

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

11 February 2024

Healing the Leper by Hyatt Moore

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H

11 February 2024

THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

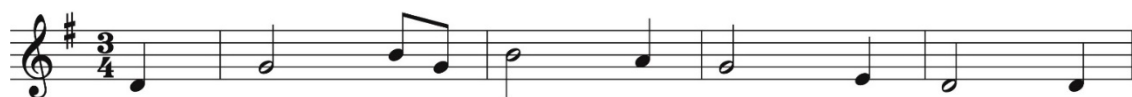
PRELUDE | Give Me Jesus

African American Spiritual
arranged by L.A. Garrett
(b. 1984)

THE ORDER OF THE MASS INTRODUCTORY RITES

PROCESSIONAL HYMN | Amazing Grace

NEW BRITAIN



1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, That
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And
3. The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His
4. Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I
5. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious did that
word my hope se - cures; He will my shield and
have al - read - y come; 'Tis grace has brought me
shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to



now am found; Was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved!
por - tion be As long as life en - dures.
safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
sing God's praise Than when we'd first be - gun.

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 ACT

GLORIA | Mass of Renewal

Curtis Stephan

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and on earth peace to peo-ple
of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we a -
dore you, we glo-ri-fy you, we give you
thanks for your great glo - ry, Lord God, heav-en - ly
King, O God, al-might-y Fa - ther.
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, have mer - cy on us. For you a - lone are the



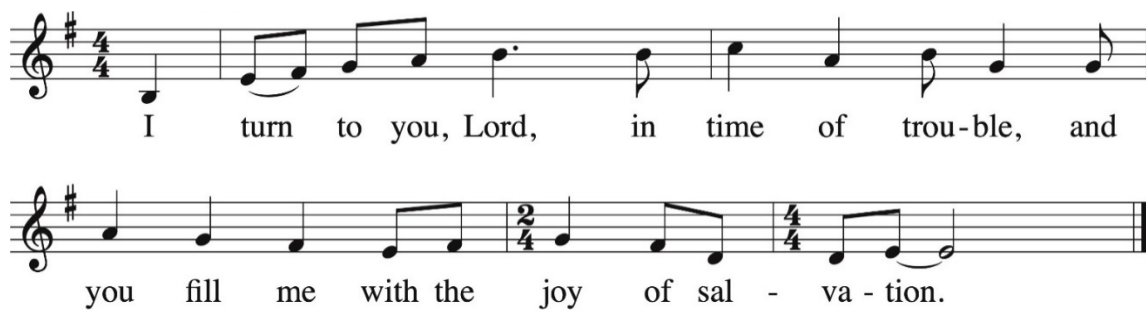
COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Ps. 32: I Turn to You, Lord

Tony Alonso

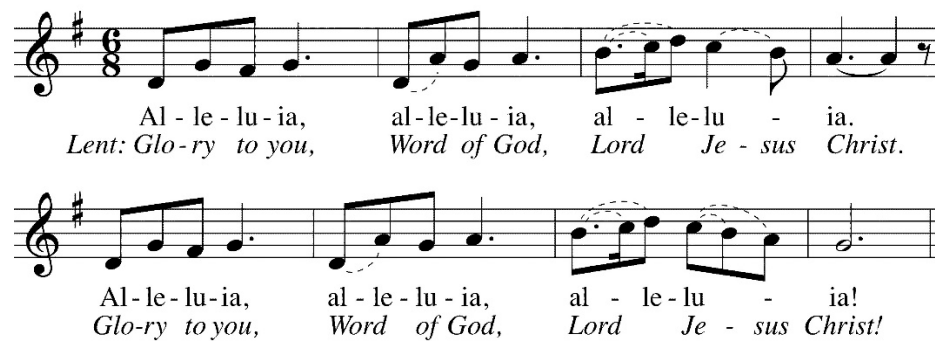


Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is remitted.
Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no guile.

To you I have acknowledged, acknowledged my sin;
my guilt I did not hide.
I said, "I will confess my transgression to the LORD."
And you have forgiven the guilt of my sin.

