

ISSUE NO. 129

9 FEBRUARY 2020



Cathedral WEEKLY

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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QUICK MEDITATIONS ON EVERY MYSTERY OF THE ROSARY | MERRIDITH FREDIANI
WE ARE THE SALT AND LIGHT | FR. MARK SUSLENKO
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Cathedral WEEKLY

THE MOST REVEREND THOMAS JOHN PAPROCKI
NINTH BISHOP
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 – February 10

7am: Mary Ann Midden (William Midden)
5:15pm: Eulalia & Raymond Ohl (Angela Ohl-Marsters)

Tuesday – February 11

7am: Helen F. Call (Craig & Lisa Biegert)
5:15pm: William F. & Shirley Logan (Lisa Logan & Lisa Motyka)

Wednesday – February 12

7am: Mary Elizabeth Forrester (Betty & Glen Rogers)
5:15pm: Bianca & Family (Family)

Thursday – February 13

7am: Mary Priester (John & Chris Malmavik)
5:15pm: Thomas Rapps (Jack & Debbie Dunn)

Friday – February 14

7am: John & Luella Vogt (Bill Vogt)
5:15pm: Helen F. Call (Joe Sullivan)

Saturday – February 15

8am: William Henry Pontzious (Betty & Glen Rogers)
4pm: Doris Drea (4 o'clock Ushers)

Sunday – February 16

7 am: For the People
10am: Helen F. Call (Court Dickason Family)
5 pm: Bart Rotherham (Betty Rotherham)



The Church's Teaching on Suicide

A little under two weeks ago, word began to spread around social media regarding a young priest in a mid-western diocese who was found to have taken his own life. News of this kind is always hard because, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life (CCC 2281)." I must admit that, even though I did not know this priest, this news hit me at my core and dogged my thoughts for several days.

While priests have no special hold on grace or any unique immunity from suffering, it can be generally assumed that, in spite of the effects of sin in the world and in our own lives, we form a certain disposition to keeping our eyes on the things of heaven, which in turn yields a certain amount of hope. So what happened

here with this young priest, Father Harkins, who had so much life, so much good work ahead of him? This question is not unique to this situation only as similar questions are often posed when people are made to deal with the heart-breaking reality of someone's suicide.

Life is a precious gift, which is given by God and only God may call that gift back to himself. The Church teaches that the act of taking one's own life is gravely wrong because it violates God's own love of the individual, just love of self, and the good of others who will suffer because of the act (CCC 2281). However, the Church also recognizes that in many, many cases, if not all one might argue, the person who commits such an act does not do so freely because it goes against the natural inclination of self-preservation.

The Catechism states: "grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide (CCC 2282)." In the case of Father Harkin, it is believed that he was the victim of a severe adverse reaction to a prescription drug that he had recently been given for serious digestive problems; the drug's side effects for him included consistent nightmares and extreme levels of anxiety.

If you have been affected by the suicide of a loved one, please do not lose hope in the goodness and mercy of God. The Church teaches and believes: "we should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives (CCC 2283)." Sadly, many Catholics do not know this aspect of the Church's teaching. If you have been affected by suicide and suffered further from being told something completely different from what the Church teaches, please know how truly sorry I am for the additional pain that you experienced.

Our ultimate hope is in the mercy of the crucified and risen Christ, to whose love we commend all the faithful departed, especially those who may have lost sight of the Lord in a tragic moment of darkness and despair; may their souls, the soul of Father Harkins, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

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



Quick Meditations on Every Mystery of the Rosary

Several years ago, my church hosted an Arise night. Arise Milwaukee is a group that helps people fall in love with Jesus in the Catholic Church. An Arise night is no small feat and I was the point person for the parish. After the first planning meeting, I heard God tell me to say a Rosary every night until the event. I'll admit, my response was, "Are you sure? That's" (quick counting) "forty days away!" I decided to sleep on it. The next morning the request returned and the fact that forty is a pretty biblical number was making it hard to say no.

