

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

MARCH 22, 2026 | FIFTH 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 12

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.



Victim for our Sins

The final two weeks of Lent have traditionally been called Passiontide, as the character of these final days of Lent invite us to focus more intensely on the Passion of Jesus Christ. We can see this in the prayers of the Mass during this time.

For the first four weeks of Lent, the Prefaces of Lent I-IV are used, but for the next two weeks, the Church shifts to Prefaces of the Passion of the Lord. Here is a part of one of those Prefaces:

For through the saving Passion of your Son the whole world has received a heart to confess the infinite power of your majesty, since by the wondrous power of the Cross your judgment on the world is now revealed and the authority of Christ crucified. (Preface I of the Passion of the Lord)

Given our theme of the Sacred Heart of Jesus during this series, I am drawn to the mention of our receiving a renewed heart through the saving Passion of Jesus. We know that the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is connected to His heart being pierced after He had died on the Cross, so His Passion is very much at the center of this devotion. In His Passion, Jesus demonstrates the depth of His love for us. This is expressed beautifully by St. Paul in his Letter to the Romans which we heard on the 3rd Sunday of Lent:

“But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8)

We proclaim Jesus to be the Lamb of God, and He makes Himself the innocent victim for our sins, so that we might not remain in the slavery of sin. Through His Passion, we have an outlet by which our hearts, wounded by our sins, can be renewed and set free – first in Baptism, and then every time we come to Him in confession. Therefore, I have chosen the following invocation from the Litany of the Sacred Heart for this week:

Heart of Jesus, victim for our sin, have mercy on us

This can be a good aspiration, or short prayer, that we have ready on our lips during these final days of Lent. Perhaps we can modify it slightly to make it more personal, saying: “Heart of Jesus, victim for my sins, have mercy on me!” This will help to foster a sense of the personal love that Jesus had while on the Cross for each of us, not just those around Him at the time, but for everybody who has ever come into existence, and all who have yet to come into existence. The Passion He endured was for all, for as St. Paul reminds, He “desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim 2:4)

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 23

7am - Brother Francis Skube (Friend)
12:05pm - Ed Sr. & Emily Riordan (Riordan Family)
5:15pm - Raymond and Eulalia Ohl (Angela Ohl-Marsters)

Tuesday, March 24

7am - Frank & Louise Steskal (Riordan Family)
12:05pm - Linda Piercall (Lou Ann Mack & Carl Corrigan)
5:15pm - Intentions for Doris and Cathy (DA Drago)

Wednesday, March 25

7am - Edward Anselment (Vicki Compton)
12:05pm - Joseph "Bud" McGrath (McGrath Family)
5:15pm - Octavia "Tabby" Diaz (Paul J. Staab)

Thursday, March 26

7am - Edward Anselment (Anselment Family)
12:05pm - Ben Garde (Family)
5:15pm - Fr. Daren Zehnle (Beverly and Larry Smith)

Friday, March 27

7am - Dec. Mem. of the Kruzick Family (Steve & Vicki Stalcup)
12:05pm - Dec. Mem. of the Rocco Piccinino Fam (John Busciacco)
5:15pm - Bridget Geraghty (Nicoud Family)

Saturday, March 28

8am - Tommy Schweska (McGee Family)
4pm - Raymond & Eulalia Ohl (Angela Ohl-Marsters)

Sunday, March 29

7am - For the People
10am - Dan "Wade" Connolly (Bentel Family)
5pm - Mary Jackson (Susan Shelton)

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



For whom are the scriptures written?

The answer to that question is fruitful to reflect on. These texts were divinely inspired, so their author is God, but they were written in a human way, in a time, place, and culture, by human authors, so their author is also a human being. Because of this, there are two “audiences” - the audience intended by the human author and the audience intended by the divine author. These audiences many times overlap, but God sees much further than any human author sees.

