This week marks the beginning of our Lenten journey—a time of renewal and preparation for the feast of Easter. We sometimes approach Lent with a sense of gloom, but the Church in its liturgy refers to Lent as “a joyful season when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.” Lent is a joyful season because it invites us to return to God’s loving embrace and offers us the promise of hope. In his 2021 Lenten message, Pope Francis said, “In these times of trouble, when everything seems fragile and uncertain, it may appear challenging to speak of hope. Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated.” And for those of us grieving the loss of someone dear, Lent offers boundless hope—the hope of mercy, the hope of healing, and the hope of eternal life.

The Lenten season also presents us with an opportunity to confront both our individual and collective sin and challenges us to reflect on where we are “missing the mark” and falling short of the ways God would have us be. There are many ways to make Lent meaningful, but it’s good to remember that the Lenten disciplines we adopt are not meant to be ends in themselves. The disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, along with whatever else we may take on, are aimed at making us more loving people. If our Lenten practices do not bear this fruit, it might be time to reevaluate.

If you are looking for something meaningful to undertake this Lent, we invite you to companion with our parish effort, “A Journey Toward Racial Justice.” During the course of Lent, we will be providing resources to help deepen our understanding of racism—a sin against the foundation of the Church’s social teaching that all human life is sacred and possesses an inherent dignity. As part of our Lenten observance what would it be like to commit to exploring our conscious and unconscious biases, assumptions, and stereotypes by listening to the experiences of others and letting our hearts become entangled in their lives? This might be the right moment for us to do some reading and reflecting on articles, books, and films that explore our country’s history of racism. If we make this journey towards racial justice together, how pleasing would that be to our God who desires mercy, not sacrifice.

In Father John’s Ash Wednesday homily, he talked about how we sometimes have to empty our glass a little bit in order to make room for something new. This metaphor is a reminder of the importance of making space for God this Lent. What do we need to let go of in order to free up some space for God? Are we already so full of ideas and strongly held opinions that there is no room for new ways of thinking and seeing things? What do we need to unlearn before we can be ready to grow and learn new things? What is filling your glass this Lent that might need to be poured out in order to create space for the living water that only God can provide?

We hope you find this packet helpful as you make decisions about how you’ll prepare for Easter this year. May we all use this Lenten retreat as a time for a joyful returning, renewing, and preparing, so that we might emerge from the desert more fully alive to the promise of Easter. And remember, relationship, not sacrifice, is at the heart of Lent.
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Subscribe to our YouTube channel: youtube.com/SaintCeciliaParish
Visit our website: stceciliaboston.org
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Where to Watch Mass

First Sunday of Lent (2/21): youtu.be/gw1kAW9MGZQ
Second Sunday of Lent (2/28): youtu.be/xk0D0Grubko
Third Sunday of Lent (3/7): youtu.be/R5TxoSW5cDQ
Fourth Sunday of Lent (3/14): youtu.be/MeuEiwDySY4
Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion (3/28): youtu.be/oQX5Puk27fU
Holy Thursday (4/1): youtu.be/q2sztnsGxuk
Good Friday (4/2): youtu.be/WT_KgUTHa_I
Holy Saturday (4/3): youtu.be/RUuYmrGsjtS
Easter Sunday (4/4): youtu.be/RXoSBqMBwX0

The easiest way to watch our videos is to subscribe to our YouTube channel:
youtube.com/SaintCeciliaParish
LENT 2021
LITURGY OF THE HOURS

EVENING PRAYER AT 6:30 P.M.

❖ Friday, February 19 – Friday after Ash Wednesday
❖ Monday, February 22 – Feast of the Chair of St. Peter
❖ Friday, February 26 – Friday of the First Week of Lent
❖ Wednesday, March 3 – Commemoration of St. Katharine Drexel
❖ Friday, March 5 – Friday of the Second Week of Lent
❖ Wednesday, March 10 – Commemoration of St. Marie-Eugénie
❖ Friday, March 12 – Friday of the Third Week of Lent
❖ Wednesday, March 17 – Feast of St. Patrick
❖ Friday, March 19 – Solemnity of St. Joseph
❖ Wednesday, March 24 – Commemoration of St. Oscar Romero
❖ Thursday, March 25 – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
❖ Friday, March 26 – Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent
❖ Sunday, March 28 – Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion

MORNING PRAYER AT 8:00 A.M.
❖ Holy Thursday, April 1 – Conclusion of the Lenten Season

Join us live on the Saint Cecilia Facebook page or via Zoom.
Email sc.hoursandtaize@gmail.com for details.
Liturgies last approximately half an hour.
Holy Week
at Saint Cecilia Parish

Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion – March 28
Mass—10:00 a.m. (Live on YouTube)

THE PASchal TRIDUUM

Holy Thursday – April 1
Morning Prayer—8:00 a.m. (Live on Facebook)
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper—7:30 p.m. (Live on YouTube)
Night Prayer—10:00 p.m. (Live on Facebook)

Good Friday – April 2
Morning Prayer—8:00 a.m. (Live on Facebook)
Stations of the Cross—12:00 p.m. (Video on YouTube)
Commemoration of the Lord's Passion—3:00 p.m. (Live on YouTube)

Holy Saturday – April 3
Morning Prayer—9:00 a.m. (Live on Facebook)
The Great Vigil of Easter—7:30 p.m. (Live on YouTube)

Easter Sunday – April 4
Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord—10:00 a.m. (Live on YouTube)
Paschal Vespers—6:00 p.m. (Live on Facebook)
Loving God,
you breathe the spirit of life within us and
are always inviting us to friendship with
you. Soften our hearts so that we may love
others and in doing so, become reflections
of the love shown by your Son, Jesus. As
we journey back to you this Lent, we pray
for the guiding presence of your Spirit. May
our lives and the choices we make during
this Lenten season be filled with grace,
forgiveness, and gentle love. We ask this
through your Son, Jesus, our Lord.
Amen.

