

# Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



## Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord 25 December 2010

Icon of the Birth of Christ

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# SAINT CECILIA PARISH

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# CHRISTMAS

Dear Friends,

Well, we are finally here—after eight months, we’re back in the upper church for Christmas! How beautiful it is! Welcome to our newly rehabilitated, renovated and revitalized worship space at Saint Cecilia! Ever since last Easter (when on Easter Monday the pews were removed and we made our way to the temporary space downstairs), we have been waiting for the opportunity to get back upstairs into a warm, welcoming and beautiful place for us to celebrate Eucharist and join together as community to give thanks to God. Today, we celebrate that the waiting is over, that we are here and, most importantly, that Christ is born! Christmas is here! Even outside, “it’s here.” There are no more shopping days ‘til Christmas. What’s bought is bought. The time for any baking, cleaning or card writing is now behind us. Since Easter Sunday we’ve been waiting to come back into this new church; and for these past four weeks of Advent we also have been waiting and preparing for this eve, this day. With its arrival we feel excitement and joy. “Waiting and revealing” are always part of our life experience and there is certainly long-awaited new life being born, revealed and celebrated here at Saint Cecilia this Christmas. In this beginning of winter in Boston, we gather in our beautiful church and we call it our “home.” For all who have worked so hard on designing and building, we are so grateful! For those of you who are visiting our city and parish, welcome! And for those of you who have been away from the Church and might be considering coming back, please know that you will receive a warm welcome here.

Today we gather to celebrate anew an event that occurred over two millennia ago but which has implications for the way we live and make our daily decisions. Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus—not just a one time event, because the mystery of the Incarnation is not simply a

moment in time, an historic moment that we commemorate with lights and trees and gift giving—but it’s a continual happening—for Christ longs to live in our time, in our hearts, in this church, in this parish community, in the city of Boston, in you and in me, and, in people as unlikely as we can imagine. This is the mystery of the Incarnation—God made human—God With Us!

In this divine exchange between heaven and earth, God challenges us to see all things with new eyes. We are challenged to go beyond our comfort zones and to be the salt that enhances the earth and the light that illumines the dark places. We are called to love and forgive and understand and not judge. He challenges us to love and serve others in selfless ways by sharing our experiences, our humanity and our faith by reminding others of their inherent dignity because we know ours. We try to do this at Saint Cecilia by reaching out to others in matters spiritual, social and relational. We are reminded that “biblical justice” is about being in “right relationship” with one another. We are in relationship with Pine Street Inn, Community Servings, The Women’s Lunch Place, Project Bread, The St. Joseph Family Homes in Haiti, Catholic Charities and the Haitian Multi-Service Center in Dorchester. We are in the pews on Wednesday evenings through Lent with the opportunity for confession, God’s forgiveness and reconciliation; we are at the Table each weekend breaking bread and breaking open God’s inspiring word to guide us and lead us. We are in the hospital, nursing homes and living rooms visiting and listening, anointing and nourishing and accompanying each other, day in and day out, and this is why we are church. It is Incarnational work; it is the everyday work of human beings helping other human beings because we’re motivated by a love and awareness that this is how God loves us! It’s motivational; it’s contagious; it’s what

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and how we are called to be, not just at Christmastime, but throughout the year.

We are initiating and baptizing adults and so many little ones in our community! And because of our baptism, we are called to be agents of God's peace and reconciliation; to be consolers to those who are suffering; to assist the poor and the downcast; to lift the brokenhearted; and to enter into the experience of others in all its messiness. To reduce Christmas to a cute little crèche and the sentimental "waiting for the baby Jesus" is to risk missing the point. God is with us and his message is both exciting and challenging.

So, as we leave 2010 and all its economic uncertainties, wars, terror, earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, diseases and unrest, we also remember all the new life, goodness, beauty hope and joy that has been ours to experience, savor and be thankful for. We move forward into a new year even with all its new uncertainties. And we continue our construction and renovation of the new parish pastoral center, the rectory and our outdoor garden space and we grow forward. As Saint Cecilia Parish, and inspired by God's Spirit, we are called to continue to build this community and reach out to others in need. We advocate for and take care of one another because we truly are brother's and sister's keepers. We are church, we are community; we are the body of Christ! And we are called to live out the Incarnation—God With Us—throughout the year.

Christ has no body now but yours,  
no hands but yours,  
no feet but yours.  
*Yours* are the eyes through which  
Christ's compassion must look out on the world.  
*Yours* are the feet  
with which he is to go about doing good.  
*Yours* are the hands  
with which he is now to bless our world.

—Saint Teresa of Avila

On behalf of the pastoral staff here at Saint Cecilia, have a merry and holy Christmas.

With love, gratitude and peace,

*Father John*



SAINT CECILIA PARISH is a welcoming and vibrant Catholic faith community in the heart of the city of Boston. We are a diverse people united in our shared faith. We are concerned about our neighbors and are committed to issues of peace, justice, and service to those near and far. Above all, we are a community of prayer. We invite you to come and be a part of our life as we journey in God and toward God. You will receive a warm welcome here.



*Christmas is a time for great celebration  
and great gratitude*

**This Christmas, remember those priests that were there for us when we needed them, and are still there for us now.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Each Christmas we gather to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus, and share in the peace He brings. We are greatly blessed that those who worship here throughout the year and those who have been away for awhile all come together for this great celebration. You are always welcome and we look forward to seeing you often.

At this time of year, in a particular way we remember, with gratitude, our retired priests. They have served our Archdiocese well over the course of many years and we are blessed by the continued service of our senior priests who bring their faith, wisdom and experience to parishes and other ministries. There are currently more than 250 retired priests in the Archdiocese of Boston and \$10 Million is required each year to meet their needs. The collection at all Christmas Masses goes directly to provide for the care for our senior priests.

Please know of my gratitude for your generosity and your faith, and be assured of my prayers for you and all whom you hold dear.

Merry Christmas to you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Seán, OFM, Cap*

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley

