

Cathedral OF THE *Immaculate Conception*

MAY 17, 2026 | SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD



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 20

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.



Delight of all the Saints

As my time at the Cathedral is coming to an end, I am noticing how different aspects of life here, of which I have grown accustomed to, are about to become memories of the past. To be sure, they will be memories that, when I recall them, will bring me great peace and joy as I recall the many blessings of having served here, some of the happiest years of my nearly fifteen years as a priest.

One thing that came to mind as I reviewed the readings for this Sunday (the Ascension of the Lord) was something from the Responsorial Psalm. It is not any specific word that I will remember, but rather something unique that accompanies those words as this psalm is sung at the masses this weekend. The response is as follows: "God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord." (Ps 47:6) As that verse is sung, Mark Gifford always adds a little trumpet blast from the organ. I usually remember that it is coming, but every time I hear it, I cannot help but smile – it brings me great delight, and I am sure every time I hear this verse in the future, even if not accompanied by this musical flourish, I will remember what happens here with that same delight.

Though Psalm 47 certainly has its own Old Testament context, possibly connected to the Feast of Tabernacles, our liturgy for this Sunday sees it as connected to Jesus ascending to Heaven to take His place forever as the King who will reign supreme for eternity. The psalm is a jubilant expression of the praise in Heaven as the saints clap their hands and shout with joy, blowing trumpets as they gather around their King. I have therefore chosen the following invocation from the Litany of the Sacred Heart for this feast of the Ascension:

Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints, have mercy on us

This feast day invites us to consider the delight that we will have when we finally are welcomed into this wonderful scene when we reach the end of our earthly pilgrimage. It is so hard for us to grasp this delight will far exceed any of the delights we experience in this life. And yet, it is true! This does not mean that we downplay the delights of this life. We accept them with gratitude, recognizing them as the gifts that they are from God, but we rejoice in our belief that something more awaits us. And unlike the delights of this world, which bring so much joy in the moment, but often turn into memories that may fade, the delight of the saints is ever present and never diminished. It reminds me of a line with which I sometimes conclude funerals. It comes from the conclusion of *The Last Battle*, the final installment of the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis, wrapping up the many adventures of delight had by the main characters:

And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.

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, May 18

7am - Carrie Eichen
(Daniel Schumacher)
5:15pm - Grace & Tony Forlano
(John Busciacco)

Tuesday, May 19

7am - Adam Sexson
(Sharon Sexson)
5:15pm - Emery Mapes
(Jesse & Claire Presley)

Wednesday, May 20

7am - Brother Francis Skube
(Friend)
5:15pm - Linda Olivero
(Family)

Thursday, May 21

7am - Deceased Members of the Sestak
Family (Steve & Vicki Stalcup)
5:15pm - Deceased Member of the
Thompson & Gairani Families (Joanna
Thompson)

Friday, May 22

7am - Thomas Conway Sr.
(Family)
5:15pm - Dale & Delia Sinn
(Pamela Hargan)

Saturday, May 23

8am - Micah Jude Gray
(Beverly & Lawrence Smith)
4pm - Dan "Wade" Connolly
(Toni Bentel)

Sunday, May 24

7am - For the People
10am - Dan Smargiassi
(Smargiassi Family)
5pm - Intention for Doris & Cathy
(DA Drago)



On this feast of the Ascension, we recall the new way Jesus desires to relate to his people. Formerly, during his hidden life on earth and his public ministry, he walked among his people in the ordinary way any human being does. He spoke to them, prayed with them, taught them, and healed them. He worked incredible miracles, but from any outward viewer's perspective he looked and acted like a normal human being. As Isaiah prophesies, "he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him" (53:2). This ordinary appearance ceases, however, after the resurrection.

When Jesus appears to his apostles after the resurrection, he is generally somewhat unrecognizable, although they can see it is him when he makes it known to them. Still, he does not remain with them for long in this new form - he ascends to heaven after forty days. There, from his throne, he now SEEMS to be far away from us. He SEEMS now to simply have no appearance at all. He seems to have left.

