



# *Cathedral*

## WEEKLY

SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY  
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

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CONTINUING OUR EASTER JOURNEY | FR. CHRISTOPHER HOUSE  
REMAINING SPIRITUALLY ENGAGED IN YOUR OWN HOME | DR. JAMES R. A. MERRICK  
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# Cathedral WEEKLY

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

THE VERY REVEREND CHRISTOPHER A. HOUSE, V.J.  
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PAROCHIAL VICAR

THE REVEREND DOMINIC RANKIN  
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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





## Continuing Our Easter Journey

This Sunday concludes the Octave of Easter. An octave is a celebration of eight days in the Church and each day is honored liturgically in the same way as the day in which the octave began, in this case Easter Sunday. Following the reforms of Vatican II, only two octaves remain in the ordinary form of the Church's liturgical calendar: Easter and Christmas. While the octave may be finishing, the joy of the Easter Season continues on. This was a *Triduum* unlike any other. The liturgies were beautiful and I am grateful for the comments that we received from folks via social media. While they were beautiful, they were lacking in that you were not able to be there and that subdued the joy that naturally comes from the celebration of Easter. I wish to thank our own Mark Gifford for providing us with the beauty of the organ during our celebrations, thank you to Andrew Hansen and Michael Hoerner from the Catholic Pastoral Center for filming/streaming our celebrations, and thank you to my confreres in the clergy and our seminarians for helping to make the liturgies happen.

The Gospel for the Second of Sunday of Easter is popularly known as the Gospel of Doubting Thomas. Here our Lord appears to Thomas, and the other ten Apostles, and invites Thomas to see and probe his wounds so that Thomas might believe that the Lord is truly risen and that he is who he says he is. While the Lord's body has been changed and glorified, the wounds from his crucifixion remain. Theologians have marveled over this reality for 2,000 years and posed various reasons as to why. As in the case of St. Thomas the Apostle, the wounds identify the Lord for who is but they also tell us what death is no longer; death is no longer an eternal reality for those who live and die in God's friendship. The marks of the Lord's death remain but, but death has no power over him, and through him neither over us. St. Leo the great says it more eloquently in a homily on the Lord's Passion:

He did away with the everlasting character of death so as to make death a thing of time, not of eternity.

As we continue our journey through this Easter Season, let us turn to the risen Lord to draw newness of life from him, remembering that the wounds of our present lives, painful as they may be, are only things of the here and now; in the Resurrection on the last day, when Christ makes us new, those things will be no more.

*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

### Unrestrained by Locked Doors

Locked doors are not good enough for keeping the Risen Jesus from us. They are not good enough for preventing Jesus from breathing the Holy Spirit into us. How must we respond? With the devotion noted in the Acts of the Apostles: to the teaching, to Sunday Mass, to attending to those in need.

- What is Jesus, through Scripture and Tradition, teaching me today?
- With what does this Sunday Mass, with prayer and fellowship and Communion, fill me?
- What needs do I notice in others – and what will I do?





## Remaining Spiritually Engaged in Your Own Home

It looks like many of us will be spending more time at home for a few weeks, whether for self-quarantine, lockdown, or social distancing. What

can we do to keep ourselves spiritually engaged and even grow during this time, rather than stagnate or fall away from our spiritual disciplines? Here are a few suggestions.

### 1. Why Has God Given You This Time?

Your initial impulse might be to get more yard work done or to tackle certain home improvement projects. Maybe you are excited about catching up on some television shows, movies or novels.

But what does God want from you with this time? One of the most consistent themes of spiritual writings is that all things are ordained for our holiness.

For example, in her fantastic work *The Spiritual Life and Prayer*, Cécile Bruyère observes:

“All God’s designs over us in this world are intended to bring about our supernatural perfection.”

Begin and end each day asking God what he wants from you during this time. Pay attention to what’s happening in your life. How is God using this disruption to direct your attention to what he’s trying to accomplish in you? You may have numerous plans for what you want to accomplish. But to what do you see God calling your attention? Maybe the Lord wants you to slow down, spend more time in leisure. Or maybe he wants you to devote more time to prayer. Or maybe he’s asking you to trust him and stop relying on yourself so much. Come back to the question of what this time is for repeatedly. The Lord is calling you to grow!

### 2. Jesus, I Trust in You!

There are many things to fret about at this time. Even if you are not worried about getting seriously ill, you can worry about friends and family members getting ill. Or you can worry about your job, the economy, and your retirement account. If your mind is like mine, there will be numerous moments throughout the day when it takes a hard turn toward worryville. When you start doom dreaming, make a habit of saying, whether aloud or internally, “Jesus, I trust in you!”

