

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

MARCH 8, 2026 | THIRD 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 10

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

DEACON DAVID BEACH

DEACON IRVIN LAWRENCE SMITH

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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.



Fountain of Life and Holiness

On the first Sunday of Lent, the diocese always celebrates the Rite of Election, a ceremony in which those preparing for Baptism at the Easter Vigil come to the Cathedral to be received by the Bishop and given a new designation as the Elect, those who have been chosen by the Church to receive these sacraments. I am pleased to report that we have five members of the Elect who will be baptized here at the Easter Vigil. Looking through our parish Book of the Elect which lists the names of those to be baptized each year, the last time we had this number was ten years ago! This is a great sign of hope for our parish and for the diocese, which has experienced increased numbers over the past two years. Please keep our Elect in your prayers: Tony, Mike, Reece, Grace, and Ava.

An important part of Lent for these Elect are the three Scrutinies that take place on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent. The *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* describes these three Scrutinies in this way:

In order to awaken a desire for purification and redemption by Christ, three Scrutinies take place, both to teach the elect gradually about that mystery of sin from which the whole world and every person longs to be rescued in order to be saved from its present and future consequences, and to fill their spirit with the sense of Christ the Redeemer, who is living water (cf. the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman), light (cf. the Gospel of the Man Born Blind), resurrection and life (cf. the Gospel of the Raising of Lazarus). From the first to the final Scrutiny, they must grow in the awareness of sin and in the desire for salvation. (OCIA, 143)

Given that the first Scrutiny that takes place this weekend points to Jesus as the Living Water, the invocation that I have chosen for this week is the following:

Heart of Jesus, fountain of life and holiness, have mercy on us.

Throughout the dialog with the Samaritan Woman, Jesus is leading her toward a deeper understanding of what He desires to offer to her, not just physical water that will temporarily satisfy her thirst, but a water that will well up to Eternal Life. (cf. Jn 4:13-14) There is an often-overlooked detail in the account that is worth mentioning. After Jesus offers this living water to her, she departs and we read: "The woman left her water jar." (Jn 4:28) St. Thomas Aquinas comments on this detail in the following way:

The water jar is a symbol of worldly desires, by which men draw out pleasures from the depths of darkness—symbolized by the well—i.e., from a worldly manner of life. Accordingly, those who abandon worldly desires for the sake of God leave their water jars (Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Gospel of John: Chapters 1–21, trans. Fabian Larcher and James A. Weisheipl, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 229)

This is what our Elect are being invited to at the Easter Vigil. As they receive Jesus in the fount of Baptism, they receive a new life in which they are cleansed of their sins, characterized by worldly desires, and they are equipped to live new lives of holiness as they pursue the life of the Gospel and the goods of Eternal Life. May our Lenten journey also be a time in which we recall our Baptism and the invitation from Christ to continue to turn to His Heart, the fountain of life, to help us in our daily struggle to turn away from worldly desires and recommit to living lives of holiness.

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 9

7am - John Joseph McGrath (McGrath Family)
12:05pm - Jim Maher (Judy O'Shea)
5:15pm - Dick Allender (Family)

Tuesday, March 10

7am - John and Edith Bakalar (John Busciacco)
12:05pm - Micah Jude Gray (McGrath Family)
5:15pm - Mary Jane Kern (Estate)

Wednesday, March 11

7am - Johnstone-Valdez Family (Rosario Johnstone)
12:05pm - Norma Fairweather (Andrew & Cheryl Klein Family)
5:15pm - Patricia Walter (Jean Moss)

Thursday, March 12

7am - Barbara Conkrite (Litina Carnes)
12:05pm - Robert 'Bob' Scott (McGrath Family)
5:15pm - Ann Pinc (Brother)

Friday, March 13

7am - Henry Burnette (Vicki Compton)
12:05pm - Andy O'Neill Sr. (Berberet Family)
5:15pm - Intention for Bianca (DA Drago)

Saturday, March 14

8am - Deceased Members of the Thompson & Gairani families (Joanna Thompson)
4pm - Irvin Larry Smith (Larry and Beverly Smith)

Sunday, March 15

7am - Mary Ann Midden (Bill Midden)
10am - Mercedes and Charles Nesbitt (Kathy Frank)
5pm - For the People

EXTENDED CONFESSIONS

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





St. Francis understood that Jesus is alive and well.

Jesus reigns from his throne in heaven and governs his Church, not in some far-off and distant way, but in a very intimate and loving way. We can speak to him, and he can speak to us, and he does so powerfully and consistently through the scriptures and the writings of the saints. In these sources, we find the voice of God in a clear and trustworthy way.

Additionally, however, Jesus speaks to us in the silence of prayer, and in the voice of our conscience moving us to actions of love. It is this latter presence of Christ's voice in quiet prayer that many in our Church today fail to accept. I believe this comes from a profound lack of faith in the present, truly human, and actual life of the risen and ascended Jesus, who is still alive and has been for nearly two-thousand years after his death and resurrection. St. Francis had faith that he served a very much alive Lord, who he could follow and serve just as he could follow and serve an earthly Lord as a knight.