As we repeat every year, however, the thought that Christ has left us is a mistaken thought. He has not left, rather, he has chosen to exist in a new sort of relation toward us. Before, he came to us in an ordinary, physical, earthly way. Now he has ascended, but not to leave. He has ascended in order to be even closer. Before, someone could only get close to him by walking toward him. Now, I call him to mind and he is there with me. His presence has become more universal and heightened - not because he has become some sort of ethereal spirit, but because in his physical body, he has gone to a place that needs no movement on our part to access.

Additionally, he has not only gone there, but he has granted to his Church (the apostles and disciples) the power to unite people to him in an intimate union that St. Paul called being "one body" in Christ. This union has come to be known as the "mystical body of Christ" or "the Church." We say that from heaven Jesus exercises a headship over his body and that we form one body with him.

St. Augustine speaks about how we cannot speak about the head without the body or the body without the head if we want to speak of the whole Christ. Jesus has willed reality to be such that he is incomplete without his body, and that we are incomplete without the rest of the body and our head. This is a great mystery!

Pope Pius XII says, even more strikingly, that although "Christ the Head holds such an eminent position, one must not think that he does not require the help of the Body. ... Christ has need of His members. ... That is not because He is indigent and weak, but rather because He has so willed it for the greater glory of His spotless Spouse. Dying on the Cross He left to His Church the immense treasury of the Redemption, towards which she contributed nothing. But when those graces come to be distributed, not only does He share this work of sanctification with His Church, but He wills that in some way it be due to her action."

I end here by simply briefly calling our minds back to St. Francis. See how he lived out his union with Christ his Head and Lord. We see so clearly in his life how Jesus worked the sanctification of so many precisely through Francis' actions and words. If St. Francis had not been the apostolic disciple that Jesus called him to be, where would the Church be now?

How is Jesus calling you and me to live more intentionally as a member of his body, sharing in the mission of our Head and Shepherd?

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

May 9th & 10th

Envelopes:	\$10,089.00
Loose:	\$3,368.75
Maintenance:	\$115.00
Total:	\$13,572.75

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

Baptisms

Grace Valentine Zimerman
Child of Zachary and Kristi Zimerman
Baptized on April 19, 2026

Theodore Peter Ryan
Child of Benjamin and Rachel Ryan
Baptized on April 25, 2026

Deaths

Howard L. Beagles
Date of Death: April 13, 2026

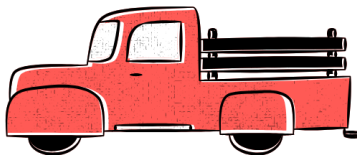
WEEK OF MAY 18

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Rosary 4:45 PM Church	Grief Share 1:00 PM School Library	Men's Bible Study 6:00 AM School Library	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Rosary 4:45 PM Church		
Spanish Bible Study 6:00pm School Library	Adoration 4:00 PM Church	Senior Social 3:00 PM Atrium	Women' Bible Study 10am & 1pm School Library			
	OCIA 6:00 PM School Library	Rosary 4:45 PM Church	CCCW Meeting 6:00 PM School Hall			
		Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Choir Room				

What's Going on Around the Cathedral?

STUFF A TRUCK FOOD DRIVE

FOR THE HOLY FAMILY FOOD PANTRY



BEFORE & AFTER
ALL MASSES
MAY 30 & 31

Stuff a Truck Food Drive

The Knights of Columbus and CCCW are partnering in a "Stuff a Truck" Food Drive for the Holy Family Food Pantry. Look for the Red Trucks before & after all Masses May 30 and 31! Suggested items for donations include (no glass please): Dry pasta, Spaghetti sauce w meat, Canned complete meals, Peanut butter & jelly, Mac-n-cheese box mixes, Fruit & veggies, Box mixes of any kind, Pancake Mix & Syrup, Fruit & Pudding cups, Potatoes, Paper products, Oral Hygiene items, Feminine Hygiene items, Laundry items, Diapers. Thank you in advance for your generosity!



