consider joining us for an hour during that time to pray to prepare well for the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas.

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Liturgical Policy Development and its Regulatory Effects within Catholic Communities Study

You are being invited to participate in a research study entitled "Liturgical Policy Development and its Regulatory Effects within Catholic Communities." The purpose of this research is to understand liturgical policy within the Roman Church. The survey asks questions about your practice of the faith, the Form of Mass that you attend, and your perception of how Church authorities make liturgical decisions. Participation is completely voluntary. Please scan the QR code to access the survey. The survey link is also available here: <https://shorturl.at/dV97z>

Voluntary Participation: You may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits if you decide not to participate or withdraw from the study. There is no compensation associated with completing the survey. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Saint Louis University Institutional Review Board for STUDY00000187.

Contact Information: Fr. Jack Tierney OSA, PhD Candidate in Public & Social Policy, St. Louis University.
Jack.Tierney@slu.edu



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

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.

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.

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!

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.

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.

Second Collection - Retirement Fund for Religious

This weekend, we will take up a second collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. This annual appeal assists nearly 25,000 elderly sisters, brothers and religious order priests nationwide. We are called to recognize that many of our senior vowed religious have dedicated their lives to service, usually receiving little pay in return. Consequently, their religious communities face a shortage of retirement savings. Compounding this challenge are rising health-care costs and decreased income. Religious communities find it increasingly difficult to meet the day-to-day needs of aging members, including their medical expenses, nursing assistance and other necessities. Your generous donations to the Retirement Fund for Religious provide vital financial support, enabling religious communities to care for their aging members.

Culturally Catholic

Catholic culture is so thick, you could spread it on a scone. Or a baguette. Or a slice of ciabatta bread. Or naan (Wait, do you put butter on naan? I would, because I'm Midwestern, but I sense that this is, perhaps, incorrect).

Okay, maybe my comparison is imperfect, but what I'm saying is this: Catholic culture is delicious, it's versatile, and it's nourishing. It's the same everywhere, even though it also looks and feels totally unique in every place. The Day of the Dead in Mexico, Simbang Gabi in the Philippines, St. Patrick's Day in Ireland, Meskel in Ethiopia, Semana Santa processions in Spain: these are all touchstones of Catholic culture.

It is so, so beautiful to be culturally Catholic. But today, when I hear John the Baptist's words to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, I am reminded that Catholicism is so much more than just cultural expression.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were loyal sons of Abraham and scrupulous observers of the law of Moses. Their culture, you could say, was strong. But John the Baptist is telling them — and he's telling us — that culture isn't enough.

Actions, rituals, traditions, sentiments, nostalgia — none of it matters unless it bears the fruit of a transformed heart.

It's something to remember especially as we approach Christmas, a time when culture and cultural rituals become so (beautifully) prominent. In the cultural practice of Christmas, we are like the Wise Men approaching the manger, bearing our gifts. But how terrible would it have been if the wise men had hurried away, their culture expressed, their ritual complete, and gone back to the world unchanged by the gaze of the Infant?

So be culturally Catholic. Bring these gifts to the Christ Child — but linger there. Reflect. And then when you return to the world, you will bring Catholic culture with you.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman
©LPi

Around the Diocese

- **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.
- **Advent Taize Prayer**, St. Cabrini Church, 1020 N Milton Ave, Springfield, December 7 at 6pm. Please bring a gift of food for the poor.
- **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.