

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

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Cathedral WEEKLY

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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



What the Lord's Ascension Means for Us

We are fast approaching the end of the Easter season. It was seven weeks ago that we celebrated the joy of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday (albeit more subdued this year) and now the Church celebrates the first of two key events in our life of faith: this Sunday with the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord into heaven and the second being Pentecost next Sunday. St. Luke teaches us in Acts of the Apostles that Jesus, having revealed his risen glory to his disciples after the Resurrection, returned to his place with the Father in heaven forty days following his resurrection. What does this mean for us some two thousand years later?

The Lord's Ascension into heaven is the fulfillment of his mission to achieve our salvation; we might use the phrase that he has come "full circle" in his return to the Father. However, there is a marvelous new reality that makes all the difference for us. In his return to the Father, Jesus takes with him our human nature. When he first descended from the Father in the Incarnation, Jesus joined his divinity to our humanity in a bond that was made inseparable in the Resurrection. Jesus's humanity was and remains real. It was not something that was an illusion nor was it discarded when his earthly ministry was completed. Jesus retains his glorified human nature beyond the boundaries of space and time in heaven. This fact points to the coming reality of the Resurrection of the Just on the last day when not just the soul but also the body will be fully redeemed and the two realities reunited forever in heaven.

Let us not forget the command of the Lord Jesus from Matthew's Gospel today:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

This great feast of the Ascension reminds us that the Lord Jesus has done his part and, now, we must do ours. We must continue the proclamation of the Kingdom both in word and action. Every aspect of our lives is to point to Christ, crucified and risen, who will come again in glory. Until that day, we, as his disciples, must be about the work of the building up of the Kingdom of God. We cannot be like the disciples following the Ascension simply "standing there and looking at the sky." The Lord's Ascension calls us to be a people of action, proclaiming Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins and the coming of the Kingdom here and now.

The Lord's Ascension does not mean that his work on our behalf is over. From his place at the Father's right hand, the Lord Jesus continues his mission as our intercessor, as the one who continually pleads our cause to the Father. Jesus's return to heaven also stands as a sign of hope for us that where he has gone we also may follow. We are reminded of both of these truths in the Preface of the Mass for the Ascension in which the Church prays: "Mediator between God and man, judge of the world and Lord of hosts, he ascended, not to distance himself from our lowly state but that we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before." We are also reminded of the Lord's abiding presence with us in today's Gospel, which hopefully strengthens our hope in these on-going pandemic days: "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

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

Sunday Reflection

Doubt No Longer

On the last mountain encounter with his disciples before his ascending, Jesus uses the "I AM" language reserved to God. This Son of God will be with them always. After Christ is lifted up, the angel has to remind them: Stop standing around. Stop looking up. The implication: get to work! Make more disciples!

- How do I know Christ is with me always? What does my experience tell me?
- Because of the strength of his presence, what mercy works will I do?
- What will I do to bring even one more person to Christ?

Hide and Seek

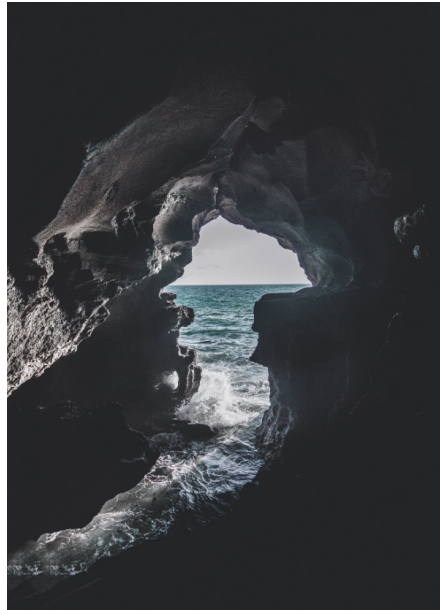
When I was younger, I remember going to a friends' house to swim in their pool during the summer months. All the parents were on the deck, enjoying the company, while the kids were splashing around gleefully in the pool. Once in a while we would play a pool game, called Marco Polo. It's kind of like the game hide-and-seek, but in a pool. I never really liked playing this game, especially when I was Marco because I was afraid of never being able to find anybody while blindfolded in the pool. My fear was, for most part, often unfounded, but nevertheless it arose time and again when we would play this game.

I remembered this childhood event while I was meditating on this feast of the Ascension of the Lord. It had struck me as odd for the longest while that Jesus himself would say that he was going to go away. After all, he had risen from the dead recently so it's not like he couldn't stick around for as long as he wanted. Even while trying to meditate on the second decade of the Glorious Mysteries of the rosary, I had a hard time trying to understand why this is a significant event in the life of Jesus. And when I was on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2017, we found ourselves in a small church which has a marbleized footprint on the ground, commemorating the last step of Jesus as he was lifted up into the sky. I was still confounded.

