

# *Cathedral* OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

**FEBRUARY 8, 2026 | FIFTH 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 6

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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.



## Hope of Those Who Die in Him

For this week's invocation from the Litany of the Sacred Heart, I have chosen to jump almost to the very end of the litany. The invocation for our reflection is as follows:

*Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in You, have mercy on us*

There is a very particular reason I chose this invitation. You see, as I am sitting down to write this article, it is a Saturday afternoon, and earlier today, I celebrated a funeral Mass for an infant from our parish who died just

under twelve hours after being born. The death was expected, as the parents were aware of the diagnosis for several months leading up to the birth. Though that does not take away the sadness of the situation, it at least helped with having some time to process what would likely happen.

There are various words that could have been used to describe the atmosphere as we gathered for the funeral, words such as "heart-breaking", "sorrowful", "tragic", "unfortunate", just to name a few. But the word that I kept coming back to was quite different. That word was "hope." Perhaps my spending an entire year writing on the topic of hope last year had me predisposed to this theme, but I think it was more than that. The reason that hope rose above every other feeling was because of something that took place after the infant was born, but before it died. The infant was baptized and confirmed, and in doing so, was made an adopted child of God through Jesus Christ and given the promise of inheriting eternal life. The prayers for the Funeral Mass for a Baptized Infant express this hope in such a beautiful way, and the Church is never more certain about the salvation of a soul than with an infant who dies shortly after being baptized. The opening Collect reads (with the key phrase in bold):

Most compassionate God,  
who in the counsels of your wisdom  
have called this little child to yourself  
on the very threshold of life,  
listen kindly to our prayers  
and grant that one day we may inherit eternal life with him (her),  
whom, by the grace of Baptism, you have adopted as your own child  
and who we believe is dwelling even now in your Kingdom.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

The sting of such a sad loss is certainly lessened by this beautiful belief that this infant is at rest in Heaven. It also provides a helpful reminder to all of us who are still on our pilgrimage of life, that we too have good reason to hope that because of our baptism, if we die in the Lord, we also believe that we will rise through Him to eternal life. In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul reminds us: "We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over Him" (Rom 6:9), and when we die in the Lord, neither does death have power over us.

### Mass Intentions

#### Monday, February 9

7am - Mark Beagles  
5:15pm - Nancy Curtin

#### Tuesday, February 10

7am - Margaret Vaplon Miller  
5:15pm - John W. Montgomery

#### Wednesday, February 11

7am - Mary Jane Kern  
5:15pm - Joe Nicoud

#### Thursday, February 12

7am - Johnstone-Valdez Family  
5:15pm - Baby Gray

#### Friday, February 13

7am - Bryan Hallengren  
5:15pm - Intention for Bianca

#### Saturday, February 14

8am - For the People  
4pm - Janet Bowyer Bucari

#### Sunday, February 15

7am - Veronica DeRosa  
10am - Betty Rogers  
5pm - Octavia "Tabby" Diaz

*Father Alford is the Rector of the Cathedral and serves in the diocesan curia as the Vicar for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations.*



Is there ever really an “ordinary” year in the Church’s life? Maybe, but this year isn’t one of them! About a month ago, the Jubilee year of Hope ended with the conclusion of 2025, and here in the Cathedral the Bishop celebrated a closing ceremony at the 10:00 AM Mass, after which the Jubilee cross was removed from the sanctuary and the opportunity to receive the Jubilee indulgence in the Cathedral ended.

Right on the heels of this “end,” however, the Holy Father, pope Leo XIV announced a “beginning,” not another Jubilee year, but a specially dedicated year nonetheless. The year 2026 will be celebrated

in honor of the eight-hundred year anniversary of the passing of St. Francis from this earthly life to his eternal life. Here are some of the words of the Vatican office which announced the special year:

“His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, Minister of our faith and our joy, establishes that, from 10 January 2026, coinciding with the closing of the Ordinary Jubilee, until 10 January 2027, a special Year of Saint Francis shall be proclaimed, in which every faithful Christian, following the example of the Saint of Assisi, shall become a model of holiness of life and a constant witness of peace.”

The Holy Father grants also, in a similar fashion to the Jubilee year, plentiful opportunities for indulgences. I’ve modified this text a bit to make it more readable, but it is taken directly from the document announcing the Year of St. Francis:

“the Apostolic Penitentiary … grants a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the intentions of the Holy Father), also applicable in the form of suffrage for the souls in Purgatory:

[to all] who, with a heart detached from sin, participate in the Year of Saint Francis by

1. Visiting, in the form of a pilgrimage, any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship anywhere in the world dedicated to Saint Francis or connected to him for any reason, and there;
2. Devoutly follow the Jubilee rites or spend at least a reasonable period of time in pious meditation and raise prayers to God so that, following the example of Saint Francis, feelings of Christian charity towards their neighbours and authentic vows of harmony and peace among peoples may spring forth in their hearts;
3. Concluding with the Our Father, the Creed and invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Clare and all the Saints of the Franciscan Family.

As far as I can tell, the closest Franciscan Church to us here in Springfield is at Corpus Christi Priory near Riverton. This year is a perfect opportunity to visit this beautiful Church to pray for the intercession of St. Francis and to obtain a plenary indulgence. This year is going to be a year of a great outpouring of grace upon the Church through the intercession of the great St. Francis of Assisi. He is one of my favorite saints and I am excited to celebrate this year. Part of my celebration will be to begin writing a series of articles here considering the life of St. Francis, his example, and his encouragement for the Church to grow in holiness. May God bless us all through his prayers! Amen.