Rejoice in the LORD, exult you just! Rejoice in the LORD.
Ring out your joy, all you upright of heart! Ring out your joy!

SECOND READING | 1 Corinthians 10: 31-11:1



GOSPEL | Mark 1: 40-45

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH

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!

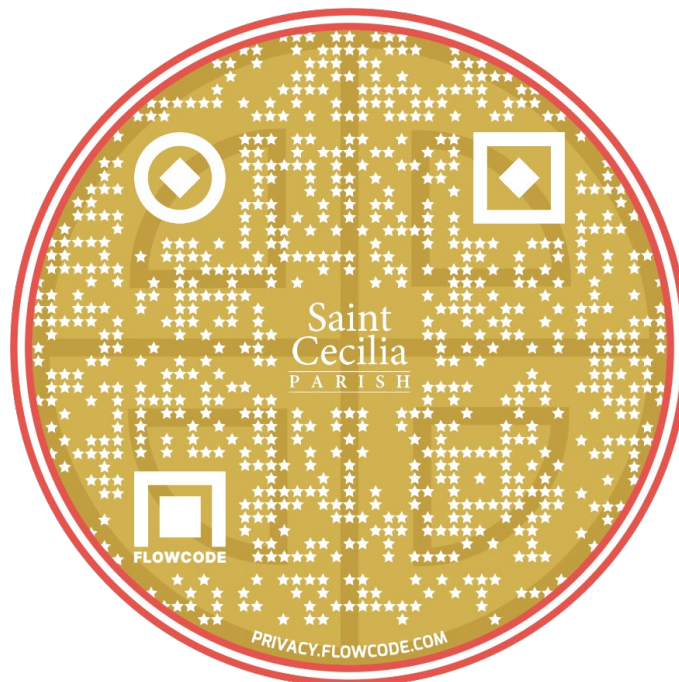
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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/stceciliaboston.

You can also mail a check to:

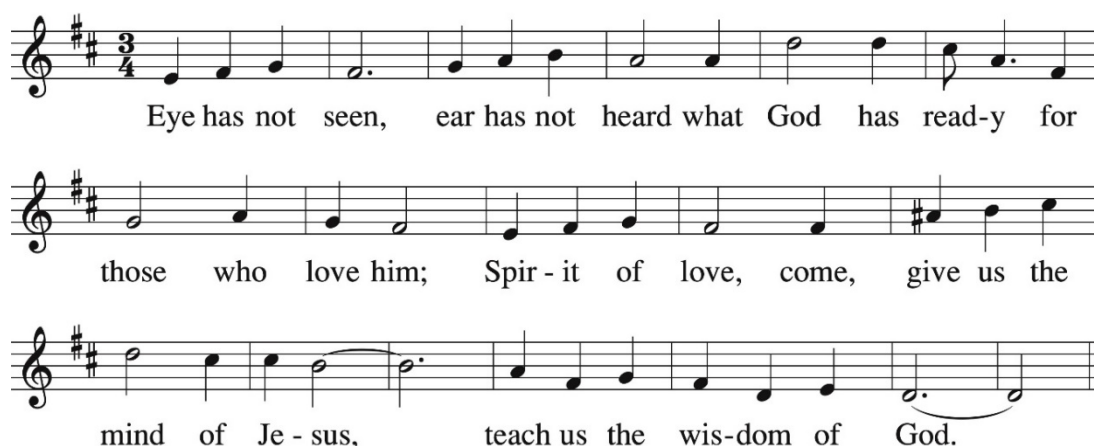
Saint Cecilia Parish
18 Belvidere Street
Boston, MA 02115



