Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
25 December 2021
The Nativity
Gari Melchers
Dear Friends,

This time last year we were hoping and expecting (isn’t that what Advent is all about?) that this COVID-19 coronavirus–worldwide pandemic would be on its last legs by now and we would be getting “back to normal,” whatever “normal” looks like. And yet, here we are a year later, in this new normal still dealing with the pandemic, its mutating variants and a world forever changed by its emergence. We are tired, afraid to go out, to interact, and afraid of what will come next, wondering if this thing will ever end. Will we ever get back to the way things were? Hoping and expecting...???? Seriously? But, with the blessing of science and technology, the vaccines have saved lives and lessened the severity of the effects of the virus across the globe. Yet, still there is fear. There is resistance to their use. How is it that we can lose hope and expectation in something proven to help?

In the same way, on the spirit level, I sometimes wonder about people losing hope and expectation in something proven to help...Jesus Christ the Lord! I mean, there is still resistance to believing in Him as the One. I often wonder why some people believe and some don’t. Some buy the message “hook, line, and sinker,” and others doubt and are skeptical; others just aren’t interested or flat-out resist and renounce. Especially in times of need and catastrophe, why wouldn’t we believe? Why wouldn’t we hope? Why wouldn’t we expect? It’s what the prophets foretold, and the shepherds heard from the angel of the Lord: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for ALL people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.” Believe!!! Even Ted Lasso is encouraging us!

As we come into the end of 2021 and enter the new year 2022, let us be people of belief, hope, and expectation. Let us be like the shepherds, aware of our fears and the dangers of this world BUT trusting and believing in something...in someone “proven to help,” Jesus the Lord. “O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, come ye to Bethlehem!” Come to your own Bethlehem in 2021/22, with Mary and Joseph to that place of fears and uncertainties, of untimely and unexpected happenings and believe, trust, and hope. Bethlehem back then and our world today are filled with these same things...and no matter what epoch, century, or millennium, we are always called to “have no fear” for there is “good news of great joy for us” no matter what life throws at us or takes away from us.

In John’s gospel on Christmas Day, we hear, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God...and the Word WAS God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be, through him, was LIFE, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” This Christmas let us let our own light shine (being hopeful, generous, kind, giving, forgiving, helpful, loving) because the Light that already shone 2000+ years ago wants to keep shining in and through you and me. This what it means to be a people of faith, hope and love...a people who believe in the reason for the season...for a savior born to us who is Jesus Christ the Lord.

Believe....and thank you for being part of our online and in-person community. Have a Merry Christmas and happy, healthy, peaceful New Year from all of us here at Saint Cecilia!
healthier priests. stronger communities.

The strength of our communities depends on the well-being of our priests who tirelessly serve others.

SUPPORT OUR PRIESTS THIS CHRISTMAS

donate at clergytrust.org

OR

SCAN HERE for Venmo, Google/Apple Pay, PayPal via Givebutter.

Supports our priests in good standing
Preludes | Noel sur les flûtes

*Der Tag der ist so freudenrich*, BuxWV 182

*Dietrich Buxtehude* (1637-1707)

*In Dulci Jubilo*, BWV 729

*Johann Sebastian Bach* (1685-1750)

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” from *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV 147

*Ralph Vaughan Williams* (1872-1958)

Fantasia on Greensleeves

*Max Reger* (1873-1916)

Weihnachten

*Chorale Prelude on “Silent Night”*

*Samuel Barber* (1910-1981)

*Louis-Claude Daquin* (1694-1772)

*The Nativity of the Lord*

25 December 2021
ENTRANCE PROCESSION

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

arranged by Richard Webster

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.

The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL RITE
GLORIA | Mass of Creation

Glory to God in the high-est, and on earth

peace to peo-ple of good will.

Verse 1

praise you, we bless you, we adore

you, we glo-ri fy you, we give you

thanks for your great glo-ry,

Lord God,

heaven-ly King, O God, al-might-y Fa- ther.

Verse 2

Lord Je-sus Christ, On-ly Be-got-ten Son,

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Fa- ther,

you take a-way the sins of the world, have

mer-cy on us; you take a-way the

sins of the world, re-ceive our prayer;

you are seat-ed at the right hand of the

Fa- ther, have mer-cy on us.