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

COORDINATOR OF FAITH FORMATION AND MISSION

The Cathedral is Hiring a Coordinator of Faith Formation and Mission

The Cathedral is looking to hire a Coordinator of Faith Formation and Mission. This role is a professional catechetical leader responsible for the total religious formation program of the parish for all ages. As a representative of the Rector, the Coordinator implements the parish religious formation program in accordance with the parish Mission Statement and goals, and develops a Parish Catechetical Plan to guide the ongoing work of faith formation. The Coordinator manages program content, volunteers, and budget and coordinates with other parish ministries and activities. Please visit www.spicathedral.org/employment for more information. Interested candidates should provide a cover letter and resume to Fr. Brian Alford, balford@dio.org.

Cathedral Meal Train

There are still plenty of dates available for the Cathedral Meal Train! If you are interested in volunteering in this ministry, please visit www.spicathedral.org/cathedral-meal-train/ for available dates. We ask that meals be delivered to the rectory by 3:00pm on the chosen dates. Entrees should feed 5 to 6 people; sides are welcome, but not necessary, and please, no desserts. Please contact the Parish Office if you have any questions - 217-522-3342. Thank you!



CATHEDRAL MEAL TRAIN

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Second Collection - Retired Diocesan Priests

Each year on the feast of Pentecost we rejoice that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to the Church in every age. As we celebrate this feast, I ask you to consider a generous response in the Retired Diocesan Priests Collection to meet the immediate retirement and health care needs of our priests.

Please pray for our priests who serve so generously in various apostolates throughout our diocese. Please thank God for all that we have received from our priests who are now retired, many of whom continue to offer generous service in every way that they are able throughout our diocese.

If you are unable to make an in-church contribution, please make your donation online at dio.org/give. At this location, please designate your gift in the instructions for this particular collection. You can also mail your donation to your parish office.

Thank you in advance for your support this year. May the Holy Spirit give us every gift we need to build up the Body of Christ in our time and place.

I Was Hungry and You Fed Me

The Holy Family Food Pantry is in need of cereal, pasta sauce, rice, and canned beans. Please help as you are able. Pantry manager, Dennis, sends his most sincere thanks for the increased donations!

Games and Puzzles Needed

Our Senior Socials are looking for 300-piece puzzles, poker chips, dominoes, dice and other games senior citizens might enjoy. If you've got some of these you no longer need, we'd be happy to accept them. Just bring to the Cathedral atrium. Thank you!

First Communion/Confirmation Volunteers Needed

The Diocese welcomes high school volunteers to help at the Cathedral for Sacraments. For Saturday events, arrival time is 9:00 a.m. (although you can help set up at 7:00 a.m.); you will finish by 1:30 p.m. For Tuesday events, arrival time is at 5:00 p.m. (although you can help set up at 3:00 p.m.); you will finish by 9:15 p.m. You must be Safe Environment trained and background checked. There are a variety of dates available, and the sign-up is available here: <https://dio.org/volunteer-to-help-with-sacraments-at-the-cathedral-parishioner/>

Attention all seniors...Senior Social

You are invited to Senior Socials, a monthly event connecting area Catholic seniors. Come meet other retired/senior citizens for an afternoon of games, cards, conversation and snacks. Bring a game you want to play or play one of ours. Hope to see you on Wednesday, May 20, 3:00pm-5:00pm in the Cathedral Atrium.

K of C Baseball Trip

The Fr. Tolton Council of the Knights of Columbus is planning a day at the ballpark in Peoria to watch the Chiefs in action. The game is June 7th at 2:05 PM and includes an all you can eat buffet, plus soda and water, and great seats, too. Transportation is on your own. Friends and family are welcome! Prizes for the first people to register! To place your ticket order visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/peoria-chiefs-day-at-the-ballpark>.