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

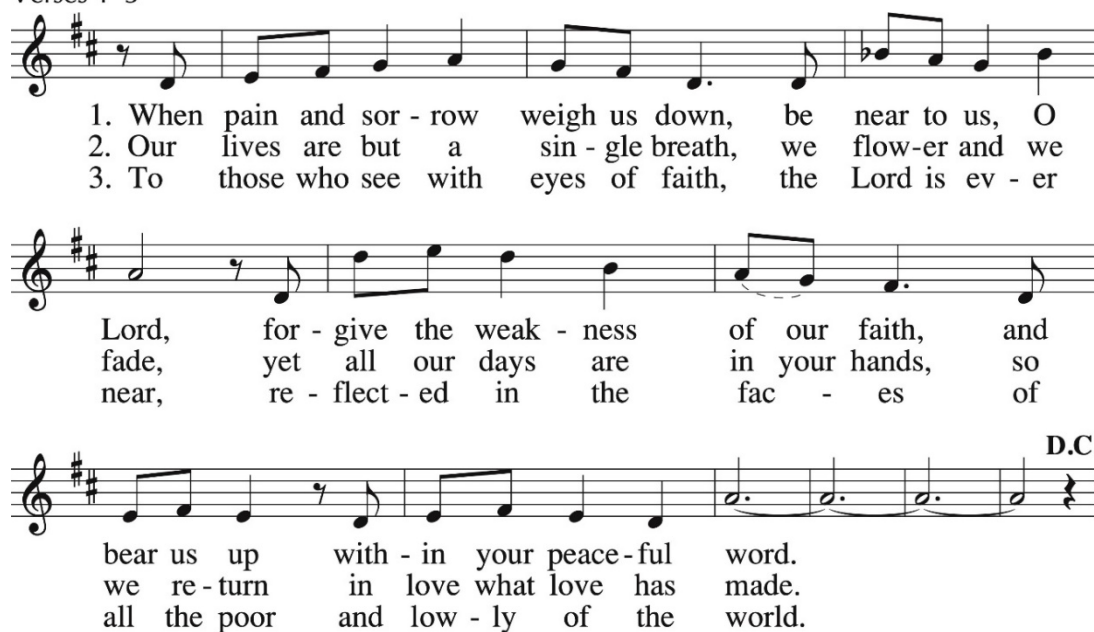
PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS | Eye Has Not Seen

Marty Haugen



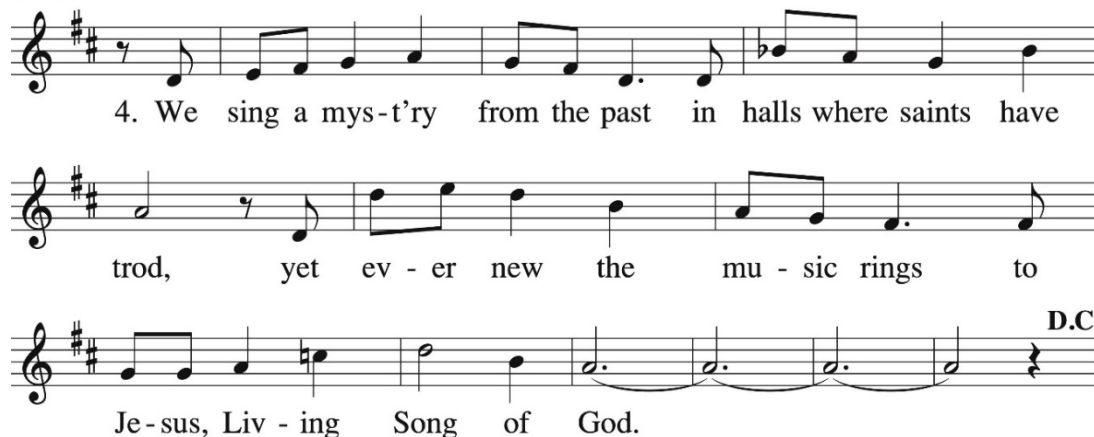
Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has read-y for
those who love him; Spir - it of love, come, give us the
mind of Je - sus, teach us the wis-dom of God.

Verses 1-3



1. When pain and sor - row weigh us down, be near to us, O
2. Our lives are but a sin - gle breath, we flow-er and we
3. To those who see with eyes of faith, the Lord is ev - er
Lord, for - give the weak - ness of our faith, and
fade, yet all our days are in your hands, so of
near, re - flect - ed in the fac - es of
D.C.
bear us up with - in your peace-ful word.
we re - turn in love what love has made.
all the poor and low - ly of the world.