D.C.
COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Isaiah 52: 7-10

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Isaiah 98: All the Ends of the Earth

Marty Haugen

1. Let us sing a new song for the wondrous deeds of our God, whose holy arm has prevailed, bringing salvation and victory.

2. All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God. Ring out your joy, break into song; all you lands sing praise.

3. Sing the praises of God; with the harp and song give praise. O trumpets sound! Joyfully sing; sing to the ruler of all.
SECOND READING | Hebrews 1: 1-6

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Celtic Alleluia
Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker

GOSPEL | John 1: 1-18

HOMILY

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE PARISH!

We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

Using the Flowcode with the camera on your smartphone is as easy as Aim & Tap. Aim your camera at the Flowcode image and tap the notification banner when it appears on your phone’s screen. You may need to zoom in a bit to focus on the code.

If the Flowcode doesn’t work for you, please visit www.flowcode.com/page/stcéciliaboston.

You can also mail a check to:

Saint Cecilia Parish
18 Belvidere Street
Boston, MA 02115
LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS | Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)
arranged by Richard Webster

1. Hark! The herald angels sing,
   “Glory to the new-born King!
   Joyful, all you nations, rise;
   Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored;
   Peace on earth and mercy mild,
   Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
   Hark! The heralds sing, “Glory to the new-born King!”

3. Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!
   Christ, the everlasting Lord!
   Mild he lays his glory by,
   “Glory to the new-born King!”

“Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
Hold him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb,
All he brings, rising with healing in his wings.”

“Hark! The herald angels sing,
Veiled in flesh the God-head see;
Mild he lays his glory by,
“Glory to the new-born King!””

“Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!”
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“Glory to the new-born King!””

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“Glory to the new-born King!”
“Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new-born King!””
Eucharistic Prayer

* The Lord be with you.
  All: And with your spirit.
* Lift up your hearts.
  All: We lift them up to the Lord.
* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
  All: It is right and just.

Sanctus | Mass of Creation

Marty Haugen

Memorial Acclamation | Mass of Creation

Marty Haugen

Amen | Mass of Creation

Marty Haugen
THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.

THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE

* The peace of the Lord be with you always.
All: And with your spirit.

AGNUS DEI | Mass of Creation

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

It is a long-held Catholic belief that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an "Act of Spiritual Communion." During this time when we are not able to celebrate the Eucharist together in person, Pope Francis invites Catholics to say this prayer as a source of grace. We can be assured that when we express our desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, God will be with us spiritually in a special way. Here is an Act of Spiritual Communion that we encourage you to pray as you participate in our live-streamed liturgies:

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Loving Jesus,
I believe that you
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
I love you above all things,
and I desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace you as if you were already there
and unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be separated from you.
Amen.
1. Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echo strains prolonged?
Say what may the tidings be, Which in answer are spired?
Heav'n-ly song? spire your back their joyous strains.
Heav'n-ly song? spire your back their joyous strains.
(env. 3x)

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, Which in answer are spired?
Heav'n-ly song? spire your back their joyous strains.
Heav'n-ly song? spire your back their joyous strains.
(env. 3x)

3. Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the shepherds sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the new-born King.
Heads in love, hearts in love.
Heads in love, hearts in love.
(env. 3x)

4. See him in a manger laid Whom the angels praise above;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, While we raise our hearts in love.
Heads in love, hearts in love.
Heads in love, hearts in love.
(env. 3x)
Away in the Manger James R. Murray

COMMUNION MEDITATION | Of the Father’s Love Begotten
Traditional plainchant, 13th century
arranged by Molly Ijames

Of the Father’s love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the Source, the Ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!

O that birth forever blessed,
when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race;
and the babe, the world’s Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heaven, adore him;
angels hosts, his praises sing:
all dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore!
CONCLUDING RITES

★ The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.
★ May almighty God bless you, the Father, (⁺) and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.
★ Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All: Thanks be to God.

RECESSIONAL | Joy to the World

George Friderich Handel
(1685-1759)
arranged by Richard Webster

POSTLUDE | Noel sur les Grands Jeux et en Duo

Louis-Claude Daquin
(1694-1772)
MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

The Vigil of Christmas
4:00 p.m.
Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Julie DesAutels and Charlie Prucher, lectors

6:30 p.m.
Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Richard Gaillardetz, Sara Hajjaj, and Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM, lectors

Christmas Day
9:30 a.m.
Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Karen McMenamy, Catherine Horsley, and Kevin Dumas, lectors

VIGIL MASS

Isaiah 9:1-6
Titus: 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14

MASS DURING THE DAY

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER
Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus’ sake.