Maybe through a stroke of creative imagination, or inspiration, I decided to thumb through the pages of the Song of Songs in the Bible. It's only eight chapters long and provided for me a much-needed insight in understanding this feast a little more deeply. It's clear from a reading of the text that there is a sort of hide-and-seek game going on between the lovers. But it is also clear that the desire of the beloved increases in her search to find her lover, whom she thinks she has lost. And this single idea was so helpful as an interpretive key to help me understand the feast of the Ascension because it is almost as if the Lord is playing a game of hide-and-seek with us, because he knows that, in his temporary

absence, the desire in our hearts will grow and intensify.

Perhaps many of you know this feeling because of what the coronavirus quarantine orders have done ... since many of us are not able to go to church, we might feel lost or even abandoned by the Lord. All the creative measures that priests have come up with during this season are helpful, but it's nothing like being able to go to the church, sit in the pew, alongside other members of the community, and celebrate the Mass. While that day is hopefully soon in coming, it is clear that our desire has grown and intensified during these months that we have not been able to go to church. It's kind of like a game of hide-and-seek, but with one significant difference. In the game of hide-and-seek, or as in the Marco Polo game of my childhood, there is a fear of not being able to find the others. This is not the case with our relationship Jesus. We don't need to always look on the outside for him, because he already lives within us. Because of our Baptism and Confirmation, we are made temples of his living presence. When we love others, especially sacrificially, Jesus is with us. When we read the text of the Scriptures, Jesus is with us in his Word. When we share in healthy Christian fellowship with others, Jesus is also there.



I have one more 'secret' to share: if we look at the feast of the Ascension in light of next week's feast of Pentecost, we see that Jesus

has not really left us as all! Our Baptism and Confirmation ensure sacramentally that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are with us always (Mt 28:20). St. Paul even says, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus?" (Rom 8:35). So, while it may seem as though Jesus is hiding from us, he really is never farther away as we are able to open up our hearts to his presence already living within. Maybe all we need to do is close our eyes, breathe deeply, and learn to recognize the Divine Presence in our hearts amid the jungle of strong emotions, sharp thoughts, and inflamed passions.

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



Scripture & Tradition: From Jewish Roots

It is an all too common occurrence, Catholics leaving the Church because one well-intended Bible-believing Christian challenged their faith by asking one question, "Where is that in the Bible?" Suddenly, the scope of truth has been confined to a single book, the Bible, without either party realizing that they have bought into a collection of unexamined presuppositions. Namely:

1. The Bible alone is the means of divine revelation
2. The Bible-alone tradition is the way the Church has received revelation from the beginning, and...
3. The individual Christian is the authoritative interpreter of the Bible.

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And without even the slightest hint of defense or a discerning pause the unsuspecting Catholic allows his friend's presuppositions to go unchecked and in many cases adopts them as his own. After all, one would think, if someone can quote that much Scripture, he must know what he is talking about.

Hydrogen and Oxygen

But are the above presuppositions true? Perhaps the greatest difference between Catholics and Protestants is the way the two groups view the means of receiving divine revelation. For most Protestants, the only reliable source of divine revelation is the Bible. This tradition of relying on the Bible as the sole means of receiving God's revelation, however, is fairly recent as it was only introduced in the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Faith, on the other hand, is not a "religion of the book," rather, it is the religion of the "Word" of God (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 108). The Church teaches that both Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God (*Dei Verbum*, 10). The gospel of Jesus Christ is the source of all saving truth and moral discipline, and as such it must be conveyed to all generations. Therefore, Jesus commanded his apostles to preach the gospel. In the apostolic preaching, the gospel was handed on in two ways:

1. Orally "by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received – whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit,"

2. In writing "by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing" (CCC, 76).

Both means of the apostolic message, Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. They both flow from the same divine source, and share a common goal; to make present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ (CCC, 80). I like the way Mark Shea put it in his book *By What Authority?: An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition*. He describes the relationship between Scripture and Tradition as one—but not the same. "They were the hydrogen and oxygen that fused to form living water. They were the words and the tune of a single song. They were two sides of the same apostolic coin." (p. 120)

Jesus Delegates Authority

But the question arises, how can the full deposit of faith remain intact and free from the fallibility of an individual's whim? This is

particularly important since there was no formal New Testament to guide the Church until 393 A.D. Who would preserve and teach with authority the gospel as it spread into various cultures and continents? To safeguard the gospel, the apostles appointed bishops as their successors, giving them "their own position of teaching authority" (CCC, 77). In the process of apostolic succession, we see the continuation of Jesus' delegated authority down through the ages.

