

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

MARCH 15, 2026 | FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



524 EAST LAWRENCE AVENUE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703
CATHEDRAL PARISH OFFICE: 217-522-3342
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FOUNDED IN 1839 | DEDICATED IN 1928 | BUILT ON FAITH, RENEWED IN HOPE IN 2009

Cathedral Weekly

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 11

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.



House of God and Gate of Heaven

When a priest is called to administer the “last rites” to somebody before they die, they are being called on to do a few things. In the ideal circumstances, the person who is dying would go to Confession, receive the Anointing of the Sick, receive Holy Communion as Viaticum, and receive the plenary indulgence known as the Apostolic Pardon.

More often than not, however, the person is no longer conscious and unable to confess their sins or receive Holy Communion, so we provide as much as we can for the person, namely Anointing and the Apostolic Pardon.

After administering these rites, the priest will then pray from a selection of prayers from the Order of the Commendation of the Dying. I usually choose to recite Psalm 23, one of the most recognized and most consoling passages in all of Sacred Scripture. It offers an expression of hope that for those who have followed the Good Shepherd throughout life, He will “give them repose.” Even when we find ourselves in the shadow of death in our final moments, we “fear no evil” for the Good Shepherd is “at our side.” When we reach the end of our earthly journey, we shall “dwell in the house of the Lord for length of days unending.” It is my hope that the one who is dying will hear those words and be encouraged, but I also hope that those who are standing by, praying with and for their loved one, hear them as well and are strengthened even as they mourn.

The Church gives this Psalm 23 for our Responsorial Psalm today, and as we hear it, our hearts should be comforted and we can rejoice in the salvation that Christ, our Good Shepherd, has won for us through His Passion, death, and Resurrection. Through Baptism, we pass through the gate that grants us access to a share in His life, a share that promises us a place in His house in Heaven one day. With this imagery in mind, I have chosen the following invocation of the Litany of the Sacred Heart for this week:

Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of Heaven, have mercy on us.

One of my favorite prayers is the *Anima Christi*, which is Latin for Soul of Christ. It is a short but powerful prayer, and one that the faithful often pray after receiving Holy Communion. When considering the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I often consider the following line of the *Anima Christi*: within your wounds, hide me. As we look at the image of the Sacred Heart, we see the wound that came from the thrust of the soldier's lance. That wound serves as an invitation from Jesus to us to come to Him, to pass through the gate that has been opened in His heart, to take refuge there, and to experience the protection of His love and mercy. Whenever we find ourselves in the dark valleys of life, we have access to the Heart of our Good Shepherd. He will ever be at our side and He will give us courage to persevere, trusting that by staying close to Him, He will deliver us safely to the “house of the Lord” where we will be rest in peace, and where we will be able to see Him face to face for eternity.

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 16

7am - Arthur Hodalski (McGrath Family)
 12:05pm - Caryl Beach (Dcn David Beach)
 5:15pm - Mary Dwyer (Barbara Bitschenauer)

Tuesday, March 17

7am - Frances Klein (Andrew & Cheryl Klein Family)
 12:05pm - Dan Sexson (Sharon Sexson)
 5:15pm - NO MASS

Wednesday, March 18

7am - Thomas Conway Sr. (Family)
 12:05pm - NO MASS
 5:15pm - Delia Sinn (Pamela Hargan)

Thursday, March 19

7am - Carrie Eichen (Anselment Family)
 12:05pm - Dick Allender (John and Barbara Bartolozzi)
 5:15pm - Marie O'Niell (Berberet Family)

Friday, March 20

7am - Emery Mapes (Jesse and Claire Presley)
 12:05pm - Deceased Mem. of the Chiaradonna Fam (Geny Chiaradonna)
 5:15pm - Ralph Walter (Jean Moss)

Saturday, March 21

8am - Dick Allender (Family)
 4pm - Raymond and Eulalia Ohl (Angela Ohl-Marsters)

Sunday, March 22

7am - For the People
 10am - Betty Rogers (Glen Rogers)
 5pm - Betty Fleck (Gregory and Marie Fleck)

EXTENDED CONFESSIONS

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





The Tenth Station... Jesus is stripped of his garments.

Every time we pray the Stations of the Cross, a devotion the Church prays with fervor and intensity during Lent, we come to that uncomfortable tenth station and enter more deeply into the humiliation that Jesus took on for us as he approached his crucifixion. He left this world as he came into it, utterly poor, deprived of every earthly possession, and exposed to the hatred and jeers of the crowd. Here we meet God in his humility. Here we meet God in his poverty, a poverty that cries out to us in our riches and challenges us.

A decisive moment came for Francis as he heard that challenge from the Lord and came up against the tension caused by his desire for generous poverty and the wealth of his family. In order to help rebuild a small church, Francis one day took some expensive cloth from his home, sold it for a sum of money, and offered it to the priest. The priest would not accept it and it was left to the side, where Francis' father later found it and retrieved it. Francis' father was irate at this use of his goods and confronted Francis. When he saw that Francis was not going to leave this way of life, his father brought him before the bishop, desiring Francis to formally renounce his possessions. Francis gladly did so, taking off his clothes in front of them all and renouncing all of his earthly possessions.