Amen!
SAINT CECILIA PARISH

PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Sick
Please pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially Mary Pickering, Caeden Boyce, Delia Alvarez, Charlie Naughton, Peter Tracy, MaryAnn Weber, Bob Haas, Bob Roppolo, Christopher Gobron, Joy Gilbert, Mary Walters, John Powers, Marc Pelletier, Larry Murphy, Josephine Mason, Marian Licameli, Ray Cronin, Rosalind Sica, Nicholas Collins, Eileen Bolesky, Fred Anzalone, Liam Nedell, and Nancy Boutin.

For Our Priests
At all of our Christmas Masses this week, our offertory collections will be to support the retirement, medical, and financial needs of priests of the Archdiocese of Boston. On behalf of all of our priests, thank you in advance for your generosity. Please make a donation directly to Clergy Trust, at clergytrust.org.

Christmas Prayers
In your prayer, please remember those who are alone and will spend Christmas without family or friends. Consider ways that you can be a welcoming presence to those who are lonely. Pray also for those who will spend Christmas on the street or in a shelter.

For Ongoing Incarnation
Pray for the grace to bring God into our world — that we may allow the Word to dwell in our hearts, become enfleshed through our lives, and revealed in our words and deeds.

For Parents Celebrating Christmas With a New Child
Pray for our parishioners who are celebrating this Christmas with a new child — that they may recognize the gift of God that they hold and faithfully nurture the gifts and talents that God has given their child.

For Peace
Pray for peace and justice in all troubled parts of the world — that God will give insight and new vision to all who are striving to turn swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

For the People Who Inhabit the Holy Land
Pray for all who live in Bethlehem and the hill country of Judah; for Christians, Jews, and Muslims — that God’s spirit will open new pathways of peace and bring forth new hope for all who live in fear.

Welcome to Our Visitors
If you are not a regular parishioner at Saint Cecilia, we hope that you find a warm welcome and a vibrancy in worship here. If you are looking for a faith community to call home, please give us a try. For more information on programming and ministries at Saint Cecilia please find our ministry booklet in the narthex. There you will find the full range of our offerings and contacts for more information. Please feel free to take one home! Come and be a part of our life as we journey in God and toward God. You are always welcome here.

Saint Cecilia Parish

CHRISTMAS LITURGICAL SCHEDULE
Masses that are also livestreamed are marked with a *
and can be viewed at www.stceciliaboston.org

- Christmas Eve | Friday, December 24
  Mass | 4:00 p.m.*
  Mass | 6:30 p.m.

- Christmas Day | Saturday, December 25
  Mass | 9:30 a.m.*
Please note that this is the only Mass on Christmas Day

- Feast of the Holy Family | Sunday, December 26
  Mass | 8:00 a.m.
  Mass | 9:30 a.m.*
  Mass | 11:30 a.m.

Monday, December 27 – Friday, December 31
Parish Office Closed

Wednesday, December 29 | Thursday, December 30 | Friday, December 31
Weekday Mass | 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 1
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God | 10:00 a.m.

Epiphany | Sunday, January 2
Mass | 8:00, 9:30*, & 11:30
Welcome to Saint Cecilia Parish, a Roman Catholic community that gathers day by day, week by week, to know and make known the grace of God. By means of this abundant grace, we enjoy a diverse and close-knit parish family—young, old, rich, poor, of various ethnic origins and differing backgrounds. From our extraordinary music program to a growing children’s faith formation program; from the various liturgical ministries to the many opportunities for social outreach that the parish provides, Saint Cecilia is a vibrant community of faith, centered on prayer and worship that tries to keep the Gospel close to heart and to live by Jesus’ teachings.

Saint Cecilia Parish was established in 1888. At that time the Back Bay section of Boston along Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street was the residential section of the Yankee aristocracy. The maids (“Irish working out girls”) and coachmen who served these residents had long requested a church of their own. When Archbishop Williams granted their request and carved the parish from the territory of the Cathedral, they built a magnificent church out of their meager earnings.