Verse 4



4. We sing a mys-t'ry from the past in halls where saints have
trod, yet ev - er new the mu - sic rings to
Je - sus, Liv - ing Song of God.
D.C.

EUCCHARISTIC 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.

HOLY, HOLY | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord God of hosts. Heav-en and
earth are full, are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na! Ho -
san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is
he who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef, key of D major (indicated by two sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord God of hosts. Heav-en and'. The second staff contains 'earth are full, are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na! Ho -'. The third staff contains 'san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is'. The fourth staff contains 'he who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -'. There are triplets marked with a '3' over the notes 'san - na!' in the third staff and 'Ho -' in the fourth staff. A '(Fine)' marking is placed above the third staff. The piece ends with a double bar line.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

We pro - claim your Death, O Lord, and pro - fess your
Res - ur - rec - tion un - til you come a - gain.

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef, key of D major (indicated by two sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains the lyrics 'We pro - claim your Death, O Lord, and pro - fess your'. The second staff contains 'Res - ur - rec - tion un - til you come a - gain.'. The piece ends with a double bar line.

GREAT AMEN | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

A - men. A - men. A - men.

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef, key of D major (indicated by two sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of one staff of music. The lyrics are 'A - men. A - men. A - men.'. The piece ends with a double bar line.

COMMUNION RITE

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.

DOXOLOGY

SIGN OF PEACE

LAMB OF GOD | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte



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." When we are unable to be physically present at the celebration of the Eucharist, 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

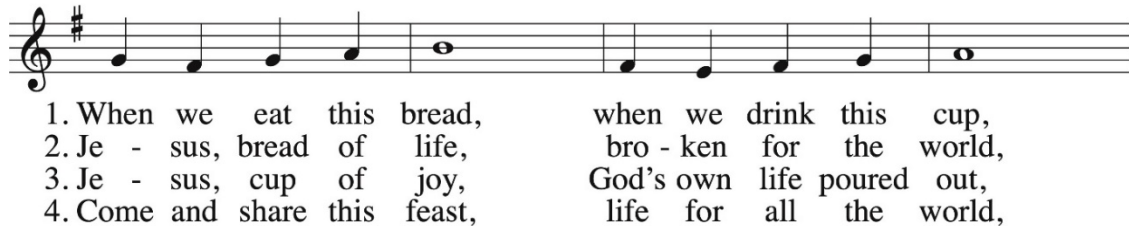
Loving Jesus, I believe that you
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you.
Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Refrain

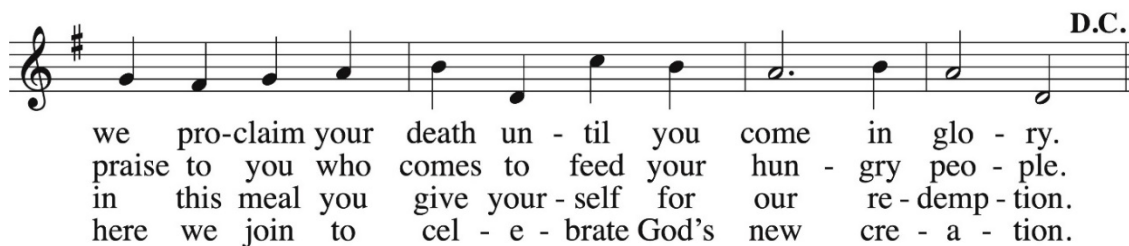


We re - mem - ber how you loved us to your death,
and still we cel - e - brate, for you are with us here;
and we be - lieve that we will see you when you come
in your glo - ry, Lord. We re - mem - ber, we
cel - e - brate, we be - lieve.

