



SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FATHER, WHY IS THE CRËCHE STILL HERE? | FR. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE

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SEALED IN THE SPIRIT: RELYING ON THE GRACES OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION | MICHAEL J. RUSZALA

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Cathedral WEEKLY

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
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OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS

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Mass Times: SAT 4PM, SUN. 7AM, 10AM, 5PM
Weekday Masses: MON. thru FRI. 7AM, 5:15PM and SAT. 8AM
Reconciliation (Confessions): MON-FRI 4:15PM- 5PM, SAT. 9AM-10AM,
2:30PM-3:30PM, and SUN. 4PM-4:45PM
Adoration: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4PM to 5PM

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. Hospitals may know you are Catholic, but not know you
are from Cathedral. We would be happy to visit.

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

Mass Intentions for the Upcoming Week

Monday – January 20

7am: Barbara J. McGrath (Family & Friends)
5:15pm: NO MASS

Tuesday – January 21

7 am: Doris Drea (G. Robin Vota)
5:15 pm: Billy Crumly (Michael & Mary Belford)

Wednesday – January 22

7 am: John Montgomery (John Busciacco)
5:15 pm: William F. & Shirley Logan (Lisa Logan & Lori Motyka)

Thursday – January 23

7 am: Lennart Arnell (By Family)
5:15 pm: Katherine Muehl (By Family)

Friday – January 24

7 am: Doris Drea (Mike & Karen Rellihan)
5:15pm: Bianca & Family (Family)

Saturday – January 25

8am: Rodney Vlies (Family)
4pm: For the People

Sunday – January 26

7 am: Monsignor Gregaory Ketcham (Andrew & Cheryl Klein)
10 am: Helen Call (Rebecca & Woody Woodhull)
5 pm: Dale Gronewold (David Beach)



Father, Why is the Crèche Still Here?

Last Sunday saw the end of the Church's liturgical celebration of Christmas with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and with it the bringing down of the Church's decorations, well, in most places, and most of them here. So, why is the crèche still here? I'm glad you asked.

The crèche remains in anticipation of what we might term as the last feast of Christmas that is actually outside of the Christmas season, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, or *Candlemas*, on February 2nd, the fortieth day after Christmas. We will talk more about this feast when it comes in two weeks, but the feast deals with the infant Jesus and his parents bringing him to the Temple in fulfillment of the law as well as Mary's full purification following Jesus birth, which would have ritually happened forty days afterwards according to the dictates of the law in the Book of Leviticus.

In different countries around the world, in Italy, Germany, and Poland for example, it is customary to leave the crèche and some decorations up, not just in churches, but also in homes. The beauty of the decorations, especially those that are lighted, stand in contrast to what can be the coldest and darkest days of the year; even though the light has been increasing since the winter solstice, it does not always feel so. In churches, the continued presence of the crèche is in step with the Scriptures that we hear for several Sundays in the beginning of Ordinary Time. Before the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council, these Sunday were numbered as "Sundays After Epiphany." While we do not use that name anymore, the Scriptures still carry the theme of epiphany or making known who the Lord Jesus is and what he has come to do for us and all the world.

The custom of keeping decorations up until *Candlemas* is one that seems to be slowly growing in some Catholic circles in the United States. We are doing so here at the Cathedral because the Presentation falls on a Sunday this year and going forward we will see if we make this tradition our own. Whether or not our homes or churches are still festooned with signs of Christmas, our lives should be the greatest reminder that Christ has come into the world. We are called to be sources of his light and love, to make his presence known, to be living proof of his power to save in every time and season.

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



Special Announcement

On January 20, 2020, we will only have the 7:00am Mass.
There will be no 5:15pm Mass. The Parish Office will be closed
and there will be no confessions.

Increasing the Reign of Christ

As I'm writing this reflection, I am taking pause from writing a talk for an upcoming Diocesan Youth Conference. I'm preparing a brief overview of Christian history, hitting only major highlights for this 45-minute presentation. In coming into the 21st century, one cannot pass by Pope Leo XIII chanting the *Veni Creator Spiritus* on January 1, 1901. I cannot help but think of how that prayer, recited in Rome, has taken root and blossomed in various ways throughout the world in the 1900s.

While I'm not familiar with all the fruit born from that prayer, I am familiar with a few things that happened in the 1900s in America: the Los Angeles Street Blessing of 1906 and the Toronto Blessing of 1994, the Second Vatican Council in Rome (1962-1965), the 1967 Charismatic Movement in the Catholic Church at Duquesne University, the work of Catholic figures presently in Catholic circles (like Fr. Mike Scanlan and Fr. Dave Pivonka and Ralph Martin and Peter Herbeck of Renewal Ministries), the rise of vocations to priesthood and religious life consequent of their involvement with programs like NET Ministries, St. Paul's Outreach, FOCUS, and LifeTeen. Many other people and movements can be mentioned here, but it is all to say that Pope Leo XIII's prayer in 1901 seems to be coming to fruition in the Catholic Church in America.

