

*Cathedral*  
WEEKLY

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST  
CORPUS CHRISTI

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CORPUS CHRISTI | FR. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE  
THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST | FR. MARK SUSLENKO  
HOW TO START READING THE BIBLE IN 10 STEPS | MARK HART

# Cathedral WEEKLY

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI  
NINTH BISHOP  
OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

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524 East Lawrence Springfield, IL 62703  
Cathedral Parish Office: 217-522-3342  
Website: [www.spicathedral.org](http://www.spicathedral.org)

Mass Times: 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

Diocesan Victim Assistance is available. For the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, please contact: Patricia Kornfield at 321-1155.

Please remember that if you or a loved one is in the hospital, a nursing home or home-bound, to contact the Parish offices or Sr. Francella at 217-522-3342 x 142.

## Welcome to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception!

On behalf of our bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, our parishioners, deacons, and priests, I 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.

I hope that your visit to our Cathedral is one of grace and beauty and that you feel at home in the mother church. I also hope that you will find this edition of the *Cathedral Weekly* to be both informative and spiritually enriching. May God bless you and yours!



Very Reverend Christopher A. House  
Rector



## Corpus Christi

This weekend we celebrate the feast formally titled the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, but popularly known as *Corpus Christi*. Every time the Church gathers to celebrate the Mass, the Eucharist, which is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord, is at the center of our worship. We must avoid the danger of growing lax in our reverence and awe due to our familiarity with this great and wonderful sacrament, which is one reason why the Church dedicates a particular day of solemnity to focus solely on this mystery.

Personally, among the many sorrows of these months of pandemic has been the separation of the faithful from the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the life source of the Church, the ultimate manifestation of Christ's presence among us, and it has been the strength of the faithful for the Church's entire history. It is not a sign or symbol, because a sign or symbol points to another reality. The Eucharist is a reality because the Holy Spirit changes the humble gifts of bread and wine that we offer into the real presence of Jesus. In extreme circumstances spiritual communion serves as a solace and source of grace but it is not the same the physical manifestation of the Lord Jesus under the appearance of bread and wine. You may remember one of Coca-Cola's past slogans of "It's the real thing." Truer words could not be said regarding the Eucharist.

Some of you may have attended an adult faith formation series last year with Fr. Stock on the 20<sup>th</sup> century American Catholic writer Flannery O'Connor. Amongst her writings is a letter where Flannery recounted being invited to a dinner party and feeling out of place in a group of she termed "intellectuals." She went on to say that she said nothing all night until the conversation turned to the Church and the Eucharist and that her hostess talked about that, even though she had left the practice of the faith, she still thought that the Eucharist was a wonderful "symbol." Having heard enough, Flannery recounted: *I then said, in a very shaky voice, 'Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it.' That was all the defense I was capable of but I realize now that this is all I will ever be able to say about it, outside of a story, except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable.*

May we have the same grace that Flannery O'Connor did to recognize just how vital the Eucharist is for us. The Church should not have to impose an obligation on participating in Sunday Mass; the Eucharist should be incentive enough. The Eucharist has been the strength of martyrs, it has comforted the faithful over the centuries in the face of adversity, it is the source and summit of our life of faith, and the remedy for our mortality that will lead us to everlasting life. May we always approach the altar to receive this most precious gift with worthy hearts and lives.

*Father Christopher House is the Rector of the Cathedral and serves in various leadership roles within the diocesan curia, namely Chancellor and Vicar Judicial.*

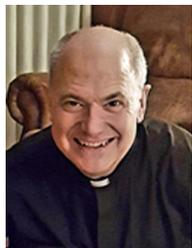
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## Sunday Reflection

### Bread and Wine; Flesh and Blood

For a while – too long, it seems – most of us could not share in Holy Communion. Perhaps it is still so. We long to eat and drink because Jesus pledges that he will remain in those who do. But we believe that same Christ is present to us in other ways. When Scripture is read aloud, he speaks in our midst today. When two or three gather in his name, he is there, too. He is not distant from us.