God of love,
through this Lenten journey, purify our
heartfelt desire to serve you and guide us
in our attempts to participate in the life
of your Kingdom. Help us choose love
instead of anger; generosity instead of
greed; humility over the temptation to judge
others. We pray that during this time of
preparation for Easter, we may be grateful
for the gifts you have placed in our lives.
We ask this through your Son, Jesus, our
Lord.
Amen.

The YouTube video for the First Week of
Lent will go live on Wednesday, February
24 at 5:00 p.m.
youtu.be/N_sMqBB-5M

The YouTube video for the Second Week
of Lent will go live on Wednesday, March
3 at 5:00 p.m.
youtu.be/6Dtdsex6Ltk
God of mercy and forgiveness, in your thirst for relationship with us you reveal a love and a longing greater than anything we can ask for or imagine. Teach us to thirst for you, O Lord, in the depths of our souls and through the example of Jesus, may we always thirst for more loving and just relationships with others. Above all, help us to respond in kind to your initiation and to be advocates for justice and peace in our workplaces and in the families and communities in which you have planted us. We ask this through your Son, Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

Third Week of Lent

Merciful God, it’s sometimes hard to see the potential and mystery of these forty days and we often run from the parts of our lives that are uncomfortable, messy, and in need of healing. As we enter into the second part of Lent, replace our fear with trust in your mercy and a renewed hope in your promise. Through the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we hope that our lives better reflect our baptismal promises. Help us to live each day as Jesus did—turning hatred to love and conflict to peace. Open our lives to your grace and power, so that when Easter comes, we can celebrate with hearts full of joy. We ask this through your Son, Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Fourth Week of Lent

The YouTube video for the Third Week of Lent will go live on Wednesday, March 10 at 5:00 p.m.

youtu.be/KPWftQT66dE

The YouTube video for the Fourth Week of Lent will go live on Wednesday, March 17 at 5:00 p.m.

youtu.be/t-oAoUq4G0w
Almighty God,
as we enter into our last full week of Lent, we place
ourselves before you. In the coming days we will
hear the stories of your Son's suffering, death, and
Resurrection, and we remember those in our world
who continue to suffer without hope. So many
of us are broken and afraid and in need of the
gentle hands of human kindness. Let us be those
hands. With joyful hearts, help us to be bold and
courageous and give us the strength we need to
share your message of reconciling love with those
who need it most. Help us put aside all that gets in
the way of hearts that are open to the promise and
beauty of Easter Resurrection. We ask this through
your Son, Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

The YouTube video for the Fifth Week of
Lent will go live on Wednesday, March
24 at 5:00 p.m.

youtu.be/GMeesy95ZfU
JOIN a small group.
Participate with others in one of our groups this Lent: Morning Gospel Reflection Group, Women’s Lenten Prayer Circle, Grief Support Group, Wisdom & Mature Spirituality Group

COMMIT to daily prayer and reflection.
Read a brief reflection each day in The Little Black Book for Lent or commit to spending some time with the daily Scripture readings that can be found at usccb.org. You can also use the weekly prayer cards the parish sent you as a starting point.

DEEPEN an existing relationship.
Practice the art of active listening by making a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying, but, more importantly, the complete message being communicated.

CONNECT with another person.
During the pandemic, impromptu and casual conversations with people outside our circles aren’t happening as often as they normally would. The absence of these interactions is likely taking a toll on our emotional health. Make an effort to reach outside your circle by sending someone a letter, a text, or making a phone call. Don’t underestimate the power of casual connections.

ENGAGE in an act of service.
Look for ways to safely volunteer in the community or connect with one of our parish outreach ministries: Saint Cecilia CARES or our parish Hunger & Homelessness Ministry.

IDENTIFY and remove any obstacles that get in the way of creating space for God.
Our relationships, including our relationship with God, need the nourishment that comes from making time for communication. Spend some time identifying those things that get in the way of prayer and then intentionally create a space and a place for conversation with God. By deliberately and consciously placing ourselves in God’s presence, we acknowledge that God may have something to say to us and we are showing our desire for relationship and intimacy with God. Jesus often withdrew to places to be alone with God. Let’s follow his example.

JOIN the parish effort to take a closer look at the sin of racism.
All life is sacred, and God has created each one of us with an inherent dignity. Making an effort to better understand racism by reading and reflecting on articles, books, and films is a good way to not only enlighten our minds but also soften our hearts. With God’s help, these forty days can motivate us to recognize our hidden biases, increase our sensitivity to the experience of others, and commit ourselves to the fight against racism in all its forms.