

**Words of Remembrance Prior to the Final Commendation
at the Mass of Christian Burial for
Reverend Albert Francis Allen**

**Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Springfield, Illinois**

July 5, 2024

**† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

I. Condolences

A. to his brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, and family members;

B. to his brother priests, especially his ordination classmates, Fathers Zachary Edgar and Scott Snider;

C. to his parishioners at the various parishes where he served and to the scouts with whom he worked for many years.

1. You called him “Father” and indeed he was your spiritual father.

2. So you are grieving the loss of your spiritual father as well.

II. Every father has a father, and the bishop is spiritual father to his priests and deacons.

A. While a bishop is spiritual father to all his clergy, I must admit that I feel a closer bond with those whom I have ordained, since I first get to know them when they are seminarians, then watch them grow into their priesthood as they are ordained deacons and then priests.

B. I was installed as Bishop of Springfield in Illinois in 2010; the first priest I ordained was Father Brian Alford in 2011; then in 2012, I ordained Fathers Albert Allen, Zachary Edgar, and Scott Snider.

1. Since I usually ordain priests in alphabetical order, I guess Father Al Allen is the second priest I ever ordained!

2. He is also the first priest ordained by me to have died, so this one hits me harder than most priests' funerals.

 - C. In addition to his parish assignments and work with the scouts, Father Allen served the diocese and me as Dean of the Litchfield Deanery for three years and as a member of the Diocesan Finance Council for eight years, from 2016 until the present, for which I am grateful.

 - D. Prior to entering the seminary, Al worked as an optician for a while, helping people to see things more clearly in this world.

 - E. As a priest, Father Allen was a spiritual optician, helping people to see God more clearly in their lives.

 - F. As Monsignor Hoefler said in his wonderful homily, Father Allen loved being a priest. Thank you, Monsignor Hoefler, for your homily at this Mass of Christian Burial for Father Allen today.
- III. In a sense, every spiritual father is only a foster father, taking pastoral care temporarily of God's children, since our true Father is God in heaven.
- A. We are all sons and daughters of God.

 - B. So now we commend the soul of Father Albert Allen to God, his Father in heaven.
- IV. May God give us this grace. Amen.