So I said yes and again, I'll admit, it was hard. I had never done a regular Rosary and it became a bit of a chore. I felt guilty about that, but I'd made a commitment to God and I wasn't going to quit. The Arise night arrived and was beautiful and I stopped praying a daily Rosary. But the idea persisted. I felt guilty for not wanting to do it while at the

same time feeling like I did want to do it. Not wanting it to be an obligation; I wanted to do it in love. I started with a weekly Rosary and began having some lovely prayer experiences. This summer when I found my life upended, I started praying it daily. It became an important part of each day.

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Rhythm and Meditation

The rhythm of the Hail Marys quiets my mind to reflect on Christ's life. I began having insights into the important parts of his life and grew in appreciation of his sacrifice, and as a result I have grown in my desire to sin less and pray more. I have also experienced spiritual attack which is not unexpected. Mary wants to help us be closer to her son. Satan is not a fan of that. As Padre Pio said, "Love the Madonna and pray the Rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today." The Rosary is most effective when we meditate on the mysteries. Below are some thoughts to help in your own prayer.

Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation – Fruit of Humility

Mary said yes. God was asking a great amount of her. She could face disapproval. Joseph could abandon her. She might not be believed. Mary risked a lot because she had faith in God's goodness. I imagine her kneeling in wonderment at the angel Gabriel, his hands encompassing hers, his forehead pressed against hers as he tells her of God's great plan. She whispers "yes" knowing that her life is forever changed and possibly going to be much harder. She allows God's will to be done and with that *fiat* the salvation of the world is set in motion. I pray that I can put God's will before my own.

The Visitation – Love of Neighbor

Newly pregnant, Mary walks several days to visit her cousin Elizabeth. She is greeted with great joy and exclaims her *Magnificat*. While knowing that all will call her blessed, she spends several months serving Elizabeth. I imagine her performing the tasks of life so that Elizabeth, in her third trimester when the physical burden of pregnancy is greatest, can rest. Despite her own possible exhaustion and morning sickness, she serves her cousin. I imagine them at the end of the day sitting together and sharing their feelings about these two miraculous babies. I pray that I can serve as Mary did.

The Nativity – Poverty of Spirit

Mary and Joseph are far from home and she is about to give birth. They find nowhere to stay. Rather than panicking, they rely on God who leads them to a safe, warm place for his son's birth. I imagine their worry but also their sense of calm. They know God cares for them and he will not abandon them on this holy journey. As the angels announce Jesus' birth and the shepherds come to pay him homage, Mary and Joseph are surrounded by God's love. I pray for the grace to depend on God completely.

Presentation in the Temple – Obedience

Mary and Joseph obey the law and bring their newborn son to the temple and offer a sacrifice. There they meet Simeon who has waited many years to meet the Messiah. I imagine Simeon gazing at Jesus. The Christ for whom he has waited has arrived just as God promised. He raises his eyes to heaven in thanks. He also warns Mary that her own heart will be pierced.

She continues to trust God, not knowing what lies ahead. I pray for trust in God's plan and patience in waiting for it to unfold.

Finding Jesus in the Temple – Piety

After not knowing where he was for three days, Mary and Joseph find Jesus in the temple. I imagine the fear they felt when they realized Jesus was not with them as they returned from Jerusalem. I imagine how scared they felt as they looked for him and the increasing anxiety they experienced as time passed. At last they find him in his father's home. What relief and joy. We look for Jesus too and we can always find him in church. He is there waiting for us. I pray that I will not find reasons to avoid visiting Jesus regularly.

Luminous Mysteries

Baptism of Jesus – Openness to the Holy Spirit

Though Jesus is without original sin, John baptizes him and God announces that Jesus is his son and he is pleased. I imagine standing in that cool river, feeling the water rush past me. The sounds of the crowd are muffled as my head goes below the surface. I imagine hearing God's great voice proclaiming he is pleased with his son. I desire God to be pleased with me too, and pray that I can accept the movement of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Wedding at Cana – Jesus Through Mary

It is here Jesus' public life is put into motion. I imagine Mary noticing that the wine is running out and hearing her ask Jesus for help, confident in his assistance. His respect for Mary is so high, he performs his first miracle at her request. Her command, "Do whatever he tells you" is for us too. The wine stewards listen and water is turned into wine. When we pray the

Rosary she intercedes with her Son on our behalf. I pray to grow closer to Jesus with Mary's help.

