

# *Cathedral* OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

**FEBRUARY 1, 2026 | FOURTH 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 5

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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  
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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.



## Treasure House of Wisdom and Knowledge

In the Sunday readings during Ordinary Time, we find that the first reading from the Old Testament and the Gospel are usually linked by a common theme. The Second Reading, however, is not necessarily so, but rather offers selections of continuous readings of other books of the New Testament, usually from the writings of St. Paul. As we are at the beginning of the Year A readings, we have been hearing from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. In today's reading, St. Paul highlights the paradox of how God chooses the weak to shame the strong:

*God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise,  
and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong,  
and God chose the lowly and despised of the world,  
those who count for nothing,  
to reduce to nothing those who are something,  
so that no human being might boast before God. (1 Cor 1:27-29)*

Such is the case with Jesus when He came into the world in the Incarnation. To those who were expecting a great and powerful leader who would defeat Israel's enemies, they were disappointed as they encounter Jesus who is "meek and humble of heart." (Mt 11:29) Jesus seems to be weak and lowly, but St. Paul writes in his letter just before our reading for today:

*For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,  
but we proclaim Christ crucified,  
a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,  
but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike,  
Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor 1:22-24)*

As mentioned above, the Gospel for today's Mass is not intended to be explicitly connected to the Second Reading, but we can see how well-connected they are, for indeed all of Scripture is related, though not always explicitly. The Gospel for today, the Beatitudes, follows this theme treated by St. Paul. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the Beatitude in this way:

*they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations;  
they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for  
Christ's disciples; (CCC 1717)*

The Beatitudes, very much contrary to the wisdom of the world, are one of the most important and succinct expressions of wisdom that Jesus preaches in the Gospel. Both the paradoxical examples of His life and His teaching make the following invocation of the Litany of the Sacred Heart a fitting choice for this Sunday's readings:

*Heart of Jesus, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, have  
mercy on us.*

*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, February 2**  
7am - Hilda Anrode  
5:15pm - Richard Allender

**Tuesday, February 3**  
7am - John Piccinino  
5:15pm - Mark Beagles

**Wednesday, February 4**  
7am - Thomas Conway, Sr.  
5:15pm - Richard Stalcup

**Thursday, February 5**  
7am - John Montgomery  
5:15pm - Kara Leigh Smith

**Friday, February 6**  
7am - Dr. Elizabeth Strow  
5:15pm - George J Nicoud and Amalia Nicoud

**Saturday, February 7**  
8am - Dick Allender  
4pm - Russell Steil Sr.

**Sunday, February 8**  
7am - Judith Ansell  
10am - For the People  
5pm - Edward Anselment



Perhaps you've had the experience of finding a book that you've really loved because it draws your heart up into a certain depth of joy and excitement while you're reading it. I've experienced that with some writings of saints like St. Charles de Foucauld, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Bonaventure, St. Augustine, and some books of the bible like Revelation. I've also found it to be the case even sometimes when reading more academic theological articles that seem to "get it" about where the world is at and what could lead us all closer to God. Most recently, I think I felt that powerful heavenly sensation while reading a book called "A Song for Nagasaki" about the Japanese man, Takashi Nagai. His writings quoted in that book, words he wrote after living through the atomic bomb that fell over Nagasaki, were incredibly powerful and at times led me to tears.

This article isn't about Takashi Nagai, though, but rather about the experience of finding words such as those he wrote. The human mind is an incredible creation of God. He made us able to express reality in words - reality that we can hardly grasp through our senses, and even reality we cannot receive at all through our senses. What is love? What is suffering? What is goodness and truth and beauty? These things can be observed in different ways in the world, but so often they are best discovered in the written or spoken word. We receive our understanding of them through stories and through the beauty of a life retold.

When we find a book that does this for us - a book that leads us to God in our thoughts - we have found a treasure. These books, articles, poems, or texts, are real gifts that we should hold on to in our memories and read again and again. Truly, it seems the Holy Spirit often uses writings like these and stories like these to lead us into a renewed and deepened relationship with God the Father.

Finally, I would like to share an imaginative poem about the awe, gratitude, and wonder of coming across the thoughts of a saint in the written word. May the Lord grant us all the grace to find and treasure words that lead us to him. Amen!

Within the wooded regions of this land  
I found a small oak cabin, now forlorn  
But bathed by amber candlelight ... unmanned.  
Perplexed, I turned the doorknob, smooth and worn.  
Inside, door closed, I lit a larger fire  
And by its greater glow saw walls of white.  
Walls covered by small papers, once entire,  
Held shreds of poems, scattered lines in flight.  
These fragments speak of life and wisdom old  
What man could know? "...a love from love divine,  
Shines forth in pure desire..." I read and know  
A saint and man of prayer composed this line.  
Oh blest mysterious light that drew my heart  
To this small saint's inspir'd celestial art!

## Stewardship of Treasure

### January 24th & 25th

Envelopes:	\$1,977.00
Loose:	\$1,625.00
Maintenance:	\$0.00
Total:	\$3,602.00

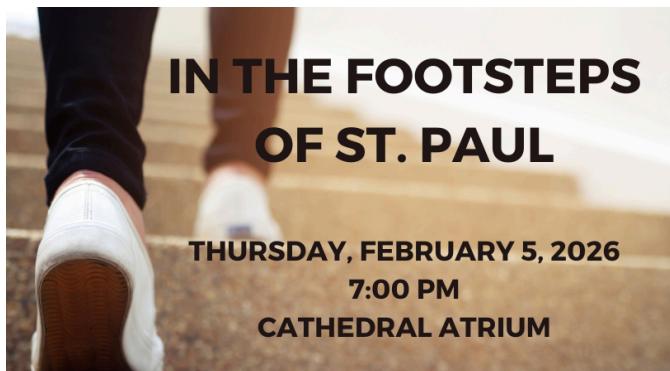
Online Giving: If you would like to extend a special gift to the Cathedral, please visit our website. Our parish is grateful for your continued support.  
Thank you!