For it was Jesus who said to Peter, the first pope:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19

And to his apostles Jesus said, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples ... teaching them to observe all that I command you" (Matthew 28:18-20) and "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me" (Matthew 10:40).



What We Mean by 'Tradition'

This idea of a living, continuing authoritative presence did not begin with the Catholic Church. In the Old Testament we see an ongoing authority in the Mosaic priesthood as well as the Royal dynasty of David and the Sanhedrin established just prior to Jesus' birth.

Today, the bishops around the world in union with the bishop of Rome, the pope, constitute the teaching authority of the Church. This authoritative body is often referred to as the Magisterium. The Magisterium, Sacred Tradition, and Sacred Scripture are so closely "linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others" (DV, 10).

This is the living Tradition of the Church. In defining what apostolic Tradition is we must first distinguish between social traditions, traditions of the Church and THE TRADITION. When the Church speaks of apostolic Tradition, she is not speaking of it in the sense that people traditionally open their gifts on Christmas Eve as opposed to Christmas day. Frankly, this is your own business and can be modified upon your grandmother's approval. Nor is apostolic Tradition the numerous theological, disciplinary, liturgical, or devotional traditions developed in the local churches over the years. These traditions, (often referred to as "small t" traditions) can be modified or entirely dropped under the guidance of the Magisterium.

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Manmade and Genuine Tradition

The apostolic Tradition, however, comes from the apostles as they received it from Jesus' teaching, from his example, and from what the Holy Spirit revealed to them. It is this apostolic Tradition that is referred to when the Church speaks of Scripture and Tradition making up the deposit of faith. This apostolic Tradition must be preserved and taught by the Church.

Jesus' criticism of the Scribes and Pharisees in Mark 7:13, "that you have invalidated the word of God by your tradition," is not a blanket condemnation of all tradition, but rather, a correction regarding a tradition of man (Corban) that had choked the power of the Word of God. According to this tradition, a son could declare that what he had intended to give his parents was considered "Corban," i.e., a gift devoted to God. Once a gift was considered "Corban" it could no longer be designated for the care of their parents. Wouldn't you condemn a tradition like that? Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger pointed out that the "traditions were criticized in order that genuine tradition might be revealed" (*Principles of Catholic Theology*, p. 95).

Oral and Written

It comes as a big surprise to some to realize that at no time in the history of the people of God was the concept of the Word of God bound only to the written page. From the beginning of the Bible until Moses (1400 BC), oral tradition was the only means of passing on the words of God. And from Moses on through to the Catholic Church it was clearly understood by all in God's covenant family (Israel) that the Word of God was to be understood in terms of both oral and written Tradition. It was also understood by Jesus and the early Church that the Word of God was transmitted by two means: orally and in written form. Paul clearly understood this to be true as we see in his exhortation to Timothy: "hold to traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our letter." (2 Thessalonians 2:14)

Cardinal Ratzinger noted: "Jesus did not present his message as something totally new, as the end of all that preceded it. He was and remained a Jew; that is, he linked his message to the tradition of believing Israel." (ibid p. 95)

This dual meaning of receiving the Word of God in oral and written form is part of the tradition of Israel. Just weeks after the children of Israel were freed from Egypt, they settled for one year at the base of Mt. Sinai. It was there on Mt. Sinai that Moses received the written Torah (the first five books in the Bible), and during the forty-year period following the Exodus under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Moses put the Torah into writing.

The Oral Torah

The fact that God put his will into writing does not come as a surprise to most Christians, but what does cause people, particularly Protestants, to theologically stutter is the fact that the

Jewish community of the Old Testament as well as the people of Jesus' time all believed that God gave to Israel an oral law (oral tradition) in addition to the written law. Rabbi Hayim Donin in his book entitled *To Be a Jew* explains: "we believe that God's will was also made manifest in the Oral Tradition or Oral Torah which also had its source at Sinai, revealed to Moses and then orally taught by him to the religious heads of Israel. The Written Torah itself alludes to such oral instructions. This Oral Torah—which clarifies and provides the details for many of the commandments contained in the Written Torah—was transmitted from generation to generation until finally recorded in the second century to become the cornerstone upon which the Talmud was built." p. 24-25

Jacob Neusner points out in his *Introduction to the Mishnah*, which is the codified oral tradition of the Jewish community, that the Oral Torah "bore the status of divine revelation right alongside the Pentateuch."