### 3. Study

Instead of binge-watching shows, challenge yourself and exercise rather than relax your mind. Grow in your understanding of your Faith. The deeper your understanding of your faith, the greater the personal connection and engagement. Don’t let this opportunity pass by.

There are so many excellent online resources available that you don’t even have to worry about shipping delays. Ascension has numerous “instant access” study programs at affordable prices. Could you do any better than to think about the life of Jesus Christ through *Jesus: The Way, the Truth, and the Life*? Or, why not spend these weeks learning about the history of the Church through the excellent program, *Epic*? You can explore the biblical roots of the Catholic Faith through Sonja Corbitt’s *Fulfilled*. If you are a mother, you can think more about your vocation to motherhood with Danielle Bean’s cleverly named *Momnipotent* program. Perhaps you want to use this time to go

deeper in prayer? Check out Fr. Mark Toup’s *Oremus: A Guide to Catholic Prayer* or *Lenten Companion*. Finally, you could master Scripture by working through Ascension’s excellent *Great Adventure* Bible study series. Or why not work through Romans?

### 4. Prepare for Massless Sunday Worship

More and more dioceses are canceling public Mass. But canceling Mass or dispensation for the Sunday obligation doesn’t mean you don’t have to worship God. The worship of the Lord is mandated in the first three commandments and it is our

first duty. How are you going to worship the Lord outside of Mass? You can spend a couple of days during the week preparing a home service.

Why not have your family process to a place dedicated to prayer (see #8) while singing a hymn. You can find some hymns online that you could sing. Then you could make a general confession and sing the Kyrie. Read the Mass readings. In place of the homily, listen to the Mass readings explained by Dr. Brant Pitre, Dr. Scott Hahn, or Jeff Cavins. Or listen to some homilies that are posted online, like those from St. Mary’s Cathedral in Aberdeen. Take a crucifix or icon of Christ and spend some time in mental prayer. Include an Act of Spiritual Communion.



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### 5. Read or Listen to Stories of the Saints

The saints faced much adversity but did so virtuously. They have much to teach us in these uncertain times. You can pick up dramatized audio stories of St. Francis, St. Cecilia, and St. Patrick from the Augustine Institute. If you have children who are home from school, check out the series of saint stories from Holy Heroes. Or read about St. Albert the Great, St. Colette, St. Robert Bellarmine, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Francis de Sales, St. John Henry Newman, St. John Paul II, St. Therese, or her saintly family. If you want to read a novel about a saint, look into the novels by Louis de Wohl.

### 6. Pray Compline

If you don't already, end the day with Compline or "night prayer." This is the last hour of prayer for the day. It is meant not only to prepare you for rest, but to prepare you for death. It includes a time for examination of conscience. You can view the "night office" through Universalis, which offers an excellent app if you'd like to have all the offices. Magnificat also has a version of Compline, and during the Coronavirus outbreak, they are offering complimentary access to an online version of their monthly book.

### 7. Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy

In times like these, we can fall into the trap of thinking only about ourselves and taking care of our needs. We can see our fellow human beings as threats. But the hallmark of our devotion to God is our concern for those in need. What can you do to help others during this time? Consider the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and ask yourself what you might do to help.

### 8. Build a Home Shrine

Why not get crafty during this time? If you don't have one, build a little home altar or shrine. There is a great book that can help you called *The Little Oratory: A Beginner's Guide to Praying in the Home* by David Clayton and Leila Marie Lawler.

*Dr. James R. A. Merrick is a lecturer at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Senior Fellow at the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, and a theology and Latin teacher at St. Joseph's Catholic Academy in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. Follow Dr. Merrick on Twitter: @JamesRAMerrick.*



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## Holy Mass Livestreams & Other Resources

Did you know you can join us at daily Mass from home?  
Mass is livestreamed every morning at 7:00am on the Cathedral Facebook page.  
All Masses are also added to the Cathedral website and can be found at  
[www.spicathedral.org/holy-mass-livestreams/](http://www.spicathedral.org/holy-mass-livestreams/).

The Cathedral website also has many great resources for you to utilize during this uncertain time. Visit [www.spicathedral.org/](http://www.spicathedral.org/) to view them.

## Despite the Locked Doors

As we age, we come to expect letdowns and disappointments. Because of so many unfulfilled promises and unmet expectations, we become cynical of anything that can seem too good to be true. Our hearts grow calloused to protect us from future disillusionment. And so, we come to demand proof and assurances before committing ourselves to anything.