- Let me make time each day to read and ponder one of the Sunday readings.
- Even if I cannot go to church, how will I still continue to pray?
- How will my longing for Eucharist and Communion urge me to help feed those needing daily bread?



## The Presence of Christ

I have often referred to the older woman who lived across the street when I was growing up. She was a gentle soul named Pani. It was only until many years later that I learned that "Pani" really meant "Mrs. or Miss" in Polish! She would often speak of her life during the depression in Poland and of course, her experience of WWII. She and her husband had just gotten married when they both were carried off to different concentration camps. Neither knew the fate of the other for well over a year and she would speak of these days with great emotion and pain. I had no words and could only intently listen. I asked her what it was like to be separated for so long and she labored to communicate, in broken English, her feelings of loss, anxiety, fear and uncertainty. She waited, hoped and put her trust in God. Much to each of their surprise, an amazing, emotional, and triumphant reunion took place one day and they both realized that their fears and worries had no merit and they could be together again. It did not matter that all their physical possessions were gone; they had each other.

I asked her one day what became of the love she had for her husband during that time away and how it could be sustained. She remarked, without missing a step that it continued to grow and strengthen in her heart and soul. His love was alive in her and hers in him. They were never really apart. When they saw each other again it was as if time never passed and they continued on. The time of separation strengthened their love in so many ways. They were strengthened and given a strong resilience towards life's disappointments and hurts. All this made their life together even more special. They appreciated each other all the more.

Many have been away from the Eucharist, the very Body and Blood of Christ, for a long time. Due to a dangerous pandemic, we were quickly separated from the physical reception of this eternal source and Presence of Love Incarnate, inspiration, and strength. As church teaching reminds us, as efficacious, beautiful, and grace filled the sacraments are, God is not bound by them. He always finds a way. Even through the pain of physical separation from the Body of Christ, the very Presence of God stirs and works in each member of the Body of Christ so that the Divine Image can still be revealed, and we can become precisely what we are meant to eat. The love relationship fostered with God cannot be taken or diminished in one who truly desires it and believes.

The community of believers receives through the gift of the Eucharist the power and the presence to touch and heal in the name of the One they desire to welcome within. So many wonderful Eucharistic blessings have taken place over the last several weeks. Families have been brought closer together, the

hectic and frenzied pace of life has been put on hold for a bit, deeper conversations with those who matter the most have occurred, generosity toward those who are struggling, poor, and bearing the brunt of the pandemic's economic fallout is being demonstrated, our dependence upon God is being realized, our need for community, social interaction and support confirmed, the earth is healing a bit, our call to solidarity is being realized and the list goes on and on in terms of how, even in spite of the absence of the physical reception of the Eucharist, God is inspiring, working, transforming, forming, and redeeming the world piece by piece. All these things and more bring hope to those who can easily fall into despair. They are lights in the midst of darkness.

Nothing can stop grace. But we also realize that separation, while bearable for a time cannot be allowed to last forever. We must connect again. My friend Pani needed to physically embrace her husband again in order for their love to continue to grow more deeply. We need to embrace the Eucharistic presence of God and our community of faith again in order to fully be who we are called to be. The sacred Eucharistic meal is a celebration of intimacy, the reunion of two loves in constant search of and longing for the other. What wonderful reunions are happening all over the world!



It is now within our grasp, especially after the experience we have endured and continue to endure, to change the way life is lived and to more intentionally put into practice the Beatitudes the Divine Guest has revealed. We are asked to be like Christ and work to create a world of sufficiency, not deficiency, where no longer does the greed of some create the want of others but where all of God's children can find a home and a place at the table of life.

The One who makes a home within calls us to live a life that transforms! It is time, more than ever, to allow the Eucharistic Presence of Christ to change us so that we can become real agents of change for others. People, our environment, and economic systems are hurting. We have to set our relationships with all things straight and allow justice, equity, peace, sustainability, accountability, and mercy order all things. This is the Eucharistic way.

If we see our relationship with the Body and Blood of Christ simply as something necessary for our personal salvation, then we are wrong. It is never just about me and what I think I need, want, and merit. If we really recognize Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread then we will also recognize him in the poor, the outcast, and all who cry out for healing and wholeness. What we do for them we do for Christ. The very presence of God touches the depths of the human soul and visits a part of us that no human being can ever hope to explore. We are God's. It is out of that relationship that we live our life. It is to God that we have allegiance.

