

Bishop Paprocki to perform special Mass on Oct. 2 at SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Alton

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ALTON - On Tuesday, Oct. 2, Most Rev. Thomas John Paprocki, Bishop of Springfield, will celebrate a Pontifical Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Bishop Henry Damian Juncker (first Bishop of Alton), on the 150th anniversary of his death. The Mass will take place at 6:30 p.m. at SS. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church, 717 State St., Alton.

SS. Peter and Paul served as the cathedral of the Diocese of Alton from 1857 to 1923, when the see was moved to Springfield. Several historical items will be in use at this liturgy. Bishop Juncker served as Bishop of Alton from 1857 until his death in 1868. The Mass will be celebrated in Latin, which was the language used by Bishop Juncker to celebrate Mass. Bishop Paprocki will preach the sermon.

Bishop Henry Damian Juncker died on Oct. 2, 1868, at the age of 59, having served as Bishop of Alton for eleven years. He was born in Lorraine and came to America as a young man. He tirelessly visited his flock and was instrumental in securing a sufficient number of priests to serve a diocese that comprised the territory of the present-day dioceses of Springfield and Belleville, which together cover the entire southern half of Illinois. He is buried beneath SS. Peter and Paul. The bishops' tomb will be open after Mass.

A pontifical requiem Mass is a Mass for the Dead ("requiem") celebrated by a bishop assisted by several other clerics. It is an imposing and beautiful ceremony which expresses both our acknowledgment of the reality of sin and judgment, and our sure and certain hope in the Resurrection. The Mass will be celebrated in Latin in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman rite. A worship aid will be provided in Latin and English. The Gregorian chant will be sung under the direction of Fr. Zachary Edgar of Granite City.