Such is the case with Thomas and the other apostles in today's gospel. They had set all their hope on Jesus. And it all came to a horrifying and humiliating end with the crucifixion. Now, they were reduced to hiding behind a locked door for fear that the authorities would do to them what they had done to Jesus.

While they were cowering in fear, Jesus appeared to them. John tells us that Jesus shows himself to them, "despite the locked doors." John is not just referring here to the heavy wooden doors of their hiding place. He is talking about the closed doors of their hearts. Jesus doesn't wait until they calm down or get perspective on the situation. Rather, he breaks through the door of their fear announcing the good news that he is alive.

Just as Jesus is not shut out by the closed doors of the apostles' fear, neither is he shut out by the closed door of Thomas' doubt. Instead, taking up Thomas' challenge, Jesus appears to him so that he can put his doubt aside. The nail marks on his hands, feet, and side dispel any doubt that this is truly the risen Jesus standing before him.

All of us have times when we approach God with a closed heart. We might fear that He will take from us more than we're willing to give. Or, we might fear that we'll be made fun of if we live His message in a total and radical way. Our hearts may also be hardened by doubt. With so many different religions and so many different opinions, we might wonder, who's to say which is the right way?

No matter where we are with our faith — no matter how closed our hearts may seem — Jesus can break through that closed door and reveal himself. If you can only go so far, Jesus can meet you there. If you can only believe so much, Jesus can take your hand and lead you a little further along. There is no doubt, fear, or weakness that Jesus, through the power of his resurrection and the power of his Holy Spirit, cannot surmount.

Thomas is an example for us here. He is famous for his doubt — but his story doesn't end there. Tradition tells us that he went on to preach the

Gospel in India. He is often pictured with a spear, because he was run through with a spear and killed. Doubting Thomas was martyred for his witness to the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus broke through the closed door of Thomas' doubt and filled him with the faith which enabled him to eventually give his life for Jesus.

The same is true for us. On Divine Mercy Sunday, Jesus wants nothing more than to reveal himself to us, dispel our doubts, and lead us to freedom and peace.

*Douglas Sousa, S.T.L. is an author for Liturgical Publications, Inc., and writes reflections on various topics, including reflections on Sunday readings.*



## Stewardship Activity

### Stewardship of Prayer

Prayer to Saint Thomas, the Apostle:

O Glorious Saint Thomas,  
your grief for Jesus was such  
that it would not let you believe he had risen  
unless you actually saw him  
and touched his wounds.  
But your love for Jesus was equally great  
and it led you to give up your life for him.  
Pray for us that we may grieve for our sins  
which were the cause of Christ's sufferings.  
Help us to spend ourselves in his service  
and so earn the title of "blessed"  
which Jesus applied to those who would believe in him  
without seeing him.  
Amen.

### Stewardship of Treasure - April 12th

Envelopes:	\$2,574.00
Easter Envelopes:	\$3,408.32
<u>Maintenance:</u>	<u>\$200.00</u>
Total:	\$6,182.32

March EFT: \$22,321.85

Did you know you can still 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!

## Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

## A Time to Reconcile

After my mother passed away, my sister and father had a falling out of sorts. When he moved to be closer to me, she told me that she didn't ever want to speak to him again, saying, "Even if he is on his death bed, do not call me." My father was in his late 70's, and the pain he would have felt if he knew her wishes would have been too much to bear. Because of this, I made a decision to not tell him. This also put a strain on my relationship with my sister as I cared for the one person in this world she seemed to despise the most.

Of all the gifts God has given us, time and family are at the top of the list to be cherished. Also, both are finite gifts. Our family members will not walk in this world forever, and each day that slips away cannot be restored. Still, we build up walls of fear, doubt, resentment, anger, and pain, not allowing ourselves to forgive and be good stewards of what we have been given.

On Divine Mercy Sunday, God's mercy is overflowing through all the earth. There is no excuse for you and me to not be reconciled with God and accept this profound compassion. In turn, there is no excuse to not extend that mercy and reconcile with those who have hurt us.

I always believed I would have a renewed relationship with my sister when my father's death would come to pass. Two weeks after he passed, my sister suddenly died as well. There is no rewind of time. Yes, good stewards, today is the day!

*Tracy Earl Welliver is currently the Director of Parish Community and Engagement for LPI where he manages the company's coaching and consulting efforts. He has spoken on and coached dioceses, parishes, and individuals on stewardship, engagement, strengths, and discipleship all over North America, Australia, and New Zealand.*