The church was dedicated on April 22, 1894. Its architecture is Romanesque, XII Century Norman. The main altar, notable for its massive simplicity, was carved from a single block of white Carrara marble. The painting in the center reredos is a reproduction of da Vinci’s The Last Supper, and the dome above is an array of 24K gold rosettes.

For the sixtieth anniversary celebration in 1954, a massive renovation project was undertaken. During this renovation, a statue of Pope Saint Pius X (canonized that same year) was imported from Italy and placed on the right side of the sanctuary. Above the statue are paintings from Pius’ life. On the left side is a statue of Saint Patrick, principal patron of the Archdiocese of Boston, and above it are three scenes from his life.

Fourteen circular and sixteen square panels adorn the nave and arches of the church. The square panels are decorated with the symbols of Our Lady taken from the Litany of Loreto and the circular ones with symbols taken from the lives of the apostles. The great window of the Assumption—framed by the two oak cases of the organ—was installed in 1954 (the Marian Year) in spaces originally designed for windows but not until then used.

The original organ of 24 stops was built in 1902 by the Hutchings-Votey Organ Company, Opus 1465, and was rebuilt in 1954 with 32 stops. In 1998, Timothy Smith and Theodore Gilbert began a massive reconstruction of the organ. The current Smith & Gilbert Organ of 4 manuals, 54 ranks, and 3,084 pipes was dedicated on the Feast of Saint Cecilia, November 22, 1999.

Today we are experiencing something of an awakening within these old walls. Our numbers are increasing by 350 new households each year, and we continue to grow in our commitment to issues of peace, justice, and service to our neighbors, both near and far.

We’ve been right here on Belvidere Street, in the same building for over 125 years, but that does not mean that life here is stale, stagnant, or even predictable. We are proud to be entrusted with the legacy of Saint Cecilia Parish, where everything is the same, yet always changing; where we honor tradition while embracing the future; where God’s love makes all things new.
SAINT CECILIA PARISH

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

*Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead; to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.* (Rev. 1:5-6)

- Guerino & Olga Abruzzi
- Mary Anzivino
- Dudley Appelman
- Sharon Appelman
- Catherine Aylward
- Nora Bain
- Romania Barclay
- Julius & Eleanore Bienkowski
- Harriet Blanchard
- Alan Bonus
- Casey Bonus
- Mary Bonus
- Chuck & Betty Botosh
- Charles Boudakian
- Mary Bradley
- Jack Brent
- Mary Elizabeth Brown
- William W. Brown
- Sergio Bru
- Glenn Calmus
- Charles M. Campion
- Ann Campo
- John & Nancy Coghlan
- Doris Coleman
- Donald Coleman
- Harry Coleman
- Virginia Coleman
- Charlene A. Colgan
- Patricia Colgan
- Fr. Chuck Connolly, S.J.
- Mickey & Joe Contilli
- Francis & Madeline Cotton
- Robert Crawford
- Daniel & Jeanne Curley
- Daniel T. Curley
- Mary Curley
- Sally Curtin
- Mr. & Mrs. Saheed W. Dahar, Sr.
- Harry Day
- Frank DeMare
- Demers Family
- John Z. Dennehy
- Mr. & Mrs. Philip F. Dennehy, Sr.
- Francis DeRose
- Marc DeSousa
- Mary and Joseph Devlin
- Mario Diaz
- Frank & Marjorie DiGennaro
- Cecelia Dobson
- Alida Dommermuth
- Edmond Donlan
- Rosella Donlan
- George J. Doran, Sr.
- Arthur T. Dunnett
- R. Maragret Dunnett
- Maria Caridad Escanaverino
- Irene & John Faldetta
- Mary & Peter Famiglietti
- Tony, Ann, & John Farinelli
- Mary & Daniel Federici
- Marie & Phil Ferraro
- Elio Ruth Fine
- Caroline & Phil Fitzpatrick
- Ann Flaherty
- Annie Caroline Flaherty
- Joseph Flaherty
- Alice Florenzano
- Francesconi Family
- Bill Gardner
- Carmina Garcia
- Joseph Garcia
- Michael Garvey
- Richard Gilbert
- Anne & William Giles
- James J. Griffin
- Lucy Ann Griffin
- Lucy B. Griffin
- Mary Ann Griffin
- Michell Griffin
- Griffith Family
- Rev. Msgr. Michael F. Groden
- Richard N. Hart, Jr.
- Nicole Bairos Heck
- Charles & Nancy Heaslip
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<td>Geraldine Travers</td>
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<td>Sheldon Rich</td>
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<td>Christine &amp; John Romeo</td>
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<td>Frances Romeo</td>
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**SAINT CECILIA PARISH**
PARKING

