

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

MARCH 1, 2026 | SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



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 8 ISSUE 9

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

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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

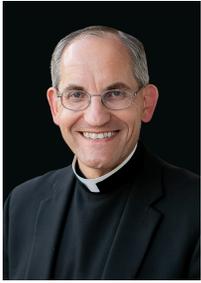
Tuesday & Thursday - 4:00pm to 5:00pm

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.



In Whom the Father is Well Pleased

Similar to the First Sunday of Lent, the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Lent always recounts the story of the Transfiguration. This was that event in which Jesus took three of His apostles, Peter, James, and John, and “led them up a high mountain by themselves and He was transfigured before them.” (Mt 17:1-2) It is interesting that we have this account in Lent, given that there is a feast day on which this event is celebrated. (August 6).

In a sermon for this feast day, Pope St. Leo the Great gives some explanation of why this event took place, including the following which highlights its fittingness for being included during the Lenten season:

The great reason for this transfiguration was to remove the scandal of the cross from the hearts of his disciples, and to prevent the humiliation of his voluntary suffering from disturbing the faith of those who had witnessed the surpassing glory that lay concealed. (Sermo 51, 3-4. 8: PL 54, 310-311. 313)

One of the key lines from the account of the Transfiguration are the words that were spoken by the Father with a voice coming from the clouds which proclaimed: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.” (Mt 17:5) Not surprisingly, one of the invocations from the Litany of the Sacred Heart draws upon this scene:

Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father is well pleased, have mercy on us

But this is not the only place where this voice from above proclaims this message. We also hear it in the account of His baptism in the Jordan River. After coming up out of the water, the Father says: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Mt 3:17) This is significant because it shows the unchanging posture of the Father to the Son, no matter the circumstances. Even as Jesus was hanging on the Cross, we know that the Father continues to be well pleased, a truth that no doubt supported Jesus in His Passion.

On the day of our baptism, we are made adopted sons and daughters of God, and though we do not hear the Father speaking in the same way, we believe that this is His posture toward us, seeing the life of His Son entering into our lives. The amazing thing to consider is that throughout our lives, because of our identity as these adopted sons and daughters, the Father’s posture of loving us and being well pleased with us never changes. This is a very helpful truth for us to constantly recall and foster in our hearts, especially when we are experiencing the difficulties of living the Christian life, when it becomes painful to accept the path on which we find ourselves. In that regard, I would like to conclude our reflection with another line from this sermon from Pope St. Leo the Great:

No one should fear to suffer for the sake of justice; no one should lose confidence in the reward that has been promised. The way to rest is through toil, the way to life is through death. Christ has taken on himself the whole weakness of our lowly human nature. If then we are steadfast in our faith in him and in our love for him, we win the victory that he has won, we receive what he has promised. When it comes to obeying the commandments or enduring adversity, the words uttered by the Father should always echo in our ears:

This is my Son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him. (ibid.)

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, March 2

7am - Dick Allender (Carla Potts)
12:05pm - John W. Montgomery (John Busciacco)
5:15pm - Carrie Eichen (Daniel Schumacher)

Tuesday, March 3

7am - Glenn Overturf (Celeste Crowley)
12:05pm - Anna Wanda Chiaradonna (Geny Chiaradonna)
5:15pm - Micah Jude Gray (Beverly and Larry Smith)

Wednesday, March 4

7am - Octavia “Tabby” Diaz (Paul J. Staab)
12:05pm - Thomas and Martha Eckert (John Busciacco)
5:15pm - Dick Allender (Sue Thompson)

Thursday, March 5

7am - Dan Sexson (Sharon Sexson)
12:05pm - Carrie Eichen (Barbara Shures)
5:15pm - Brother Francis Skube (Community)

Friday, March 6

7am - Thomas Conway Sr. (Family)
12:05pm - Don Smargiassi (Smargiassi Family)
5:15pm - Mary Celine Sestak (Steve and Vicki Stalcup)

Saturday, March 7

8am - Lambert Fleck (Gregory and Marie Fleck)
4pm - Veronica DeRosa (Bentel Family)

Sunday, March 8

7am - Judith Ansell (John and Margaret Lemanski)
10am - For the People
5pm - Joseph Reichle (Lou Ann Mack and Carl Corrigan)

EXTENDED CONFESSIONS

MARCH 20 - 12:30PM-6:30PM
MARCH 21 - 9:00AM-4:30PM





Francis touched a leper.

A leper - a man with a disease that ate away at his skin. A contagious disease. A crippling disease... physically, spiritually, emotionally, socially.

Francis touched that man.

He not only touched that man. He showed him love - he embraced him and kissed him.

What must have passed through Francis' heart in the moment before he did this?

Can we imagine?

