

# *Cathedral* OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

**JANUARY 18, 2026 | SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**



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 8 ISSUE 3

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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 CHIDOWIE NWIYI  
PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE VERY REVEREND DOMINIC VAHLING  
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

ROSE KEHOE  
PARISH SECRETARY  
RKEHOE@CATHEDRAL.DIO.ORG

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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.



## Formed by the Holy Spirit

As we begin our reflections on the various invocations of the Litany of the Sacred Heart, we do so having spent the past several weeks reflecting on the mystery of the Word becoming flesh in the Incarnation. For that reason, it seems that a good place to start is with the second invocation of the litany:

*Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mother, have mercy on us.*

This invocation expresses what the Angel Gabriel reveals to both Mary and Joseph, that the child in Mary's womb was to be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt. 1:20, Lk 1:35) From Mary's womb, Jesus, the Word made flesh, receives His human nature. But this humanity in Jesus is united consubstantially with His divine nature, such that we can speak of Jesus as true God and true man. Mary's "yes" to God makes this union possible, as she gives her permission to have her womb be the very place where God joins Himself with our humanity.

As Jesus's humanity develops in the womb of Mary, it follows the same pattern of every human life, including the development of organs, including the heart. One of the most exciting moments for a woman who is pregnant is to hear the heartbeat of the child in her womb for the first time. Unfortunately, there was no ultrasound technology at the time of Mary's pregnancy, but we know that Jesus's heart was indeed beating. Unlike an embryo who is not yet conscious, the beating Sacred Heart of Jesus was already an expression of the love He has for each of us, for the divinity of God, who is love, is constantly loving all whom He has created from all eternity. As that heart would grow and develop, inside and outside of the womb of Mary, it remained a human heart, while always united with the divine heart of God.

Trying to understand the mystery of what is called the hypostatic union – that in Jesus, there is one divine Person, who has two complete natures, human and divine – is beyond what we can consider in this brief article. Yet, it is a mystery that is central to our faith, and central to the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the last major document that he wrote before his death, Pope Francis offers the following explanation that makes this point:

*Since the heart continues to be seen in the popular mind as the affective centre of each human being, it remains the best means of signifying the divine love of Christ, united forever and inseparably to his wholly human love. Pius XII observed that the Gospel, in referring to the love of Christ's heart, speaks "not only of divine charity but also human affection". Indeed, "the heart of Jesus Christ, hypostatically united to the divine Person of the Word, beyond doubt throbbed with love and every other tender affection" (Dilexit nos, 61)*

Of all human beings, Mary's Immaculate Heart was most in union with the Sacred Heart of her son, both physically and spiritually. We can ask her to help us to better appreciate the gift of the Sacred Heart, and that by our union with Him through grace, our hearts will beat more consistently with His with love for Him and for our brothers and sisters.

*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, January 19

7am - Thomas Conway Sr  
5:15pm - NO MASS

#### Tuesday, January 20

7am - Betty Rogers  
5:15pm - Carrie Eichen

#### Wednesday, January 21

7am - Don Smargiassi  
5:15pm - Dale Sinn

#### Thursday, January 22

7am - Dorothy Huber  
5:15pm - Barbara K. McGee

#### Friday, January 23

7am - Glen Overturf  
5:15pm - Intention for Doris and Cathy

#### Saturday, January 24

8am - Terry and Tom Murry  
4pm - Patricia Hubbell

#### Sunday, January 25

7am - Judith Ansell  
10am - Raymond and Eulalia Ohl  
5pm - For the People



Every year as the Church comes back into Ordinary Time after the Christmas season, or later on after the Easter Season, it can feel a bit like letting out a long breath after a strenuous exercise. We've just finished celebrating a lot of major feast days right in a row: The Immaculate Conception, Christmas, Holy Family, Mary Mother of God, Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord. These are incredibly meaningful feasts and are deep mines of truth for reflection. They console us with their simplicity and reveal to us the humility of God, who came among us as a child born from the pure womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Still, despite the beauty of these feasts and the joy we experience celebrating them, it can be a real spiritual "exercise," in every sense of the word, to reflect in a profound way, feast after feast on the mystery of God's love. There is thus a certain sigh of relief given by the Church in the liturgical rites as we come back into a simpler season. It is with peace and readiness that we enter back into Ordinary Time.

As we breathe this sigh of relief, I think we're due also for the yearly reminder of the exact meaning of that term, "Ordinary." Does it mean plain, boring, and monotonous? No!

While there is a sense in which this season is filled with a simplicity not found in other seasons, that is not the reason this word is used to describe the seasons.

"Ordinary" refers not to the "feeling" or "vibe" of the season, but rather to the simple fact that the weekends of Ordinary Time are numbered in a way we call "Ordinal." This is a seldom used word. Its antonym is "Cardinal." An ordinal number is listed in reference to a list and the number's place in the list, whereas a cardinal number is simply the number as such. A list of ordinal numbers, for example, looks like: First, Second, Third, etc., and a list of cardinal numbers looks like: One, Two, Three, etc..