There is discounted parking at The Hynes Auditorium Garage (located at 50 Dalton Street next to Bukowski’s Tavern), for $11, available on Sundays until 3:00 p.m., and $14 after 4:00 every day of the week. To take advantage of this discount, ask one of our greeters for a chaser ticket at Mass or ask a staff person during the week. Chaser tickets must be used at the machine at the exit gate. To obtain the discount, first place the ticket you received upon entering the garage into the machine, then follow it with the chaser ticket.

FOR THOSE WITH CELIAC DISEASE

If you have celiac disease, please let us know. We have a supply of low-gluten altar bread available for those who cannot tolerate gluten.

CHILDREN’S BOOKS

Generous parishioners have donated a supply of children’s books that can be found in the narthex. Given our desire to respect the dignity of the folks we serve through our hunger and homelessness ministries, we would ask that you have your children borrow these books rather than play with the donations of food and toiletries.

HEARING ASSISTANCE IN CHURCH

The church is equipped with an FM listening device. Small receivers are available for anyone who may have trouble hearing the sound system. Simply request a receiver from one of our greeters before Mass.

HELP CARE FOR THOSE IN NEED

Occasionally we give gift cards to our sisters and brothers in need. We need to replenish our supply of gift cards to Shaw’s Supermarket. If you would like to help out in this way, simply purchase a gift card and place it in the collection basket at Mass, give it to a member of the staff, or mail it to the Parish Office. We are very appreciative of your help as we attempt to offer some assistance, especially around the holidays, to those who struggle.

OTHER WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH

A good way to keep up–to–date with what is going on in the parish is to like us on Facebook or follow us on twitter. If you search “Saint Cecilia Parish” on either site, you should find us. We also put out a weekly Bulletin Blast which is a summary of the goings on in the week to come. If you’d like to receive it, please email lbennett@stceciliaboston.org.

THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
“Now they are all on their knees,”
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
“Come; see the oxen kneel,
“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,”
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

~ Thomas Hardy, 1915

Gebert Christi, Wolfgang Sauber, 15th century
Celebrate the Christmas Season with Evening Prayer

Monday, December 27 at 6:30 p.m. – The 3rd Day and Saint John the Evangelist

Wednesday, December 29 at 6:30 p.m. – The 5th Day and Saint Thomas Becket

Friday, December 31 at 6:30 p.m. – The 7th Day and Vigil of Mary, Mother of God

Sunday, January 2 at 6:30 p.m. – The 9th Day and Epiphany of the Lord

Tuesday, January 4 at 6:30 p.m. – The 11th Day and Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Wednesday, January 5 at 6:30 p.m. – The 12th Day and Saint John Neumann

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.

John 1:14

Sunday, January 9 at 6:30 p.m. – Baptism of the Lord and Conclusion of Christmas
Have you ever asked yourself why so few people noticed Jesus’ birth? Why, when the moment of salvation and hope, which had been so long expected, finally arrived, did it pass so many people by?

The answer I think is simple – because everything looked the same. The world was, apparently, exactly as it had been before: the Roman oppressors were still in power; there was no prosperity and harmony for God’s people and the wolves were not, as Isaiah had promised, lying down with lambs. God’s people were waiting for a dramatic and life changing intervention from God. Although few agreed on exactly what the Messiah would be like, they did agree that when the Messiah came everyone would know. The moment would be unmissable.

When Jesus did come it was far from the spectacular event everyone expected. Admittedly the appearance of ‘a multitude of the heavenly host’ singing would have lent a certain pizzazz to the occasion but the only people to see them were the shepherds in the fields keeping watch over their flocks. As far as we know, no one else saw them. The most spectacular event at this otherwise quiet and unremarkable birth was observed by a handful of people in the fields outside of a small, insignificant village.

The angels’ song, however, points out that, barely noticed though this birth may have been, it was the moment for which God’s people had waited for so long. The prophet Isaiah made clear that when the moment arrived in which God intervened in the world, it would be recognized because of two things: God’s glory would be seen and there would be peace on earth. This is exactly what the angels proclaimed when they sang to the shepherds: ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’ In other words, the long awaited moment had come, the world had changed forever - even if it didn't feel any different.