**Continued on pg. 5**

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Throughout history we have hurt so many people in the name of progress. Throughout history we have trampled upon our environment in the pursuit of wealth and power. Throughout history we have done everything possible to live our lives without God. Throughout history we have forced so many people to conform to a certain way of thinking and persecuted them because they looked and believed differently than us. Have we learned any lessons during our time away? If so, then the reunions with the physical Presence of Christ that are happening all over the world ought to set all of us on fire with the transforming Presence and love of the Holy Spirit! In how we order our lives, set up our priorities, interact in the world, speak to others, and advocate to accomplish, what will people see? It is hoped that they see people who believe what they believe not simply for their own merit but because they truly desire to become the One they receive!

*Fr. Mark Suslenko is Pastor of the Community of Ss. Isidore and Maria in Glastonbury, CT. Fr. Suslenko publishes reflection articles regularly to his parish's blog.*



## How to Start Reading the Bible in 10 Steps

I meet tens of thousands of people a year at different events. Most of them are Catholic Christians who want to start reading the Bible but don't know where to start.

So if you've ever wanted to go deeper into God's Word but haven't known how to approach it, allow me to suggest a few tips (so you can learn from my mistakes).

Like anything else, if you want to build something ... in this case, your knowledge and love for the Scriptures ... you don't just grab a hammer and some nails and start pounding. To ensure that you don't just jump in and then quit out of frustration or confusion, there are certain things you can do to be more successful.

We'll attack this on three levels ... the tools, the blueprint, and the construction. By the end, you'll have ten total steps to help you build a biblical fortress able to resist anything the devil can throw at you.

### The Tools

Let's start with three things you should do before you start studying.

#### 1. Pick a time, but not just any time.

Commit to a daily time that you'll open God's Word but be sure it's an intelligent time. If you're really tired, for example, then reading the Bible once you're in bed probably isn't the best time. Pick a time when you're totally awake so you can give your full attention.

#### 2. Pick a Bible that you can understand.

Get yourself a good Catholic Bible (that way you have all seventy-three books), but if you don't have one right now, that shouldn't keep you from reading. The best translation today is the one that you already have. It's important that your Bible is comfortable to read, light enough to take with you, durable

enough to really use, and inexpensive enough that you don't feel bad writing or marking in it. If you haven't seen it ... I highly recommend the Revised Standard Version—Catholic Edition for personal study, it's great. You might also want to have a copy of the New American Bible, which is the translation we hear at daily Mass and on Sundays (NAB). Just remember, your Bible is like a telescope—it's not meant to be looked at but, rather, looked through.

#### 3. Have other books that help you understand the Book.

There's a myriad of solid Catholic ancillary materials and resources to help you understand the Bible better—like those available through Ascension and from other fine Catholic publishers. It's also great to have *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* handy, so you can use it as you study.

### The Blueprint

Now here are three things you can do as you study:

#### 1. Pray, and then pray some more.

Before you open God's Word, ask the author of that word—the Holy Spirit—to be present in a bold and fierce way. Quiet yourself, spend some time in silence, and hold the Bible in your hands as you pray. Ask God, through the power of his Spirit, to open your mind, your eyes, and your heart to his truth. Thank him for the gift of his Word, a gift that millions have given their lives to defend and to offer you the freedom to read and pray. It doesn't have to be a long prayer but take some time ... this is the most important step in Bible study.

#### 2. Have a plan.

If you were planning on reading the Bible cover to cover ... don't. The Bible isn't a novel; it wasn't designed to be read from Genesis straight through to Revelation. We must learn *the story of salvation history*—and I cannot recommend *The Great Adventure* series of resources highly enough—whether you're an adult (*TGA*) a teen (*T3*) or a middle school student (*Encounter*), we've got you covered!