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

## WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2

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  Rosary 4:45 PM Church  Cathedral Bible Study 6:00 PM School Library  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  In the Footsteps of St. Paul Presentation 7:00 PM Atrium	Rosary 4:45 PM Church	CCCW Trivia Night 6:00 PM Atrium  Cathedral Concert 7:00 PM Church	

### What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



#### In the Footsteps of St. Paul

Join Fr. Daniel McGrath as he presents on his recent pilgrimage to Greece! This parish faith formation talk will cover not only Father's trip (with great pictures!) but also the impactful ministry of St. Paul to the people of Greece during his second missionary journey as recorded in Acts of the Apostles chapters 16-18, as well as insights from his letters to the Thessalonians, Philippians, and Corinthians.

**Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 7:00 PM, Cathedral Atrium**



#### Music at the Cathedral Concert - February

Join us in the Cathedral for our February Concert, featuring Ethan Heinzel and Mark Gifford, Piano and Organ Duets. Music at the Cathedral is sponsored by the Staab Family, directed by Mark Gifford, and is free and open to the public. All are welcome!

**Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 7:00 PM**

## Second Collection - Church for Latin America

Soon our diocese will take up the Collection for the Church in Latin America. For more than 50 years, this collection has given Catholics in the United States an opportunity to share faith in unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout Latin America and the Caribbean islands. Your support for the Collection for the Church in Latin America helps church leaders throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean to fulfill their mission to preach the Word of God and to awaken a love of Scripture in the hearts of those they serve. Our diocese takes up this collection on the weekend of Jan 31/Feb 1, 2026. Please be generous toward this collection. For more information on the Church in Latin America and the many projects funded by the collection, please visit [www.usccb.org/latin-america](http://www.usccb.org/latin-america).

## 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.

## Diocese of Springfield, IL – Care Manager

Do you have a healthcare background? Do you love your Catholic faith and have a desire to help priests set and meet healthy living goals? Our diocese is seeking applications for a unique, mission-driven position dedicated to providing essential healthcare navigation and support for our clergy. This role does not require hands-on clinical care. Please submit your resume to REC@metacareusa.com

## Fr. Tolton Council 16126 Knights of Columbus

Following the example of our founder, Blessed Michael McGivney, we are a brotherhood committed to boldly living our faith and serving our families, parishes and communities. Below are some upcoming activities and events hosted by the Fr. Tolton Council based here at the Cathedral parish:

- **February 7** - Fellowship Breakfast at Café Moxo, 8 AM. Men interested in the Knights of Columbus and their wives are welcome! We have a private room for the morning. Each person is responsible for their meal.
- **February 7-8** - Souper Bowl of Caring Food Drive! Bring food or cash donations for Holy Family Food Pantry. Items will be collected after each Mass.
- **February 26** - Council Meeting at 7:00 PM, council chambers, 1st floor school hall
- **March 29** - 5th Sunday Rosary after 10 AM Mass

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, [bhubiecomcast.net](mailto:bhubiecomcast.net).

## 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.

## 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.

## What Stays the Same

Somewhere, there is a monk whose life is very quiet and who devotes long hours to prayer. And somewhere there is a nun, cloistered in a life of contemplation, who speaks very little except to God.

Somewhere, there is a father whose days are filled with noise, who hasn't finished a Rosary in years because he keeps falling asleep. Somewhere there is a mother whose voice is weak with giving direction and offering counsel.

Somewhere, there is a teenage girl with much to say, but few people to listen — fewer, at least, than she would like.

Somewhere there is a woman who holds a positive pregnancy test in one hand and a phone in the other, and somewhere there is a man on the other end of that phone who waits for her to speak.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus utilizes a literary device called anaphora. Both as a reader and a writer, I love anaphora. It's a clean, unfussy way to communicate a point. By repeating the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses, you're basically saying the same thing over and over again, just a little bit differently each time. Those small differences tease at your audience's brain, gently highlighting the consistencies.

Discipleship is a lot like anaphora. It's the differences — those little aberrations from person to person, life to life — that so beautifully illustrate what remains the same across the broad spectrum of what it means to live out the Beatitudes.

Me. You. The monk. The nun. The father. The mother. The lonely girl. The man and woman who decided their own future without realizing it. How similar we all are in sin. How similar we all are in potential. How different we look to the world.

And yet, how wondrous it is that we are all offered the same hope: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in Heaven."

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

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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)
- **Saint Meinrad for the Graduate Theology Program Open House**, Feb 14-15. Tour campus, attend class, pray at liturgy, and meet professors and students. Learn more about our flexible and affordable offerings and register at [saintmeinrad.edu/openhouse](http://saintmeinrad.edu/openhouse). All are welcome.
- **SDCCW Lenten Retreat: Heaven Meets Earth - A Journey through the Holy Mass** - February 24-25 at Villa Maria Conference Center on Lake Springfield. Led by retreat director Sr. Margaret Schreiber, OP, PhD, this retreat offers spiritual presentations, prayer, Holy Mass, Confession, fellowship, and time for quiet reflection. All women are welcome—bring your sister, your mom, or a friend. Registration forms with the cost and further information are available at [www.dio.org/events](http://www.dio.org/events). Deadline to register is February 14. For more information, contact Mary Ann Sullivan at 217-822-1928 or Janet Zimmerman at 217-494-4743.
- **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)