Proclamation of the Kingdom – Repentance

Jesus went about the land preaching the coming of the kingdom of heaven. He healed the sick and cast out demons. I imagine the awe of the people watching this man proclaim the importance of repenting of our sins as he healed people of their paralysis or leprosy. He preached about love and forgiveness. We too need healing and repentance. I pray for the ability to be humbly and genuinely sorry for my sins against others and against the God who loves me and made me.

The Transfiguration – Desire for Holiness

Peter, James and John accompany Jesus up Mount Tabor where Jesus is transformed before them in glorious light and Moses and Elijah appear. Peter desires to build tents for them so they may stay. God again proclaims pleasure in Jesus, his beloved Son and tells them to listen to him. I imagine the disciples seeing Jesus with the prophets of the past and hearing God's voice. They received a beautiful gift from God and comforting words from Jesus to not be afraid. I pray for the desire to spend time with Christ thinking about his message and striving for holiness.



Institution of the Eucharist – Eucharistic Adoration

Jesus gives us the greatest of gifts in his presence in the Eucharist—body, blood, soul and divinity. I imagine the disciples hearing these words of the New Covenant and the directive to do this in his remembrance. We reflect on this at every Mass as we genuflect before the tabernacle. We are also invited to visit Jesus in adoration. It takes great faith to believe in the Real Presence. I pray for the grace to have that faith, to seek him in adoration and surrender myself humbly to his service.

Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden – Conformity to God's Will

Jesus knows torture and death lie ahead and he prays that the cup will pass. He also prays God's will be done. In his agony, he carries the weight of our sins so that we may be saved. I imagine the courage it took to give himself to God's plan. We too suffer and while we may pray the suffering will end, we are given support from Our Lord to endure, as Jesus received strength from the angel in the garden. I pray for the courage to conform to God's will especially when it may be difficult.

The Scourging at the Pillar – Mortification

Jesus is brutally tortured to near death. Scourging was more than mere beating; it involved using instruments to inflict the most pain and blood loss possible without actually killing. Jesus was beaten for our sins. His mother watched as her son's blood spilled on the ground. I imagine the horror she felt watching her precious child be brutalized, and how hard it must have been to not run to his rescue. I pray for forgiveness for my sins, the sins that contributed to the torture of my Lord.

The Crowning with Thorns – Moral Courage

Jesus is stripped, reclothed with a scarlet robe and crowned with thorns. He is mocked and spit upon by the soldiers. The people demand his crucifixion. Despite his innocence, he does not defend himself. He is strong in the face of hatred. I imagine his sadness at the people's ignorance, his sorrow at their contempt. I pray for courage to defend God's truth and strength to withstand the criticism and hatred of others.

The Carrying of the Cross – Patience

Jesus' humiliation continues as he carries the Cross he will be crucified on through the town and people continue to mock him. I imagine the pain of the heavy wood against his back, rubbing against the open wounds from the scourging, the hot sun on him, the thirst, and hunger. I imagine his grief at seeing Mary, knowing she is watching her son die. Jesus is patient in enduring this suffering for us. I pray for more forgiveness, knowing my sins add to the weight of that Cross. I pray for patience in my own times of difficulty.

The Crucifixion – Salvation

Jesus arrives and is nailed to the cross. As he hangs, slowly dying, he is comforted by the presence of Mary, her sister, John and Mary Magdalene. Mary is strong. She has watched him suffer and now die and she never leaves him. I imagine her heartache. In his words to Mary, "Woman, behold, your son" all

of us are entrusted to her love. I pray in thanksgiving for Christ's suffering and sacrifice so that I may be saved.

Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection – Faith

Jesus did as he foretold; he rose from death, thus securing for us everlasting life in heaven with him and his father. The women who went to visit him are greeted by an angel who gives them this good news. They see him on their way to Galilee and he tells them to tell the disciples of his resurrection. I imagine the joy they feel when they see the one they love living again, the celebration of the disciples and Mary when they are able to touch him and talk to him. I pray for faith that I too may one day be with Jesus in heaven.