*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 31st & February 1st

Envelopes:	\$7,624.00
Loose:	\$3,488.00
Maintenance:	\$880.00
Total:	\$11,992.00

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

Micah Jude Gray

Date of Death: January 23, 2026

## WEEK OF FEBRUARY 9

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	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 School Library  Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Rosary 4:45 PM Church		Family of Faith & Faith and Science Series 6:00 PM Atrium

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



#### CCCW Lenten Soup Suppers

Join the women of CCCW for Lenten Soup Suppers throughout this season of Lent! The first Lenten Soup Supper will be Wednesday, February 25, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium. Various homemade soups with bread & crackers will be served. All are welcome!



BEGINNING MARCH 3  
AT THE CATHEDRAL

#### Bereavement Ministry - Grief Share

The Cathedral will be hosting Grief Share, a weekly, faith-based, grief support group. If you, or someone you know, would like help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend, please join us beginning Tuesday, March 3, 1:00-2:30pm in the Cathedral School Library. (Enter through the atrium doors off 5th street parking lot) Grief Share runs for 13 weeks, but guests may join the series at any point and can pick up content they missed during the next cycle. For more information go to <https://www.griefshare.org/> or contact Berni Ely @ 899-6637 or [jackandberni96@yahoo.com](mailto:jackandberni96@yahoo.com). To register call 217/522-3342 or email Vicki at [vcompton@cathedral.dio.org](mailto:vcompton@cathedral.dio.org). All adults, of any or no faith background, are welcome!



## Rethinking Rice Bowls - The Projected Toll of Funding Cuts

As government support declines, your compassion becomes essential. A rigorous study published in *The Lancet* estimates that more than 14 million lives could be lost over the next five years due to cuts in U.S. assistance — including 4.5 million children under age 5. At least 95 million people are projected to lose access to lifesaving nutrition, maternal care, vaccinations, and treatment for diseases like malaria and HIV. 88 deaths every hour. That's the current pace, according to Boston University's analysis. Without urgent action, the toll will keep rising. Families displaced by conflict, children facing hunger, and communities recovering from disaster are all at risk. You Can Save Lives - Catholic Relief Services is already on the ground—responding through trusted Church partnerships in some of the world's most fragile places. But we cannot meet the growing need alone. Your generosity fills the gap. It provides food for a hungry child, shelter for a displaced family, and clean water and medical care for communities in crisis. You help CRS reach those in greatest need, even when other resources fall away. This is a moment for courage and compassion. This is your moment to save lives. CRS rice bowls will be available again this Lent. Take time now to prayerfully rethink your response. What might you sacrifice this Lent so that others might live? Pray and give using the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten calendar as your guide.

## St Joseph the Worker Parish Mission - Church Fully Alive!

Join St Joseph the Worker Parish in Chatham, IL for on Sunday, March 1 and Monday, March 2 at 6:00 PM for their Parish Mission - Church Fully Alive! What would your life be like if you were more FULLY ALIVE! Lee Roessler is a well-known passionate genuine Christian musician whose charm persuasively invites an audience to find their hope and strength in Christ! Joe Farris an experienced and esteemed public speaker, Joe aims to deliver education, inspiration and entertainment to a variety of audiences.

**SDCCW Springfield Deanery Meeting** All women are invited to attend the Springfield Deanery, Council of Catholic Women meeting on Saturday, Feb 28th at 9am, at Holy Trinity Parish Hall in Stonington, IL. Chuck Martin, Executive Director of the Christian County Coal Mine Museum in Taylorville, will be our guest speaker. Did you know that the museum has a special display dedicated to daughters of coal miners? Chuck, who is very passionate about the industry, will offer intriguing stories about the first female coal miners and their rich history in central Illinois! The meeting includes: a wonderful breakfast, business meeting, speaker(s), recitation of the Rosary, door prizes, 50/50 raffle, and more! Please contact Janet DeClerck, Christian County Area Rep for the Springfield Deanery at 217-827-9670 by Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> to register.

## 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 7-8** - 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).

## Be Salty

I want you to close your eyes. Are they closed? (I'm serious.) Okay. Now think of the greatest saint in history.

I don't care who you're thinking of. It's going to be different for everyone. Just think of that person. Think of his or her life. And answer the question: Why is he or she a great saint?

You're all thinking of different people, but the answer is the same for everyone. And it's not "Because he did great things for God" or "Because she sacrificed everything she had for the poor." Those answers show evidence of the reason. But the reason is something more.

The greatest saints in history were not great at holiness. God brought holiness about within them because (ding ding ding! Here's the answer!) the greatest saints in history were great at being who they were meant to be.

Not who they wanted to be. Not who they thought they should be. Who they were meant to be.

Simply put, they gave themselves to God. All of themselves. Flaws and all. And God took them, in their totality, and said: "Now watch this."

Just imagine if salt was ashamed of being salty. Imagine if it looked at the sodium content on its nutrition label and thought, "That's embarrassing," and decided it was going to stop being salt. Well, great. Now it's just a box of tiny rocks.

Wouldn't it have been better for the salt to trust the baker using it?

There is a plan for each of us. There is a path to holiness for each of us. This path doesn't bypass our flaws or our weaknesses; it incorporates them. It transforms them. It fulfills them.

So be salty. Be who you were meant to be.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

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## Around the Diocese

- **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)