The evangelist, Matthew, for example, wrote his Gospel to a primarily Jewish audience. There are many Jewish themes, elements, and arguments throughout that Gospel which make it clear that it came from a learned Jew

who was writing to convince Jews of Jesus’ divinity and his claim to be the Christ.

Matthew probably had a good sense that his gospel would outlast him and so we could also say that he wrote for a future audience who would one day read his work and come to know Jesus.

One difference here between Matthew and God is that God not only intends the scripture to be read by a future audience, but he knows the future audience. Additionally, Matthew only passively speaks to any future audience members - they read his words knowing he wrote them but not considering that they can in any way communicate with Matthew through the reading of the text.

God, on the other hand, actively speaks to these future audience members - they read his words knowing he wrote them and realizing that he truly is presently speaking as they read that text and they can communicate with him directly in conversation with these texts. As St. Augustine once wrote,

“Your prayer is a conversation with God: when you read, God is speaking to you; when you pray, you are speaking to God” (En. Ps. 85:7, Trans. Boulding, p. 227).

It is for this reason that the author of the Letter to the Hebrews can write, “Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). This word is living not because the words on the page have any special power in themselves but because of the One who communicates through them and the ideas, stories, and images they transmit - that One speaks in them.

You’re probably wondering, “What about St. Francis?”

Well, the next phase in Francis’ life is so powerfully moving because he heard the words of the Gospel and acted as perfectly according to them as possible. He wanted to live his life as the apostles did, and he knew Jesus spoke directly to him in those holy words read at Mass. At the beginning of his third chapter of the Life of St. Francis, St. Bonaventure shares that Francis heard a call from the Lord into a deeper poverty while he was at Mass.

St. Bonaventure writes,

“One day when he was devoutly hearing a Mass of the Apostles, the Gospel was read in which Christ sends forth his disciples to preach and explains to them the way of life according to the Gospel: that they should not keep gold or silver or money in their belts, nor have wallet for the journey... (Matt. 10:9).

When he heard this, he grasped its meaning and committed it to memory. This lover of apostolic poverty was filled with an indescribable joy and said:

‘this is what I want; this is what I long for with all my heart.’” (Quoted from The Life of St. Francis, Translated by Ewert Cousin, ch. 3.1)

St. Francis not only committed this to memory, he committed it to action. It is from this seed that his order would be founded. May we strive with all our hearts, like St. Francis, to listen to God’s word in the scriptures and follow his call with joy!

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 14th & March 15th

Envelopes:	\$3,466.00
Loose:	\$2,762.00
Maintenance:	\$35.00
Total:	\$6,263.00

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 23

<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 4:00pm Church	Rosary 4:45 PM Church Stations of the Cross 6 PM Church		

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT APPLICATION:
APRIL 30, 2026

CCCW/Knights of Columbus 2026-27 Scholarships

The Cathedral Council of Catholic Women (CCCW) and the Fr. Augustine Tolton Council 16126, Knights of Columbus are pleased to announce that the application period for the 2026-27 academic year scholarships is now open. Scholarships will be awarded and used to offset tuition at a Catholic high School and will be awarded to students who are members of registered active Cathedral parish families. Applications are available as hard copies at the parish office during parish business hours or in the atrium, a PDF of the application form will be available at the Scholarship Application link on the parish website (spicathedral.org), or the application may be completed online.

The deadline for submission of completed applications and documents is 11:59 PM on Thursday, April 30, 2026, either online or by hard copy. Hard copy submissions should be placed in a sealed envelope and addressed to CCCW/Knights of Columbus Scholarship Committee and returned to the parish office in the rectory. Thank you for your interest, and good luck to all applicants!



CCCW LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS

WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT
FEBRUARY 25
MARCH 4, 11, 18, & 25
6:00PM
CATHEDRAL ATRIUM

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 25th, beginning at 6pm in the Atrium. Various homemade soups with bread & crackers will be served. All are welcome!