It is worth holding on to this truth through the seemingly never ending dark times of the pandemic we are in. In happier, less stressful times, it is easy to imagine that we know that the world changed for the better with Jesus’ birth because of the joy we feel or the justice we see around us. At happier times we can might feel the joy of Christmas.

But it is worth remembering that at the time of Jesus for most people nothing seemed to have changed. The world appeared as dark and as hopeless as it always had. At the heart of the Christmas story lies the truth that it might have looked that way to most people but as the angels revealed to the shepherds or as the star revealed to the magi, how things seemed was not how they were.

Hope had stirred. Love had been born. Immanuel – God with us – was in the midst of them. The world had changed forever, even if they couldn’t see it. This year let us hold fast to this with every fibre of our being – how things seem is not how they are. There is hope and love in abundance and God still is with us through it all, whether it feels that way or not.

~ Dr Paula Gooder is Chancellor of St Paul’s Cathedral and a leading Biblical scholar.
PARISH RESOURCES

Parish Office & Mailing Address
18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA 02115
Hours | Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. & by Appointment
Phone | 617 536 4548; Fax | 617 536 1781
E-mail | info@stceciliaboston.org
Website | www.stceciliaboston.org

Parish Staff
Rev. John J. Unni, Pastor
Rev. James Shaughnessy, SJ, Pastoral Support
Rev. Mr. David A. Kibliger, SJ, Deacon
Leah Bennett, Communications and Operations Manager,
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Mike Currier, Reception
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Mark Donohoe, Pastoral Associate
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Lisa Pickering, Director of Facilities and Events
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Christin Roskos, Reception
reception@stceciliaboston.org

Assisting Clergy
Rev. Terrence Devino, SJ
Rev. Peter Grover, OMV
Rev. Peter Glyes, SJ

Schedule for Liturgy
Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday | 8:00 a.m.
Lord’s Day | Sat 5:00 p.m.; Sun 8:00, 9:30*, 11:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
Holy Days | 8:00 a.m.
* Please note that the 9:30 Mass is both in-person and livestreamed.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the communal process through which non-baptized men and women become members of the Catholic Church. It is also suitable for those baptized in different faith traditions who are interested in becoming Catholic, or, for those who were baptized Catholic, but have yet to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and confirmation.

Baptism for Infants
Infant baptism is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. For more information, please contact Mark Donohoe in the Parish Office.

Faith Formation for Children
To register your child for our Faith Formation Program, please contact Scott MacDonald in the Parish Office.

Marriage
Couples who wish to prepare for marriage should contact Mark Donohoe in the Parish Office at least six months in advance.

Care of the Sick
To arrange for the Sacrament of the Sick, for Holy Communion to be brought to those unable to attend the Sunday celebration, or for Viaticum for the Dying (Holy Communion for those in danger of death), please contact the Parish Office. It is always possible to anoint the sick during regularly scheduled liturgies.

Order of Christian Funerals
The parish is prepared to celebrate the Vigil (wake) in the church. Please contact the Parish Office for more information.

Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team
The CAP Team is responsible for training all parish staff and volunteers in mandated reporting laws and the Protecting God’s Children program (VIRTUS). They also provide consultation and support to anyone in the parish who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Lois Flaherty (loisflaherty@gmail.com), Maria Roche (maria.roche15@gmail.com), Letitia Howland (l_howland@hotmail.com), or Erin Young (erin.t.young@gmail.com) if you have any questions or concerns.

The Archdiocese of Boston has in place a vigorous program to protect children from harm and to educate its ministers and faithful about the nature of abuse, with a goal of increasing knowledge, creating a safe environment for children, and recognizing and reporting potentially dangerous situations. The full text of the policy is also available in the narthex and Parish Office, as well as on our website.

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Joining Our Community
We’re happy that you’re with us! Our community offers a warm, spiritual home for a diverse group of Catholics. We come from many neighborhoods in and around Boston, but also have long distance parishioners from other states as well as other countries. We invite both local and long distance individuals and families to fill out a new parishioner form on our website. No matter what your background or location, please know that you are always welcome at Saint Cecilia.

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“He has risen.” Matt 28:6

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