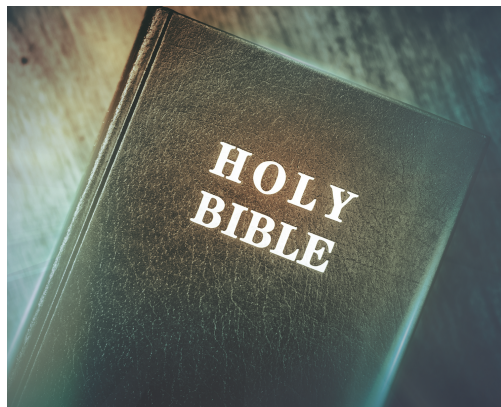
An Ancient Current

The Jewish community, from which Christianity springs, has always understood Torah to be both written (Sefer Torah) and

Oral (Torah She-B'al Peh). Along with the written Torah, the Oral Torah which Moses received at Sinai, was "transmitted to Joshua, and Joshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly..." (Ethics of the Fathers 1:1). In nearly identical fashion the Catholic Church has continued in this tradition of the Word of God coming to his people in both written and oral form. It is fair to say that the new concept of God's Word coming only in the written form (*Sola Scriptura*) was a foreign idea to the Jews both in Moses' and Jesus' day.

It must be made clear that the Catholic teaching that "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God" (DV, 10) is not some new cleverly devised system, but is a continuation of that ancient stream in which our forefathers stood. The very idea of the Word of God being both written and oral flows from our Jewish roots. It is part of the nourishing sap of the Olive Tree (Israel), and those who stand outside of this tradition stand on the shores of the still flowing ancient current.

Jeff Cavins is passionate about helping people understand Scripture and become disciples of Jesus Christ. Though he was born Catholic, Jeff went to Bible school and served as a Protestant minister for twelve years before reverting to the Catholic Faith. He then quickly became a leading Catholic evangelist and author. Jeff is best-known for creating The Great Adventure Bible study programs published by Ascension, which have been used by hundreds of thousands of people to engage in Scripture in a life-changing way. In addition to The Activated Disciple, some of his other recent projects include his podcast, The Jeff Cavins Show, and the Great Adventure Bible studies, Ephesians: Discover Your Inheritance, and Wisdom: God's Vision for Life.



Stewardship Activity

Stewardship of Prayer

Lord, help me to get comfortable in the quiet,
still moments.
Show me the importance of stopping
and removing distractions
to spend time in Your presence.
I don't want to talk over You but
help me to discipline myself long enough
to hear what it is
that You have to say.
Amen.

Stewardship of Treasure - May 17th

Envelopes:	\$5,737.00
Maintenance:	\$233.00
Total:	\$5,970.00

April EFT: \$25,664.80

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!

Other Announcements

Holy Mass Livestreams

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/.

You can also join Bishop Paprocki on Sundays at 10:00am for Sunday Mass. These livestreams can be found at www.dio.org/live.

Distribution of Holy Communion

The distribution of Holy Communion at the Cathedral will take place from 8:00AM to 9:00AM and from 11:30AM to 12:30PM on Sundays until we are able to return to the celebration of Holy Mass. Holy Communion will be distributed at three stations: in the vestibule of the Cathedral, at the Sixth Street entrance of the Cathedral atrium, and at the Fifth Street entrance of the Cathedral atrium. For more detailed instructions, please visit our website (<https://spicathedral.org/blog/2020/05/15/pandemic-holy-communion-distribution/>).

Calculating Love

Have you ever Googled the word "love"? If you did, you may have come across something called the Love Calculator. It is a website where you can supply two names, and the percentage chance of a successful relationship is calculated. Curious, I entered my name and my wife's. Twenty percent! I hope my wife doesn't read this!

I then decided to add my name and God. A whopping 13 percent! Then for the last attempt, I put in my name and Jesus. A very disappointing zero percent! Am I that unlovable?

Of course, then I read the small print at the bottom of the page: "Please note that this site has no serious intention whatsoever." Shocking!

The truth is, the modern world increasingly seems to have no real idea what love is or how to determine when love is real. That makes the seemingly simple words of Jesus about loving God and your neighbor very complex indeed. How can you love God with your all your heart, soul, and mind when you have no idea what the act of loving means? And then, what constitutes loving a neighbor? To make it more complicated, Jesus commands you to love them like you love yourself. I bet you can agree with me that there are a lot of people out there who do not even come close to loving themselves. Knowing what love is in modern times is just not that easy. How is a well-meaning person able to find out the true meaning of love?

You don't know what true love is? I think you do. Turn your eyes to that crucifix hanging in your church, home, or office. The answer was given over 2,000 years ago, and the image remains for the entire world to see.

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.