As we move through ordinary time, then, our weekends are numbered as "The Second Sunday of Ordinary Time," "The Third Sunday of Ordinary Time," etc. What we reflect on in this time is deeply profound and exciting yet so varied that it doesn't fall into its own seasonal designation. We delve deeply into the mystery of the life of Jesus Christ in his public ministry. We hear stories of his miracles, his teaching, his parables, his disciples, and his encounters with the Jewish people and authorities.

We reflect, in other words, on every action of the life of God made man. There is nothing more exciting than this; there is nothing more extraordinary than this. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us! The evangelists were excited men, and present to us in writing the exciting message of salvation.

True, the Lord does so often come to us precisely in the ordinary moments of everyday life. True, the life of Jesus was overwhelmingly filled with ordinary human moments. Yet, Ordinary Time is not named so because of that. We enter an ordered time in which to reflect on the most extraordinary occurrence known to man. Rejoice and be glad! Breathe deeply - we have met the Lord at his baptism and now we enter his public ministry. We walk with him toward the cross and receive God's steadfast love. Jesus, lead us in your love. Teach us your humility!

*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

### January 10th & 11th

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

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 JANUARY 19

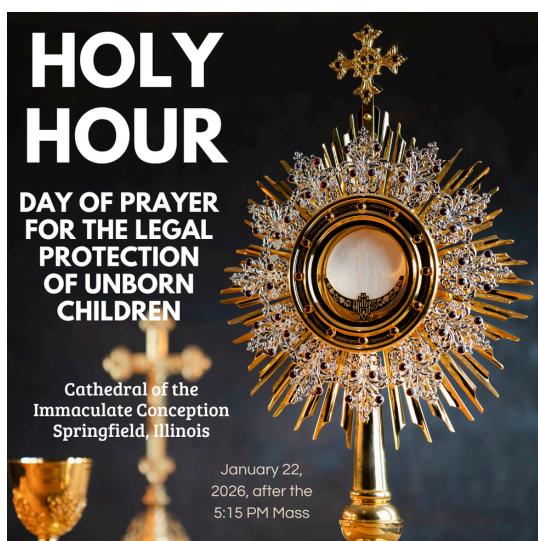
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
NO 5:15 PM MASS	Adoration 4:00 PM Church  OCIA 6:00 PM School Library	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library  Rosary 4:45 PM Church  Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Room	Women's Bible Study 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM, & 6:00 PM School Library  Adoration 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		

## What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



### Cathedral Meal Train

Meal train dates for 2026 are now open! If you are interested in volunteering in this ministry, please visit [www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-meal-train/](http://www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-meal-train/) for available dates. 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. Please contact the Parish Office if you have any questions - 217-522-3342. Thank you!



### Fr. Tolton Council 16126 Knights of Columbus Upcoming Events

All are welcome to join the Council at our upcoming events:

- January 22 - Holy Hour for the National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children after the 5:15 PM Mass
- Also on January 22 - Council Meeting at 7:00 PM, council chambers, 1st floor classroom

Visit our website at <http://www.kofc16126.org/> for all the details. New members are always welcome, join online at <http://kofc.org/join> and use council number 16126. Questions? Contact Grand Knight Larry Travis, [LTRAVISJR@gmail.com](mailto:LTRAVISJR@gmail.com), or Program Director Brian Huber, [bhubie@comcast.net](mailto:bhubie@comcast.net).

# SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



## OCIA Spotlight: Lydia Brant

I am becoming Catholic thanks to my husband. I grew up in non-denominational churches and left due to logical conflicts I found which I thought applied to all Christianity as a whole. After exploring a few different religions, my husband told me about what Catholics believe and I was shocked. I was able to return to God once I studied the teachings of the Church. After a year and a half of looking into the Catholic Church, I decided to join OCIA in 2024. I believe the Catholic Church to be the One True Church. Everything is based on strong foundations, study, and teachings; it all has a meaning. The works of Catholics are genuine and based out of love with charity unlike anything I've seen. One of the most important things I believe the Church offers is the Eucharist and being able to receive Christ this way. I am incredibly grateful to have learned about Catholicism so I can dedicate my life to the Lord and serve others.

## Confirmation with Dr. Brant Pitre

Is Confirmation really necessary if we've been baptized? What is the connection between the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the graces bestowed at Confirmation? Why are there different practices in the Church about the proper age to receive Confirmation? How does Confirmation strengthen us to endure persecution as we witness to Jesus? Discover the answers to these questions and more in this Lectio series on the Sacrament of Confirmation.  
Cathedral Women's Bible Study, Thursdays at 10:00 and 1:00, 8 weeks starting on Feb 5. Study guide available for purchase at \$26.00.