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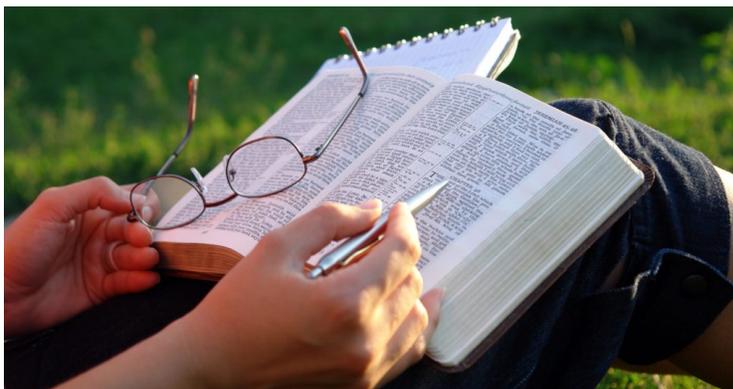
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And after you catch the big picture of the Bible, then you can focus on smaller portraits. I'd pick one book that you are going to start in and make that book your focus for a while. If you are starting from scratch, I'd suggest the Gospel of Mark. St. Mark's Gospel is the shortest and easiest to understand; you already know the main characters and plotline and its personal significance and relevance to your faith walk. The Gospels are the hinge-pin to the entire Bible, they're a great place to start and get into that reading "rhythm."

### 3. Get the background.

If you do start in a Gospel, take the time to learn about who the author was, who he was writing to, and what the basic themes are of his Gospel account. Ask yourself what makes that specific account different than the other three. Don't just jump into a letter of St. Paul without knowing what is going on in the city to which he is writing. If you are reading a prophet, know what was going on in his world at the time.

'Where do I learn these things?' you might ask. Read the Introduction to the Gospel on the pages preceding it. Use one of your additional books or resources to help you. When you know what is going on with the author and the audience, the words will jump out at you in a much different way and you will have better insight.



### Building up Love for God's Word

Finally, let's discuss four pieces of wisdom you should remember while reading the Bible and beyond.

#### 1. Less is more.

Don't just open up the Gospels and read until you get tired or for fifteen minutes because that's what you committed to doing. Most Bibles break down the chapters into subchapters. If you began in the Gospel of Mark, for instance, you shouldn't just start in verse 1 and continue through verse 45 (the end of the chapter).

Instead, take verses 1-8 and spend fifteen minutes meditating on them. Take just verses 9-11 and meditate on them. That first chapter (the 45 verses) should be broken down into about ten different studies alone. Studying the Scriptures is not like driving across the country ... it's not about how much distance you cover in a set amount of time. Enjoy the time, roll down the windows, and take everything in.

#### 2. Periods are there for a reason.

The periods at the end of each sentence are almost as much a gift as the words that precede them. Each little dot is an invitation to take a breath and reflect on what you just read and prayed. At each period, take a moment to envision the story that's unfolding.

If you are reading about the Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11), don't just say 'Hey cool, Jesus is getting baptized.' Go deeper. At each period, put yourself more deeply into the story ... at his baptism, where are you? Are you on the shore, on the mountain overlooking the scene or in the water right next to Christ? Is it hot out? Does the water smell bad? Is it noisy or peaceful? Let the story come alive.

#### 3. Journal.

As you are writing and verses confuse you or questions arise, write them down in a journal. Don't allow yourself to get hung up on tough verses. Scribble down the verse number with a question mark and keep moving. Later on you can search the footnotes, other books, or just ask someone who knows the Bible well for more help. The journal isn't just for questions, though. You should also use it to write out reflections that the verses stir within you. Write down images God gives you in your imagination. Record key verses that stand out to you spiritually. God will reveal a great deal about yourself to you when you let him.

#### 4. Put the Book down.

Don't become a bookworm who never takes their eyes off of the page. The Bible is the Living Word (John 1:1-5, Hebrews 4:12). It lives and breathes well beyond the page that contains it. Share what you learn. Write out passages and post them up in your room, locker, or office. Email verses to people. Put them on the fridge. Just like the Eucharist, the Word should be taken, blessed, broken (down), and *shared*. The greatest gift

you can give someone is to live a life that mirrors the Gospels ... reflecting God in all you do. The second greatest gift is to invite others to peer into that mirror.