Verses-Set A



1. When we eat this bread, when we drink this cup,
2. Je - sus, bread of life, bro - ken for the world,
3. Je - sus, cup of joy, God's own life poured out,
4. Come and share this feast, life for all the world,



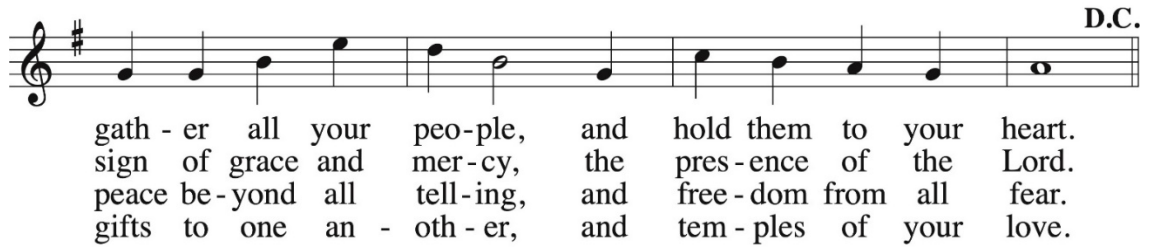
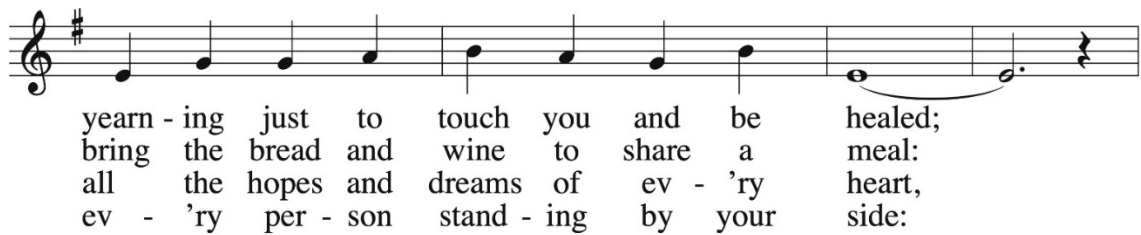
D.C.

we pro-claim your death un - til you come in glo - ry.
praise to you who comes to feed your hun - gry peo - ple.
in this meal you give your - self for our re - demp - tion.
here we join to cel - e - brate God's new cre - a - tion.

Verses-Set B



5. Here, a mil - lion wound - ed souls are
6. Now we re - cre - ate your love, we
7. Christ, the Fa - ther's great "A - men" to
8. See the face of Christ re - vealed in



COMMUNION MEDITATION | I Love My Love

David C. Dickau

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

CONCLUDING RITES

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

✠ 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.



1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me
 2. When my way grows drear, Pre - cious Lord, lin - ger
 3. When the dark - ness ap - pears And the night draws

stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am
 near, When my life is al - most
 near, And the day is past and

worn.
 gone,
 gone,

Through the storm, through the
 Hear my cry, hear my
 At the riv - er I

night, Lead me on to the light. Take my
 call, Hold my hand lest I fall. Take my
 stand, Guide my feet, hold my hand. Take my

hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.
 hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.
 hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

Music in this worship aid is printed with permission under Onelicense.net #A700-137.

For information on becoming involved or supporting the music program at Saint Cecilia,
 please contact Dr. Robert Duff at 617-536-4548 or email: RDuff@stceciliaboston.org.

WELCOME!

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. Our church building resides on the ancestral homeland of the Pawtucket and Massachusetts tribal nations.

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.

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS



MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, February 10 | 5:00 p.m.

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV, celebrant
Rosaria Salerno, lector

Sunday, February 11 | 8:00 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Esteban Vanegas, lector

Sunday, February 11 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Michael Lake, Bob Minehart, and Peter Haley, lectors

Sunday, February 11 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Jen Kowieski, Ritika Philip, and Catherine Horsley, lectors

Sunday, February 11 | 6:00 p.m.

Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ, celebrant
Megan Altendorf, lector

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Sunday, February 11 | 8:00 a.m.