## Second Collection - Catholic Times

Catholic Times has long been a trusted and essential voice for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. Through its clear teaching of the faith, important diocesan news, and stories that inspire hope and faith, the magazine has helped connect our diocesan family and deepen our understanding of how God is at work among us. In 2026, Catholic Times is taking a significant next step in its mission to inform, inspire, and connect the faithful. Beginning this year, the magazine will transition from publishing every other Sunday to a monthly magazine format. This change allows us to offer more in-depth reporting, richer photography, and a more cohesive and engaging reading experience. With expanded space in each issue, Catholic Times will be able to tell more complete stories about the life of our parishes, schools, ministries, and people- stories of faith, service, sacrifice, and hope that make our diocese so vibrant. Readers will also notice improved paper quality, and an engaging magazine that continues to deliver the features, evangelization, and diocesan news they have come to expect and enjoy. At its heart, Catholic Times exists to serve you- the faithful of our diocese- and to share how Christ is alive and active in our communities. Please consider supporting this communication tool so we can ensure Catholic Times remains an inexpensive source of Catholic information, education, and inspiration.

## CTK Lenten Bible Study

Join us for a new five-week study called Life Everlasting: Heaven, Hell, Death, and Judgment. In this study, Catholic scholars Dr. Edward Sri and Dr. Jeffrey Morrow will guide us through the Church's teachings on the last things—not to fill us with fear, but to inspire us with hope. Together, we'll discover how living each day in light of eternity gives meaning to our struggles, clarity to our choices, and strength for our journey of faith. This study is designed to fit into your busy schedule, with minimal homework or reading. We will watch a 30 minute video each week, followed by light discussion. Meetings are on Thursday mornings, 9:30 AM to 10:45 AM beginning on Thursday February 19<sup>th</sup>, through Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at CTK Parish. Cost of materials is \$20. Registration deadline is Sun 2/2. All are welcome! For more information and to register, please email Kristin Luker at [KLuker@LukerDentalCare.com](mailto:KLuker@LukerDentalCare.com) or phone her at 217-341-8753.

## Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Winners

Fr. Augustine Tolton Council #16126 would like to congratulate the winners of the "Keep Christ in Christmas" poster competition! Thank you to all the children that submitted posters to help remind us of the true meaning of Christmas. The winning participants have won a \$25 gift card and their posters will move on to the District level competition for the Knights of Columbus.

Kindergarten: Faustina G.

Grades 1-2: William H.

Grades 5-6: Grace W.

Grades 7-8: Evelyn H.

## CCCW is Getting Wild with Trivia!!

Join the CCCW for an animal themed trivia night on February 7th, 2026 6pm-10pm in the Cathedral Atrium. Soda, Beer and Wine will be sold, but attendees are encouraged to bring their own snacks. Cash prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. \$10 per person, with 8-10 person teams. Register your team by January 30th by emailing Judith Carstens at [jnjcarstens5@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jnjcarstens5@sbcglobal.net)

## Gospel Meditation - 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

It's common to hear belief in Jesus and the Church mocked as blind faith and credulity. But in reality, it is deeply human and rational. Think about it: we rely on the testimony of others constantly. I trust chemists who certify the safety of toothpaste and cleaning products. I trust engineers when I use a microwave or drive over a bridge. Why? Because they have studied and seen what I have not, and their testimony proves itself in daily life. That kind of trust is not irrational; it is how human knowledge works.

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist declares: "Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God" (John 1:34). That is the language of an eyewitness. It invites us into a very human act: trusting someone who has directly encountered something — or Someone — we have not yet fully seen ourselves.

The Church's faith is built on this kind of reliable sight-based testimony. The Apostles did not make abstract claims. They saw, followed, suffered for, and proclaimed Jesus Christ. Over centuries, their witness — carried in Scripture, in the lives of the saints, and in the sacramental life of the Church — has proven dependable. We come to know its truth by assenting to it, by living and studying it, praying with it, trusting it.

Faith in Christ is not a childish leap into the dark. It is a step into the light of testimony that proves itself over time.

Father John Muir

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## Around the Diocese

- **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](mailto:secretary@sacredheart.dio.org) or 217-965-4545. To order, visit [www.sacredheartvirden.com](http://www.sacredheartvirden.com)
- **Feast of St. Sebastian: Men's Faith, Beer, and Bourbon Night** - Men are invited to an evening of fraternity at the Villa Maria Conference Center on Lake Springfield as we celebrate the feast of St. Sebastian. Join Father Herman Joseph O.Praem. as the night begins with Mass at 6 p.m., followed by drinks and a discussion on the joys and challenges faced by men striving to follow Christ within the Catholic Church. Tuesday, January 20: 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Cost: \$10 Registration Deadline: January 16 Contact: [events@dio.org](mailto:events@dio.org). Register at: [dio.org/events](http://dio.org/events)
- **Save the Date: Upcoming DCCW Springfield Deanery Meeting**, February 28, 2026, 9am-12pm, Holy Trinity Catholic Hall, Stonington, IL. Stay tuned for more information and details about the event. We look forward to seeing you there!
- **Solemnity of the Annunciation: Women's Faith, Wine, and Chocolate Night** - Women are invited to an evening of fellowship centered on Christ and Our Lady, beginning with Mass at 6 p.m., followed by wine, chocolate, and discussion on womanhood modeled after the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Wednesday, March 25: 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Cost: \$10 Registration Deadline: March 20 Contact: [events@dio.org](mailto:events@dio.org). Register at: [dio.org/events](http://dio.org/events)