One hundred and nineteen years have passed since Pope Leo uttered that prayer, and flourishing still seems to be happening all around. And yet, there are still so many who have not yet tapped into the power of the Holy Spirit given to them at Baptism and Confirmation. The potential has been sacramentally distributed, yet remains dormant in most of the Catholic population. I heard it said one time that the Holy Spirit is the most powerful force in the world. So what would it look like if we could learn to harness or access this power in our daily lives? The late Cardinal Suenens gives us a thought-provoking reflection in his book, *A New Pentecost?*:

"I like to compare our approach to God in faith to that of a traveler who, as he makes his way on a winter night, arrives by some detour at a lonely cottage, ablaze with lights shining through the windows. As he looks through the windows, he sees a fire with logs burning and crackling and sparks flying. He can imagine the warmth by the fireplace, but he cannot feel it as long as he stays outside, an onlooker, in the cold and wind. This is an image of the Christian, who, in the darkness of faith, sees the light and the warmth that is God..."

Still, though he may catch sight of the firelight and imagine its warmth, it has not yet penetrated to the very marrow of his bones. He has yet to go inside, not because he is worthy, but because God invites him: a God who gently presses the invitation, and longs to be one with him. For that to happen, the traveler must knock at the door — that is what he has to do. Jesus told us to knock. He did not say how many times. We have to be sure to knock and knock again. But above all, each one of us must realize that he is expected at the fireside, that he is a son, that this is his home, that he can give no greater joy to God than by accepting this invitation.

To stay on the threshold on the plea of humility would be to misjudge God's heart. He invites all of us to experience, even here below, the warmth of His love. He has made us just for that.

Once inside, everything is different for the traveler. The bright flames on the hearth leap up to greet him, the heat begins to envelop, to penetrate him, his face lights up in the glow, he reaches out his two hands, and his numb limbs begin to lose their numbness. A sort of osmosis begins: the brightness of the flames penetrate his very being. This is an image of the experience of God, as felt by one who lets himself be invaded by God, who opens his whole being, conscious and subconscious, to the radiance of his presence. A new life takes over. Saint Paul's cry becomes, once more, a reality: "It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me." (Gal 2:20)

We are not alone anymore, we know we are guided by the Holy Spirit; our life unfolds in response to him. As we dispossess ourselves, our being is possessed by God. The void is filled.

God himself, who is all welcome, light and warmth, transforms our existence, bestowing on us something of his radiance. Those who allow themselves to be possessed by God, resemble the log that little by little becomes white-hot. Their life, nourished by the fire of the Holy Spirit, becomes fire in its turn. Is not this the fire of which Jesus spoke when he said, "I have come to bring fire to the earth ..." (Lk 12:49)? This is what it means to experience the Holy Spirit who alone can renew the face of the earth!"

How desperately we need a fire like this that burns not only within churches, but more importantly, within individual believers' hearts, young and old, cleric, lay and religious.

Brother John-Marmion Villa, BSC is an author for Liturgical Publications, Inc. and writes reflections on the Sunday readings.





Sealed in the Spirit: Relying on the Graces of Baptism and Confirmation

St. Paul tells the faithful at Ephesus that they have been “sealed with the promised holy Spirit.” Catholic Tradition interprets this in terms of

an indelible character imprinted on the soul in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. It is not as if this invisible mark is simply decorative. Rather, through it, we are enabled to participate in Christ’s mission and in his offices of priest, prophet, and king.

We share in Christ’s priestly office, for example, when we “lift up our hearts,” at Mass, particularly enabled to do so by God-given powers given to us in baptism and strengthened in confirmation. When we hold the true faith in accord with the Magisterium and share it with others, we are likewise empowered by an ever-ready supply of grace from our baptism and confirmation. This is a participation in Christ’s prophetic office. When we order our lives or our families to God’s order, we likewise rely on grace from baptism and confirmation and share in Christ’s kingly office.

St. Paul uses the word ‘seal’ (*sphragis*) several times in his epistles, where he connects it with the promise or ‘down-payment’ of the Holy Spirit. Something sealed by a king is marked as belonging to him, and it comes with a guarantee of protection. The prophet Ezekiel uses a similar term, where the Lord says that in the impending doom on Jerusalem, he will save the righteous who were given his mark on the forehead (Ezekiel 9). Later we see similar imagery in Revelation where 144,000 are saved from God’s wrath (Revelation 7).

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,

“The Holy Spirit has marked us with the seal of the Lord (‘Dominicus character’) ‘for the day of redemption.’ ‘Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life.’ The faithful Christian who has ‘kept the seal’ until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his baptism, will be able to depart this life ‘marked with the sign of faith,’ with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God—the consummation of faith—and in the hope of resurrection” (CCC, 1274).

Hence, St. Paul further says that the seal “is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s possession, to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:14).

In answer to questions in the Church of his day regarding repentant apostates, St. Augustine taught that one must not and cannot be baptized again or ordained again (Rev. Peter Drilling, *Trinity and Ministry*, 64). These sacraments were given to a person once forever. St. Augustine developed the understanding of the seal as a *character*—like a brand imprinted on a soldier

that cannot be removed. Even if the soldier defects, he cannot remove the brand. Sin may cut off our access to the grace we have received, but repentance through the sacrament of reconciliation causes it to flow again in us. Thus we read in the Catechism,

“No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, baptism cannot be repeated” (CCC, 1272).