The Ascension – Hope

As Jesus ascends to heaven he tells his followers to go and make disciples. He sends them to the world to share his story and he promises he will always be with them. I imagine their surprise to see him lifted up and away to the clouds and their wonderment as all that occurred. I imagine them considering what will happen next and how they will do as he told them. They are filled with hope and maybe fear. I pray for hope when I don't know the way forward or when times seem dark.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Wisdom

The apostles and Mary are hiding in the upper room in fear of the future. When the Holy Spirit, the Advocate Jesus said he would send, comes to them they are filled with the gifts they need to go out into the world: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We receive these same gifts at our baptism and confirmation. I pray that I can use these gifts to share the love of Jesus and the story of his good news.

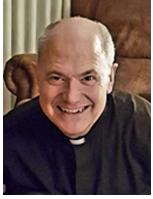
The Assumption of Mary – Devotion to Mary

Mary is taken to heaven to her rightful place with Jesus where she intercedes for us in prayer. I imagine her excitement at being with her son again, and her pleasure at being in heaven with God. I pray for her intercession and help in growing closer to Jesus, while asking her to help me love him more. She will keep pointing the way toward her son.

The Coronation of Mary – Eternal Happiness

Mary is the Queen of Heaven and Earth. She listened to God's will and stayed true to his plan for her life. Mary was not spared suffering but her reward in heaven is great. She is our queen too, and if asked she will help us in all facets of our life. I imagine her lovingly looking down at us and her happiness at our requests for help. I pray for her humility, patience, and trust.

Merridith Frediani's perfect day includes prayer, writing, unrushed morning coffee, reading, tending to dahlias, and playing Sheepshead with her husband and three teenagers. She loves leading small faith groups for moms and looking for God in the silly and ordinary. She blogs and writes for her local Catholic Herald in Milwaukee.



We Are the Salt and Light

The prophet Isaiah is both concise and profound: "If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation, and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday."

These words direct our attention to the sacredness of human life and human dignity. Without mincing any words, Isaiah sees no compromise when it comes to our relationship with the hungry, homeless, naked, and afflicted. Jesus insisted on the centrality of these relationships and directly stated that what you do to one of the least of these you do to him.

How much clearer does it need to be? Our faith speaks directly to every aspect of human need. But even today, there are many who believe that faith and social issues need to remain separate and be treated differently. There are many places where the sacredness of human life and human dignity are sacrificed. The unborn child, the immigrant, the young victim of sex trafficking, victims of war and violence, the poor and the homeless, those struggling to make ends meet who cannot find sustainable work, those on death row, victims of sexual and emotional abuse, the forgotten elderly, those who are physically or emotionally challenged, those suffering from addictions, and those who profit from enabling them are just a few examples. For every one of these and more, there are two things that are needed. The first is an immediate compassionate response that helps to ease their burden. The second is an understanding of why each challenge exists and what needs to be done to fix it.

Both are difficult. And both require more than what social services can provide and law can accomplish. The solution requires an acceptance of what our faith directs us to do and then working towards real systemic change. There is a great deal of work to do, and it will require communities of salt and light to accomplish it. Our faith brings us into the marketplace, to the streets, to politicians, to teachers, to leaders, to governments, and to people who really do not care what Jesus has to say or what Christianity directs.

Salt brings taste, zest, and joy to life. We are asked to liven things up by allowing the joy of our faith to spill over into the lives of others. Once we are able to develop a sincere and deep relationship with God, it will define us and flow out of us.

Sunday Reflection

Being Salty

In old Roman times, soldiers were paid in salt (it is the root word for "salary"). We are not paid with salt but are told to be salt today. Salt of the earth. Told, not to use "salty" language, but to be seasoned, tasty. We are also told to be light today. Light of the world. Told, not to show the goodness of our deeds, but to let our good deeds manifest the glory of God.

- How will I season, enliven someone's life today?
- How will I shine God's light on some gloom in today's world?
- How will doing this mercy work show the blessedness of God and Christ and Spirit?

Because of that relationship, humanity can be freshened and set on proper course. This is especially true if these relationships are cultivated, shared, and enriched in communities that share the same beliefs. To be light means that our faith must translate into action so that we can be Christ for others and extend the same arm of mercy and compassion that Christ did. To be light means that through perseverance, learning, determination, and discernment, the darkness of the cause of injustice can be illumined, challenged, and remedied. None of this is easy work.