Before recording the major call of Francis, which he received in the small and broken-down church of San Damiano, which I will reflect on next week, St. Bonaventure writes a short little poem about the source of Francis' wisdom. In this small poem, we read this brief but meaningful sentence:

"Francis, the servant of the Most High, had no other teacher in these matters except Christ."

(Quoted from *The Life of St. Francis*, Translated by Ewert Cousin)

What Bonaventure is referring to by "these matters" is St. Francis' radical life of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, poverty, and desire to live like Christ in the Gospel. Francis listened deeply to the Word of God in the Gospels. It was there that he knew the voice of Christ still lived, and it is there that Francis constantly looked for guidance. He knew also, however, that Jesus could speak to him and teach him in his own heart. Thus, we see that he heard and trusted the voice of Christ in his dream calling him to be a knight, and the voice of Christ in his heart leading him to embrace and kiss the leper.

Francis believed Jesus was still alive and able to speak to him.

This sounds so simple, almost too simple even to write down. How many of us, though, at one time or other in our lives, have treated Jesus more as simply a character in a story from the past, more as a historical figure like George Washington or Buddha, than as a currently alive and reigning man (who is God) who wants to have a real relationship with us? He wants us to speak to him and to listen to him.

Admittedly, he speaks differently than the friend sitting next to us. We talk to Jesus in our hearts and he speaks to us there, most often in silence and most often without words (though to some saints, he has even spoken out loud in words their ears can hear). But is this form of silent communication therefore less real? No, not at all. It just requires a form of listening that we have to practice.

Jesus is alive. He is a moment's consideration away. He hears our every thought and when we give him our attention, he will give us his. He wants to teach us to do his will. He may

not speak in a way we can understand right away, but in time our understanding will grow. Through the intercession of St. Francis, may our faith be strengthened to live with, speak to, learn from, and serve the living Lord Jesus, our high priest and king. 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 28th & March 1st

Envelopes:	\$5,294.00
Loose:	\$6,442.00
Maintenance:	\$995.00
Total:	\$12,731.00

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 9

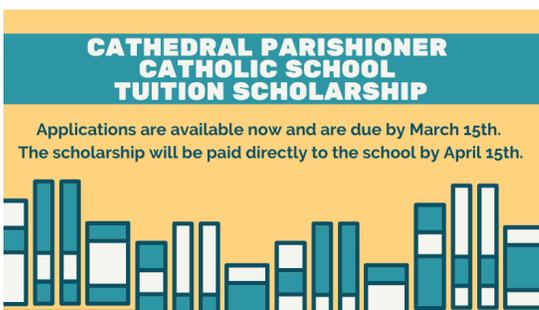
<u>MONDAY</u>	<u>TUESDAY</u>	<u>WEDNESDAY</u>	<u>THURSDAY</u>	<u>FRIDAY</u>	<u>SATURDAY</u>	<u>SUNDAY</u>
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Adoration 4:00 PM Church Grief Share 1:00 PM School Library	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library Rosary 4:45 PM Church Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Room	Women's Bible Study 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		Triumph of the Heart Movie 2:00PM 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 next Lenten Soup Supper will be Wednesday, March 11th, 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.



Congratulations to Madi, Lisa, Matt and Gabe who have been welcomed into full communion and to Lynise who has been Confirmed. Please keep these new Catholics in your prayers!

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Nourishing Futures in Guatemala

In Guatemala, nutrition classes and savings programs give mothers and families better opportunities to improve their health, nutrition and financial well-being. Visit crsricebowl.org/week-3 to read how your support of CRS Rice Bowl is helping the Guatemala community Thrive.



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!

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

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

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.



When God asks for Water

One of my earliest memories is of my mother weeping.

The last few months of her pregnancy with my little brother were tremendously painful for her, and more than once the pain brought her to tears. I have a hazy image of her in my mind, belly swollen with a 12-pound baby lying transverse in the womb, sitting on the edge of her bed, dabbing at her face with toilet paper.

I had brought her the toilet paper. I would do that when I saw her crying, to wipe away her tears. I have a hazy memory of that, too — of the way my heart was wrenched by the sight of her suffering, of my desperation to do something to help, and of my immense satisfaction when she would take the toilet paper, smile and say, “Oh, thank you, sweetheart!” as if I had just airlifted her out of a war zone.

What a powerful gift to give to a child still learning the meaning of compassion and selflessness — the gift of being able to feel that she has, even in some small way, “rescued” a person she worships. Her smile of gratitude lives, immortal, in my mind, along with the swell of satisfaction it produced in the deepest corner of my heart. This was when I learned that it feels good to help people, and this memory is a perpetually replenished well of living water for me. I draw from it daily, three decades later.

This is a gift that Christ gives, over and over again, in the Gospels. He allows us to encounter him tired, afraid, sad and hungry. Omnipotent power subjected to the utter vulnerability of human form.

Before the Incarnation, God looked down from Heaven and said, “You are thirsty. Here is something to drink.”

After the Incarnation, God sits down beside us and says, “I’m thirsty. Give me something to drink.”

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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.
- **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