How to Live in the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the most mysterious of the persons of the Trinity, and His work in our lives is not always apparent - for example, can you answer the question, "How am I living out of the gifts given to me at the sacrament of Confirmation?" If you want to know and understand more of what God desires for our relationship with the Holy Spirit, join Fr. Daniel McGrath at 7:00 PM in the Cathedral Atrium after the feast of Pentecost, on June 8, 15, 22, and 29, as we dive into the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the effect of the Holy Spirit on our lives!



When Words Fail

I love words (obviously; I'm a writer).

But sometimes, words are like teeny, tiny cages. They enclose and confine and restrict our understanding of supernatural realities that are, by their nature, bigger than language.

We do the best we have, with the words that we have, to express who God is. We use terms like "Father" and "Son" because they are the most accurate. But often, without really noticing, we give the words too much weight, and we find ourselves thinking of Jesus as a human son and the Creator as a human father, with all the implications those particular words carry for different people.

That's why I love hearing Christ speak to God the Father in the Gospels. These one-sided conversations (at least from our viewpoint) pull back the curtain just a little on the breathtaking intimacy that exists between the two. Our misunderstandings of their relationship — framed by our own human experience of fathers and sons, of time and place, of creation and death — are shattered.

"Now glorify me, Father, with you," Jesus says, "with the glory that I had with you before the world began."

Before the world began.

In our collective imagination, too often we imagine Jesus as being connected — tethered, really — to a certain time and place: the Incarnation, and all that came after. But let's not get confused: the Incarnation means that the Son became flesh, and dwelt among us. The Incarnation does not mean that the Son became.

The Son was. From the very beginning, He was. Begotten, not made. Consubstantial.

We say these words every week in the Creed. But saying them isn't enough. We have to take them into the silence of our hearts and hold them there. We have to invite the Spirit to move among them. Rearrange them. Liberate them. Unleash them.

Only then will we understand what words fail to explain.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

©LPi

Around the Diocese

- **Naomi and Ruth Women's Ministry @ St. Agnes, Summer Sundays Book Study.** Sessions 1-3 Sundays June 7, 14, 21; Sessions 4-7 Sundays August 2, 9, 16, 23. 2pm in the Parish Center. Order your book through Amazon or the Parish - Cost \$25/book includes video access. Contact Cathy Becker at St. Agnes for more information - 217-793-1330 or at cbecker@sacsipi.org
- **The Washington Street Mission** is excited to announce that our 2026 Annual Charity Golf Outing will be held on Friday, June 5th at Edgewood Golf Club in Auburn, Illinois. This event will help to raise much needed funds for the Mission. Please feel free to contact me (telephone - 660/349-8095; e-mail - bartowbog1@yahoo.com) if you have any questions or would like to discuss this opportunity further.
- **Summer Immersion Experience 2026**, Single Catholic women ages 20-45 who are curious about religious life are invited to a national service immersion experience hosted by four Dominican Sisters' congregations in Springfield June 16-20. The group will live at Sacred Heart Convent and experience the rhythms of apostolic religious life, which includes community life, prayer, active service, and theological reflection. There is a \$50 participation fee, but no woman will be turned away for lack of funds. Apply soon at springfieldop.org/events or call Sister Denise Glazik, OP, 217-787-0481 for questions.
- **Called and Courageous Women's Conference in Springfield** - Life is full of highs and lows, and it can be hard to see where God is in the middle of it all. At this year's Catholic Women's Conference, discover how to trust God in the messy, real moments of everyday life. Learn how your emotions influence your spiritual life and how to challenge the lies that lead to self-criticism, comparison, and discouragement. You'll leave with practical tools to learn how to recognize God in your daily life, grow in prayer, and live with greater confidence in your identity as a beloved daughter of God. No matter what your season of life - single, married, divorced, widowed, young adult, or retired - you'll find encouragement, community, and hope. When? Saturday, October 10. Christ the King parish Center, Springfield. Women ages 18+. Cost \$30. For the full schedule, speaker information, and registration, visit go.dio.org/cac. Even if you are on the fence about God, remember: God is not on the fence about you. Questions? Contact Gracie Ortiz at gortiz@dio.org or 217-321-1124.