### This Book Will Change Your Life

OK, so that's a substantial start. Get the tools, pull together your blueprints, and start building your love for God's Word. There are several ways to begin reading Scripture ... these are just what I've found over the years to be the best, most realistic steps to begin and keep reading it daily.

And don't just think that you have to study every time you open the Bible. It's great if you set aside thirty to forty-five minutes every day to begin studying, but that doesn't mean you can't flip through the pages in other books like the Psalms, Proverbs, Sirach, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, or in St. Paul's letters ... you'll be blessed by all of them.

## Continued on pg. 7



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I also strongly recommend the Book of James in the New Testament. Romans is a gorgeous and extraordinarily well-written book but is sometimes a little 'too deep' for the biblical beginner. While Romans teaches us how to get to heaven, James teaches us how to live on earth (with people who might annoy you and try your patience). It's great.

All I can tell you from my own experience is that the Word of God has changed my life. It has deepened my experience of the Eucharist, both at Mass and in Adoration. It has deepened my love for our Mother Mary and my gratitude for intercessory prayer and the communion of saints. It has deepened my love for the Church, the papacy, and basic human dignity. It has fueled a fire within me for truth, the need to proclaim it, defend it, and uphold it—especially in this morally relative culture. I pray it will do the same for you.

*Mark Hart has helped transform Catholic youth and young adult Scripture study in parishes, homes, and classrooms with his wildly popular Bible study programs, T3: The Teen Timeline (for teens) and Encounter (for pre-teens), as well as Altaration (a program about the Mass for teens). Mark's humor and his passion for Scripture are helping hundreds of thousands of Catholics, young and old, begin to read and study the Bible in engaging, fun, and relevant ways. A devoted husband and father of four, Mark is also the main author and presenter in The 99, A New System for Evangelization.*

## Stewardship Activity

### Stewardship of Prayer

Let nothing disturb you;  
Let nothing frighten you.  
All things are passing.  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things.  
Nothing is wanting to him who possesses God.  
God alone suffices.  
(*St. Teresa of Avila*)

### Stewardship of Treasure - May 31st

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Envelopes:   | \$5,553.00 |
| Maintenance: | \$215.00   |
| Total:       | \$5,768.00 |

### Stewardship of Treasure - June 6th & 7th

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| Envelopes:   | \$6,530.00  |
| Loose:       | \$3,221.00  |
| Maintenance: | \$745.00    |
| Total:       | \$10,496.00 |

May EFT: \$23,892.00

Did you know you can make a gift online? If you would like to extend a special gift to the Cathedral, please visit <https://spicathedral.org/give-online/>. We appreciate your generosity!

## Announcements

### Grief Share at Cathedral

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield is hosting Grief Share, a weekly, faith-based, grief support group. If you, or someone you know, would like help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend, please join us beginning Thursday, July 2, 6:00pm-8:00pm in the Cathedral School Library (please enter through the atrium doors off 5<sup>th</sup> street parking lot). Grief Share runs for 14 weeks, but guests may join the series at any point and can pick up content they missed during the next cycle. For more information, please visit our website, (<https://spicathedral.org/grief-share/>) or contact Vicki Compton @ 217-522-3342 or or at [vcompton@cathedral.dio.org](mailto:vcompton@cathedral.dio.org).

### BOLT! Vacation Bible School

We're so excited to announce that BOLT VBS is coming to your house on July 7th! With minimal preparation, easy-to-follow instructions, and a video that leads your family step-by-step through each day, BOLT is designed to bring the fun and faith-formation of VBS to your home. Although we wish we could have VBS in person as we do every year, we are so excited to offer this program to our Cathedral families.

If you are interested in participating in BOLT VBS, please register your family by going to <https://spicathedral.org/vacation-bible-school-2020/>. We will be reaching out to those who register with details regarding access to materials and how to run the program all from your home. Registration closes on June 15th, so sign up today! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us by calling the Parish Office at 217-522-3342 or by emailing Haley at [hbentel@cathedral.dio.org](mailto:hbentel@cathedral.dio.org).