St. Paul came to the table with weakness and a lot of trembling. He did not have persuasive words of wisdom that swept people off their feet and set them on proper course. His effectiveness came because of his relationship with Jesus Christ, which brought a demonstration of Spirit and power. His relationship with God flowed over into his life and created an example of convincing integrity. It was from this simple example that the early communities flourished and grew. Numbers were added to the faith not because of what people said, but because of how they lived. They prioritized their lives and solved their problems differently than the rest of the secular world. If it happened once, it can happen again.

As with any group poised with tackling a challenge, some members have the gifts to train hard and get right into the heart of what needs to be done. Others have different gifts and talents and may find themselves suited more for a supportive role, lending their voice of encouragement and contributing to the mission as they can. We all come with different means, but we are all on the same team. Our Lord and Master has given us the blueprint and game plan. All we need to do is put it into action! I wonder how the world would look if Christianity was actually tried for a change.

Jesus wouldn't have gone through all of the trouble of gathering a bunch of people together, teaching them about the kingdom of God, and sending them off on a mission if he didn't think we had the ability to handle this. A good teacher knows what his students can handle. Do we see in ourselves what God sees in us? We have the ability to be both salt and light. We can do this!

*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.
To read more of Fr. Suslenko's reflections, visit
<https://isidoreandmaria.org/category/pastor-reflections/>.*



STEWARDSHIP



Stewardship Activity

Stewardship of Prayer:

The Cathedral offers an online prayer wall for individuals to anonymously post their special intentions and prayer requests. This prayer wall is monitored regularly by a group of parishioners who are dedicated to keeping these intentions in their daily prayers. If you would like to submit a prayer request or special intention, please visit <https://spicathedral.org/prayer-wall/>. No access to a computer? No problem! Call the Parish Office at 217-522-3342 and one of our staff members will enter your intention for you.

Stewardship of Service:

Join the women of the Cathedral in fellowship and fun! The CCCW hosts a variety of events during the year which support the mission of the Cathedral and scholarships. All women of the parish are welcome! Contact the Parish Office for more information.

Stewardship of Gifts

Stewardship of Treasure - February 1st & 2nd

Envelopes:	\$5,253.00
Loose:	\$5,189.68
Maintenance:	\$1,972.00
Total:	\$12,414.68
January EFT	\$20,602.70

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!

Sacraments

Deaths

Please pray for the repose of the soul of John "Jack" D. Rotherham, as he was called to eternal rest on January 22, 2020.



Discovering Your Superpowers

I was 50 years old before I learned that I had a superpower and that it would help me carry out a special and unique mission. And that I wasn't the only one; every baptized person has a mission and "superpowers" with which to accomplish their mission. My mission, or call, and yours comes from God. But most Catholics do not know that they have been given a call from God. It is not just for Saints or a small number of special people. It is an ordinary experience. All of us have a contribution to make to the Kingdom of God that is unique and irreplaceable and that really matters.

At Baptism and Confirmation the Holy Spirit pours spiritual gifts into us. Some of these gifts are sanctifying gifts, meant for our own holiness; and some of these gifts are meant to manifest God's love and mercy to others. The catechism states *Within the communion of the Church, the Holy Spirit "distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank" for the building up of the Church.* (951) These special graces or gifts are called charisms. And our charisms are the "superpowers" granted by the Holy Spirit that give us a special empowerment to bring God's redeeming love into the world. We don't use our charisms for our own gain or betterment, only for God's purposes or to serve others.

Charisms bear three marks that allow us to recognize them with confidence:

1. An unmistakable inner experience of peace, energy and joy when you are using this gift.
2. Unusually effective and successful results in what you are trying to accomplish.
3. Other people's direct or indirect recognition of the gift's presence.

Charisms are profoundly and directly connected to our relationship with God and grow in power and purity as our relationship with God grows. In other words, you cannot begin to discern your charisms until you have "dropped your nets" to follow Christ.

Over the next few weeks I will share with you some information about some of the most common charisms, starting with Intercessory Prayer. I hope and pray you will be intrigued by the charisms and curious to discover what yours might be.

Vicki Compton is the Coordinator of Faith Formation and Mission at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield, Illinois.