John & Angelina Machado, *Memorial*

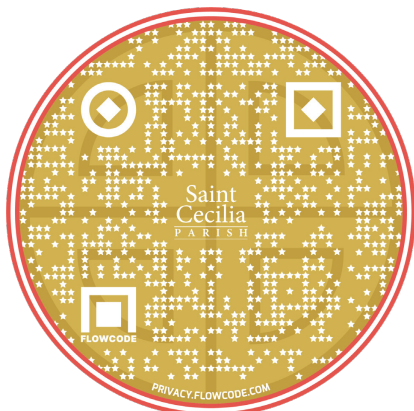
Sunday, February 11 | 9:30 a.m.

George Zammit, *Memorial*
Liam McDonnell, *Memorial*
Kenneth Perry, *Memorial*
Joseph A. Camarano Sr., *Memorial*
Leila & Bob Mahoney, *Memorial*
Joseph Ring, *Memorial*

Sunday, February 11 | 11:30 a.m.

Edward Colligan, *Memorial*

SCAN THIS CODE
FOR OFFERTORY GIVING.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS
SUPPORT OF SAINT CECILIA PARISH!

TODAY'S READINGS

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
1 Corinthians 10:31—11:1
Mark 1:40-45

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Genesis 9:8-15
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15



PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Deceased

Daniel Hart's brother, **John Patrick Hart**, died on January 18, 2024. Pray for John's eternal repose and for the consolation of his family and friends. His celebration of life service, funeral Mass, and burial were on Friday, January 26. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Our Sick

Please pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially Mary Olivieri, Jacqueline Lavelle, Glenn Gallo, Marc Pelletier, Michele Maniscalco, and Fred Tufts.

Welcome to Saint Cecilia Parish

We are pleased to welcome the following newly-registered members of our parish: **Carmen Zayas** of Brockton, the **Martinez Family** of Farmingdale, New Jersey, **Kerry Brennan** of West Roxbury, **Erin Egan** of King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, **Tayon Kulos** of Boston, and **Andrea-Storm Barkus** of Cambridge. If you have not previously registered, you can do so at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Black History Month

During the month of February we recognize that Black history is American history. To divorce the two is to perpetuate the systematic oppression and violence our neighbors of color face. Though only 29 days long, Black History Month is a time to celebrate and lift up the lives and achievements of Black Americans past and present. We plan to celebrate this year by sharing articles and highlighting some facts about some noteworthy Black figures in history. These values echo the main principles of Catholic Social Teaching, and we pray that they are increasingly embraced by all Americans.

Ash Wednesday Special Collection

This Ash Wednesday, a special collection will be taken up for Catholic Charities Boston. Catholic Charities helps thousands of families within our own communities who are facing critical challenges—homelessness, food insecurity, poverty, lack of affordable childcare, access to education and job training, legal advocacy, and support for refugees and immigrants—to help achieve stability and reach self-sufficiency. Any amount directly helps our neighbors in need. You can give here: <https://www.osvhub.com/stceciliaboston/giving/funds/ash-wednesday-2024-catholic-charities>. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Celebration of First Reconciliation

On Saturday, February 10, we celebrated the sacrament of first Reconciliation with the 27 children preparing to receive their First Communion on May 11. In their classes, they are learning about how much God loves them and more about how they will be welcomed to God's table through the Eucharist. Pray for our First Communicants and for all the children in our Faith Formation program—that the gentle and loving presence of God continues to be made known to them.

World Marriage Day

Today the Church celebrates World Marriage Day. Pray that all married couples will be blessed with the wisdom to see, affirm, and appreciate the gift that they are to each other. Pray also for couples struggling in their marriage, that they might find the strength to work through their difficulties and recommit themselves to each other.

Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 14 and Mass will be celebrated at 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. These are the only times ashes will be distributed at Saint Cecilia.

Happy Mardi Gras!

The Lenten Fast begins this coming week. Now it is Mardi Gras season, the last few days for making spiritual resolutions and adopting the practices that have the potential of yielding a joyous Easter. Do something fun these next few days. Carnival feasting allows for good Lenten fasting.