Sealed for a Purpose

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the character is a supernatural power given to the soul. Fr. Peter Drilling writes of St. Thomas’ teaching, “What God does is confer the capacity to give proper worship to God. The whole purpose of the character, then, is to orient a person to action in the public, ecclesial setting, where worship is offered” (*Trinity and Ministry*, 69). The worship it orders us to in the liturgy is communal in nature, as the baptized person is incorporated into Christ’s Body the Church. Thus we read in the Catechism,

“Incorporated into the Church by baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship. The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity” (CCC, 1273).

In the RCIA, this is why baptized candidates wishing to enter the Church are given special place at the liturgy while unbaptized catechumens or elect are dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word to further reflect on the Word amongst themselves.

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Baptism orients the person not only to participation in Christ's priestly office but also his prophetic and kingly offices. The Rite of Baptism places these words at the anointing with chrism: "As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life." Confirmation strengthens this with particular emphasis on the prophetic and kingly offices, so that the confirmand may be strengthened in building up the Body. We read in the Catechism:

"Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the 'character,' which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness. This 'character' perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and 'the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi ex officio*)'" (CCC, 1304-1305).

Holy Orders further builds on baptism and confirmation, empowering a man forever to act in the person of Christ in his offices of priest, prophet, and king; he is variously enabled to serve the Body if ordained a deacon, priest, or bishop. The laity, of course, are not given the indelible mark of Holy Orders in its three ranks. However, the laity are called by virtue of the indelible character of their baptism and confirmation to serve as Christ in the Church and in the world. We read in the Catechism:

"Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is the more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it" (CCC, 900).

Thus, as we worship, teach, and serve, let us be aware of the font within us of ever-ready grace from our baptism and confirmation. As Jesus said to the woman at the well,

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

Michael J. Ruzsala is the author of several religious books, including Lives of the Saints: Volume I and Who Created God? A Teacher's Guidebook for Answering Children's Tough Questions about God. He holds a master of arts degree in theology & Christian ministry from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He has served for a number of years as a parish director of religious education, parish music director in the Diocese of Buffalo, and adjunct lecturer in religious studies at Niagara University in Lewiston, NY. For more information about Michael and his books, visit michaeljruszala.com.

Sunday Reflection

What Baptism Makes of Us

We begin Ordinary Times this liturgical year full of baptismal reminders. Jesus ranks ahead of John the Baptist and all of us. But though greater, he, in his good Spirit, remains with all of us. In Baptism, we are God's servants, ordained to show God's glory (and not our own), and be about God's saving plan. And like Saint Paul and the Corinthians, we are called to be holy.

- How will I cherish Baptism today and rest in Christ loving me?
- How will I manifest God's glory in some simple word or work?
- How will I be holier today than I was yesterday?



The Significance of You

There are close to 7.6 billion people currently on earth. That is a lot of people! If you try to estimate how many people have collectively been born since the beginning of time, a good guess is 108 billion! It is hard to contemplate that many distinctly different human beings created by our God. In the midst of all those people, where do you and I fit? Can we really be created to make a difference in the world? One can feel very small and insignificant when reflecting on the numbers.

We render ourselves insignificant when we make the mistake of seeing ourselves as being just like everybody else. However, when looking at the numbers, how can one honestly think we are all the same? Another way we become insignificant is believing the lie that one person in the midst of so many does not have the power to make an impact. However, we all spend time reading books, watching movies, or listening to news about singular people who made all the difference in some part of the world. Imagine your own world without a few key people who have touched you and made a difference.

We are all created with unique gifts. We have those gifts that have been part of us from birth and those that have been imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul tried to get the Corinthians to understand that reality when he explained to them the many gifts of the Spirit. Perhaps some of his audience back then thought they were insignificant. The message then remains the message today: God is counting on you to use what He has given you. If you don't, who will?

Tracy Earl Welliver works for Liturgical Publications, Inc. and writes on various stewardship topics.



Stewardship Activity

Stewardship of Prayer:

Renew Your wonders in our time,
as though for a new Pentecost,
and grant that the holy Church,
preserving unanimous and continuous prayer,
together with Mary, the mother of Jesus,
and also under the guidance of St. Peter,
may increase the reign of the Divine Savior,
the reign of truth and justice,
the reign of love and peace.
Amen.

Stewardship of Service:

Are you looking to grow in your faith or are you willing to provide radical hospitality to those searching and seeking? We could use your help at Alpha! Contact the Parish Office at 217-522-3342 or Vicki Compton at vcompton@cathedral.dio.org for more information!

Stewardship of Gifts

Stewardship of Treasure January 11th & 12th

Envelopes:	\$7,083.25
Loose:	\$2,478.58
Maintenance:	\$180.00
Total:	\$9,741.83
December EFT	\$28,254.70

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