Bonaventure writes very simply, "This unforeseen encounter struck [Francis] with horror. But he recalled his resolution to be perfect and remembered that he must first conquer himself if he wanted to become a knight of Christ. He slipped off his horse and ran to kiss the man" (The Life of St. Francis, Translated by Ewert Cousins).

He recalled. He remembered. He acted.

Still, memory alone doesn't lead to self-denying actions like kissing a leper. Added to the memory of these things - his resolution and that spiritual principle - must have been not simply knowledge of the truth but a burning love. There is no sentimentality in this sort of love. This is not the love of nice feelings. This is the love that is captivated by a remarkably intense desire to belong to the beloved. This love impels the lover to give everything away. It is a love of desire.

In the realm of holy acts, desire is everything.

What did Francis desire? To be a knight of Christ.

Why did he desire that? Because he loved Christ.

What did that desire lead him to do? To make a "resolution to be perfect."

To hold the words of Christ in his memory: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," and "if anyone wishes to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

Here, in this moment, on his horse, Francis desired Christ's life so deeply that he forgot himself, literally. Thoughts of contagion left him. Considerations of social standards left him. He could have said like St. Paul, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me."

The choice of love in this moment left a mark on the life of Francis that would never leave - he was willing to do anything for Jesus, his King. The leper disappeared, seemingly literally. Was he the Lord? Or an angel? Bonaventure seems to suggest such.

Regardless, it is clear that Francis was a changed man after this. He yearned deeply for the Lord; he thirsted for Christ, and that thirst was quenched in a vision of the Crucifixion that seared his memory and opened his soul to new realms of self-gift. From then on, he longed for poverty, humility, and charity. He served the poor and the lepers of his community.

As we enter more deeply into Lent, we can profit from the prayers of St. Francis. We can beg him for a similar grace of a transformation of our heart and soul into a likeness to the crucified Lord.

Does self-denial grate against our nature? Yes. Yes it does, but it is the path to holiness. Come Holy Spirit, draw our hearts into the Sacred Heart of our Lord. Set us on fire with the fire of charity that burned in Christ's heart for others and then in St. Francis' heart. Lead us out of ourselves to serve you with generous hearts. 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

February 21st & 22nd

Envelopes:	\$5,361.00
Loose:	\$4,329.00
Maintenance:	\$106.00
Total:	\$9,796.00

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 Received into the Church

Gabriel Martinez,
Lisa Holladay,
Matthew Nika

February 22, 2026

Confirmed

Lynise Gutierrez
February 22, 2026

WEEK OF MARCH 2

<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Adoration 4:00 PM Church Grief Share 1:00 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 Stations of the Cross 6 PM Church	First Saturday Concert 7:00PM Church	

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



CCCW Lenten Soup Suppers

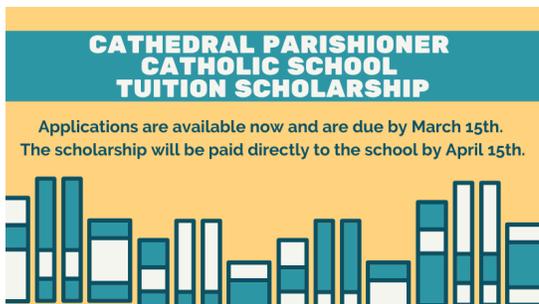
Join the women of CCCW for Lenten Soup Suppers throughout this season of Lent! The first Lenten Soup Supper will be Wednesday, February 25, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium. Various homemade soups with bread & crackers will be served. All are welcome!



First Saturday Concert Series

Join us on Saturday, March 7, 2026 at 7pm in the Cathedral for a First Saturday Concert!

March's concert will feature a baroque string quartet. The First Saturday Concert Series is sponsored by the Staab Family, directed by Mark Gifford, and is free and open to the public. All are welcome!



Cathedral Parishioner Catholic School Tuition Scholarship

The Cathedral Parish believes in the value of Catholic education and is committed to assisting parishioners who choose a Catholic education for their children by providing tuition assistance. Parishioners will receive a \$500 tuition scholarship for each child enrolled in a Springfield Catholic Grade School (Grades K-8), and a \$750 tuition scholarship for each child enrolled at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School. The Scholarship is eligible to any parishioner household who is registered and active in the Cathedral parish. For more information or to apply, please visit our website (www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-parishioner-catholic-school-tuition-scholarship-form/). Applications are due by March 15th, 2026. If you have any questions, please contact the Cathedral Parish Office at 217-522-3342.

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Empowering Growth in Ghana

By supporting CRS Rice Bowl, you help parents and caregivers in Ghana to receive training in health, nutrition and early childhood development. That means, young children in these communities are better able to thrive and meet critical milestones in their growth. Visit crsricebowl.org/week-2 to read this week's Story of Hope.

