

Celebrating Sunday Around the World

The Cathedral
of the Immaculate Conception, Kansas City,

Missouri, USA

Paul Turner

Paul Turner is pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Kansas City, Missouri and director of the Office of Divine Worship for the Diocese of Kansas City-St Joseph. He holds a doctorate in sacred theology from Sant' Anselmo in Rome.

You've easily spotted the golden cupola on the skyline of downtown Kansas City. You've driven your car here because very few people take public transportation to church anywhere in the Diocese of Kansas City-St Joseph. If you can find a spot in our tiny car park, you leave your vehicle and approach the front of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

At one of our four Masses two ushers wait outside to shake your hand and open the door. Otherwise, you enter on your own to find me in my clergy suit bidding you welcome. If I'm presiding, I'll vest shortly before the procession.

The St Joseph Gift Shop is open. The organist improvises a prelude. The cantor greets you, announces the Sunday, encourages your participation, gives you the names of the priest and the deacon—as well as the cantor's own name—and then invites you to stand and greet those around you. Then the cantor announces the opening hymn. During the second verse the ministers, generously paced, process.

Almost all of our servers are adult men, although we invite women and children. With two deacons, one of them assists at every weekend Mass. The organist, who sits near the sound system, records my homily so that the webmaster can post it online the next day. The Universal Prayer will include the names of parishioners who were sick this week or have just died.

We take up two collections. If no national or diocesan collection has been designated, we split the funds from the second collection between our unpaid bills—which are substantial—and our outreach to the homeless, who have even less, but can get a meal and emergency assistance from us almost every day.

If you are a regular here and you checked your email before coming to Mass this weekend, you found a message from me telling you what to expect. Or you

The golden cupola of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

located it on our Facebook page, where I have also posted a one-minute video about the weekend liturgies. Before the First Sunday of Advent, for example, I told people that we'd light the first candle on the wreath at the Saturday Mass, that coffee and donuts will be ready for them in the morning, a new Catholic will be received into the full communion of the Church, the Knights of Columbus will raffle Christmas decorations, and our gift shop is selling a special ornament featuring our rose window.

We can certainly improve. I'd like greeters at every door at every Mass, but that takes recruitment. I'd like to stop taking up the second collection for ourselves, but right now we need the money. I'd like more ways for people to network, because even our regulars come from all over the metro area and see one another only on Sundays. And I'd like more parking, which is nearly impossible downtown. No matter how beautiful the liturgy, many locals won't worship here if they cannot find a place to park.