From this point forward, he would be clothed by the charity of others - first in the mantle of the bishop who stood by and then in cheap clothing given to him by another poor man. St. Bonaventure sees this profoundly humiliating action as a real sharing in the nakedness of Jesus at his passion. Near the end of the biography, as St. Bonaventure reflects on the death of St. Francis (which looked very similar to this scene with the bishop), he writes this poem:

"In all things
He wished to be conformed to Christ crucified,
Who hung on the cross
Poor, suffering and naked.
Therefore at the beginning of his conversion,
He stood naked before the bishop,
And at the end of his life,
Naked he wished to go out of this world."
(Quoted from *The Life of St. Francis*, Translated by Ewert Cousin, ch. 14.4)

Certainly, these actions of St. Francis are most likely in the realm of those things that are meant to be admired and not imitated. Still, they teach us about fundamental truths of the Christian life.

1. The path to sainthood is conformity with Christ crucified - this looks a bit different for everyone, but it is the shape that baptism gives to our life. Living in any other way will not ultimately make us happy.
2. Everything we have is a gift from God - a gift meant to be given back to him.

May the prayers of St. Francis obtain for us many graces of detachment and a renewed desire to draw near to Jesus Christ Crucified, particularly during Lent. 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

March 7th & March 8th

Envelopes:	\$7,448.00
Loose:	\$3,167.00
Maintenance:	\$65.00
Total:	\$10,680.00

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!

WEEK OF MARCH 16

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
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 for Pro Life Mass Pilgrims 12:00-5:00PM Church	Rosary 4:45 PM Church Stations of the Cross 6 PM Church	Extended Confessions 12:30-6:30 PM Church	Extended Confessions 9:00AM-4:30 PM 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 next Lenten Soup Supper will be Wednesday, March 18th, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium. Various homemade soups with bread & crackers will be served. 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.



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

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Feeding Dreams in Timor-Leste

By participating in CRS Rice Bowl, we're helping young people in Timor-Leste find opportunities and support to fulfill their dreams of becoming leaders in their communities. Visit crsricebowl.org/week-4 to read about Adriana's dream of becoming a doctor in this week's Story of Hope.



Support our parish by giving online

Scan the QR code above to donate online and support our parish. Thank you for your generosity!

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 Work of Mercy

In an effort to assist our parishioners who have mobility issues, we would like to ask that the parking spaces adjacent to the handicapped spots, be left available for those who have difficulty walking distances. These are the 10 parking spots on the north and south sides of the sidewalk that cuts our parking lot in half.

If you are able to walk easily, please do not park in these spots. Thank you!

Grounded in Hope - Cathedral Women's Bible Study

Grounded in Hope, based on the book of Hebrews, will help you encounter Jesus in such a powerful, comforting, and stabilizing way that He can become your lifeline. Grounded in Hope is ideal if you long to know Jesus with greater intimacy and are ready to grow in your trust in Him as your true source of hope. Order your workbook at walkingwithpurpose.com Thursdays starting on April 16 @ 10:00 and 1:00, Cathedral School Library

Caring for the World – April 7

The Catholic Church is the largest non-governmental provider of health care services in the world, with 65% of Catholic health facilities located in low-resource areas globally. Each year, Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach (located in Springfield) supports more than 100 Catholic hospitals and clinics in Africa, Asia, Ukraine, and Central/South America by donating critical medical supplies and equipment. To celebrate World Health Day on April 7, we will honor the life-saving role Catholic health care plays globally at the 5:15 Cathedral Mass and a World Health Fair in the Atrium following Mass. Mission Outreach will be there to show how the work they do is building a healthier world, especially for mothers and babies in need.

Attention all seniors...Senior Social

To help shake off the winter woolens and welcome spring you are invited to the launch of Senior Socials, a monthly event connecting area Catholic seniors. Come meet other retired/senior citizens for an afternoon of games, cards, conversation and snacks. We'll supply it all; you can just come as you are! Hope to see you on Wednesday, April 15, 3:00pm-5:00pm in the Cathedral Atrium. Please share this invitation with your senior friends and relatives.

A belated Thank You to all who donated items for the Christ Child Shower!

All donations are much appreciated by the agencies who provide hands-on services for Moms and Babies who are in need. A money saving tip: Watch for sales (such as end-of-season sales) all during the year to allow you to collect more items for the same or less money!

Thank you for participating in this Corporal Act of Mercy!

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

Sent

I don't know about you. But if I was a blind person sitting by the side of the road, minding my own business, and a stranger came along and rubbed spit-mud in my eye, I'm just salty enough that I would ignore his words out of spite.

Even though he was, admittedly, super-nice about the whole thing.

Obviously I would wash the mud out, because ... spit. But I wouldn't go to the Pool of Siloam. I would go to a pool on the whole other side of town, just to be contrary. I would make frustrated, grossed-out noises while I splashed water on my eyes: "Ugh! I can't believe this! People are the worst!" I would feel satisfied that I wasn't tricked or conned or taken advantage of.

And I would stay blind the rest of my life.

When Jesus performs a miracle in the Gospel, we sometimes think of it like a fireworks show. Something people point at — "Ooh! Aah!" — and move on from. But a miracle of Jesus is not a party trick. It is a commissioning.

And each of us, in our own way, has the choice of accepting it or not.

Nowhere in the Gospel story does it say that Jesus promised the man sight if he washed in the pool. I wonder what it was that made the blind man feel he could trust Jesus. Was it something in his voice? Was it something in his touch? Was it the humanity with which he spoke of the blind man to his disciples — a gentleness missing from most other interactions of his life?

We'll never know. But we do know this: the blind man's sight wasn't restored until he made a decision. A decision to be sent.

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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.
- **Maintenance Job** - St. Cabrini Parish, 1020 N. Milton, Springfield is looking for a maintenance person experienced in maintaining property and equipment and who is willing to do normal janitorial work, also. Interested persons should call St. Cabrini's Parish office at 217-522-8555.
- **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. We will not be meeting Easter Sunday, April 5th
- **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