OCIA Spotlight on Reece Szepelak

Over the past two years, I've been blessed to be surrounded by people who continually encourage and inspire me to grow, both personally and in my faith. Their guidance and example have meant more to me than I can fully express, and I am deeply grateful for the many ways they have helped shape this journey.

Through them, I was introduced to Father Alford and the OCIA community at the Cathedral. From the moment I first walked in, it felt like home. The warmth, support, and faith of this community have been a true gift.

As I prepare to enter into the Catholic Church in the coming weeks, I feel an overwhelming sense of excitement and gratitude. I am looking forward to embracing this new way of living and continuing to grow in faith alongside such an incredible community.

Please pray for Reece and all our catechumens and candidates as they prepare for baptism or full-reception into the Church.



SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Embracing God's Love, United in Generosity

God created man and woman in his image, reminding us that every person is sacred and reflects God's love. Each of us has a purpose, woven into God's plan. Our support of CRS Rice Bowl provides hope and opportunity to families around the world. Let's reflect on how our prayers, fasting, and almsgiving can help our sisters and brothers fulfill their potential. Visit crsricebowl.org/week-5 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. For further questions, please call Rita Devore at 217-821-7517. 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!

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.

Support our parish by giving online

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

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!

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

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.

Fr. Tolton Council 16126 Knights of Columbus Need ideas for Mother's Day?

The Knights of Columbus is selling individual roses to raise money for area pregnancy resource centers. Roses will be delivered at Masses over Mother's Day weekend. Visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/fr-augustine-tolton-council-16126s-shop> for details.

- March 26 - Council Meeting at 7:00 PM, council chambers, 1st floor school hall
- March 28 - Chrism Mass service project after 8 AM Mass
- March 29 - 5th Sunday Rosary after 10 AM Mass

Questions? Contact Grand Knight Larry Travis, LTRAVISJR@gmail.com, or Program Director Brian Huber, bhubie@comcast.net.



What Lazarus Wanted

"It must be so crazy, being God," one of my friends said in high school. "Does it feel like playing The Sims all day? Just making people do stuff because you want to see what happens?"

I think we all sometimes fall into this warped manner of thinking about God's omnipotence. It's understandable, to a degree. The flimsiness of our own agency in this world, our real ability to impact or change anything ... well, it all feels especially puny when you put it next to the power of the Creator. "Oh God, thy sea is so great," goes the old fisherman's prayer. "And my boat is so small."

But today, in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, we are reminded that God is all about giving us agency.

Jesus could have raised any random person from the dead on this, the Fifth Sunday of Lent. His intention was clear: to foreshadow his own passion, death and resurrection, and to exhibit the closeness of God to those who mourn. "This illness is not to end in death," he tells his companions. "But is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." (John 11:4)

So if it could have been anyone, why was it Lazarus?

I think the answer has to be that this was something Lazarus agreed to. Perhaps not in an explicit way, for he didn't know the mind or the plans of God. But in his friendship with Jesus, in the strength of his faith and the depth of his devotion to God, in every prayer he ever uttered — "Lord, let your will be done" — he was agreeing to it. Over and over, in what he said and what he did, Lazarus, beloved friend of Christ, said, "Lord, I love you. Lord, use me."

In this last full week of Lent, let us say it with him: "Lord, I love you. Lord, use me."

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Around the Diocese

- **Genealogy Using Catholic Records** - Learn about using sacramental records to trace your family history. Presentation will include a brief overview of how to get started doing genealogy and a detailed look at sacramental records and the information they contain. There will be a special focus on using Church records to trace African American/Black family history. Katie Oubre, MLIS, CA, CRM is the Vice-Chancellor for Archives and Records for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. She has worked for the Diocese for over nine years and previously worked for the Diocese of Baton Rouge Archives. She is the Immediate Past President of the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists. Lincoln Library Carnegie Room North 326 South 7th Street Springfield, Illinois
Saturday, March 28, 2026 11 am to 12 pm
- **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