SDCCW Scholarship Opportunity

The SDCCW (Springfield in IL Diocesan Council of Catholic Women) is pleased to give \$2,000 for education beyond high school to four 2026 female high school graduates from the Springfield Diocese in IL who exemplify the SDCCW's mission. The mission of the SDCCW is to support and empower all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. The SDCCW is affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). Applications are available in the Cathedral Atrium, and must be mailed to the SDCCW Scholarship Program by April 15, 2026.

I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food

Holy Family Food Pantry is in great need of macaroni and cheese, pasta, spaghetti sauce and tuna. Pick up a few extra for the food pantry when you are shopping for these Lenten staples for yourself. Drop off your donations in the blue bin in the atrium. THANK YOU!

A Journey to Joy - Bringing scripture to Life

Frank Runyeon a national acclaimed performer will perform the Gospel of Luke, explore the Sermon on the Mount, and speak about Hollywood vs. Faith for three days, Sunday, March 1 - Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at St. Aloysius Church (2000 Sangamon Ave. Springfield, Illinois) Each performance beginning at 7:00pm is an hour and will touch on one of the three topics. The three evenings will be both entertaining and eye-opening. There will be a light reception each evening after the performance..

Triumph of the Heart

Cathedral will be showing the powerful true story of St. Maximilian Kolbe who chose sacrifice over survival and love over hate in his final days in the Auschwitz death camp. Fr. Kolbe volunteered to die in place of a fellow prisoner, then spent his final days ministering to the other condemned men in the starvation chamber. This film is not suitable for young children. Sunday, March 15 @ 2:00pm in the Cathedral Atrium, FREE

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 upcoming activities and events hosted by the Fr. Tolton Council based here at the Cathedral parish:
- **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, or Program Director Brian Huber, bhubiecomcast.net.

LENTEN SECOND COLLECTIONS

MARCH 1	CATHOLIC CHARITIES
MARCH 8	HELPING HANDS
MARCH 15	CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES COLLECTION
MARCH 22	CATHEDRAL PARISH STUDENT ASSISTANCE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION
MARCH 29	ST. MARTIN DE PORRES CENTER
APRIL 3	HOLY LAND
APRIL 5	SEMINARIANS

Three Tents

You guys, I was such a good Catholic at the National Eucharistic Congress.

Mass every day? Check. Rosary every day? Check (and check — we said a lot of rosaries). Deep thoughts and deep conversations about God with total strangers? Check. Hours in adoration reflecting on the state of my soul? Check.

When I went to Indianapolis in the summer of 2024 to cover the NEC for our archdiocesan newspaper, I knew it would be a fun and spiritually rich experience. But I didn't expect that it would make me think differently about my whole life (and afterlife). And when people ask me why — "What happened in Indianapolis that changed you?" — I can only tell them this: I spent time with God.

Of course, I do all these things in my regular life at home, too. I try to be a good Catholic here. But good grief, it's a lot harder. In Indianapolis, I didn't have a calendar full of appointments and to-do lists that filled me with dread. I didn't have the world crowding around me, grasping at my attention and my will.

Indianapolis was the mountain, and if I could have, I would have built three tents.

So I understand Peter's feelings at the Transfiguration. He's thrilled — he sees it all clearly now. Here is the fullness of Truth, revealed in all its glory, and he's ready to start bringing groups of tourists up to see it. He's ready to bring people to Christ. But in the blood-soaked, fear-filled days to come, Peter will realize that it's not his job to bring the world to the Truth. His job is to bring the Truth into the world.

What a tragedy it would be, if Truth only lived on the mountaintop.

So build three tents, strong and durable shelters for the Truth to dwell. But build them in your heart. And then, the Transfiguration won't be just an event, something that happened at a certain time and a certain place. It'll be a reality that lives within us all. And we will bear it with us wherever we go.

©LPi

Around the Diocese

- **HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE January 12-21, 2027** - Join Fr. Dean Probst and Fr. Charles Delano on a trip to the Holy Land, visiting the area of the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Enjoy celebrating Masses and Prayer Services at the places of Jesus' birth, preaching, miracles and crucifixion and resurrection. Cost is \$4099/person from St. Louis airport. Contact Fr. Dean at 217-494-6326 or email rdprobst@gmail.com for brochure.
- **Join Us in Prayer** - Every first Sunday of each month, the Springfield Chapter of the Mother of Eucharist and Grace will be holding their monthly novena in the Blessed Sacrament Adoration chapel from 2:50-3:45. This devotion stemmed from the Blessed Mother's appearance to Carmelo Cortez identifying herself to him as the Mother of Eucharist and Grace. Everyone is welcome to participate. Call Rose Amon at 217-926- 2976 for any questions.
- **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. Register at: dio.org/events