Take a Little Black Book for Lent

These books are available in the narthex. Please take one home and spend just six minutes a day in reflection to prepare for our celebration of Easter. If you aren't coming to church in-person you can order your own directly from their website at littlebooks.org. They are available in paper (\$5) and ebook (\$4) formats. You can also get all the seasonal books on the Little Books app (<https://littlebooks.org/pages/little-books-on-the-go>).

God Bless This Sunday's First Communicants

At this Sunday's 9:30 liturgy, we will welcome four youngsters to the table of the Lord. **Isabella Gallegos**, **Micah Price**, **Grant Schmitt**, and **Landon Schmitt** will all receive Holy Communion for the first time. We pray that as these children celebrate a new level of relationship with the Body of Christ, they are filled with joy and happiness. Congratulations, Isabella, Micah, Grant, and Landon!

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

"Is there anyone sick among you?" This question, found in the New Testament Letter of James, gives the response that the sick should call for the priests of the Church who are to pray over and anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord. Never hesitate to call the parish office to ask for prayer and the Sacrament of the Sick prior to surgery or when diagnosed with serious illness. This sacrament is not to be looked upon as the "Last Rites" but rather as a powerful instrument of God's healing presence. On February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Church observes World Day of the Sick. This celebration is a reminder to pray for all those who are sick and to recognize and honor those who work in healthcare and those who serve as caregivers. On Sunday, February 11, we'll observe this day with a special Blessing of Healthcare Workers and Caregivers at the 9:30 and 11:30 liturgies. The Sacrament of the Sick will be offered after the 5:00 p.m. (Saturday), 8:00 a.m., and 11:30 a.m. liturgies that same weekend, for those who are living with physical, mental, or spiritual sickness or the frailty of advanced age. If you would like to take part in this special celebration, be sure to attend one of these liturgies.

ARE YOU AN ADULT WHO HAS NEVER BEEN CONFIRMED?

Are you an adult Catholic who has been baptized and received first Communion, but was never confirmed? If so, perhaps this is the right time. This year's regional adult confirmation will take place on Monday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mary Church, 211 North Main Street, Randolph. We will be offering a class at Saint Cecilia for adults who wish to prepare for the sacrament of confirmation. Four classes will be held at Saint Cecilia from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on the following Wednesdays: April 10, April 17, April 24, and May 1. If you would like more information or would like to register for this class, please contact Scott MacDonald at his parish email address.



EVENINGS WITH FRANK RUNYEON

The Charlestown Catholic Collaborative invites you to two very special evenings with TV and film star Frank Runyeon, who will light up St. Mary's Church at 55 Warren St. with three presentations: *Signs! The Gospel of John* on Thursday, March 21 at 7:00 p.m., and *The Sermon on the Mount and Hollywood vs. Faith!* on Friday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m. Take everyone to this special evening and be engaged and inspired! Admission is a free-will offering. Mark these dates on your calendar and join us. For more information, call 617-242-4664 or go to charlestowncatholic.org.

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH... TOGETHER

The Catholic Appeal is a way to fortify, sustain, and expand the many ministries and services that serve thousands across the Archdiocese. This past week, many of you may have received a letter from Cardinal Seán requesting your participation and early support of the 2024 Appeal. Because of the growing need in our communities, we hope every parishioner will join with a donation. Please prayerfully consider offering a generous early gift by returning your pledge card or by making an online donation at www.bostoncatholicappeal.org. Your contribution has a real and significant impact. Thank you!

AN EVENING WITH THEOLOGIAN JAMES ALISON

The Saint Cecilia Rainbow Ministry is pleased to host an evening with James Alison, Catholic priest, author, and theologian. It will be held in the Parish Hall at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 15. The event will also be livestreamed on the Saint Cecilia YouTube channel (<https://bit.ly/3HG08Qy>). Fr. Alison earned his doctorate in theology from the Jesuit Faculty in Belo Horizonte, Brazil in 1994. Fr. Alison was brought up in an Evangelical Anglican family and became a Catholic at the age of 18. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1988. For more information, please see www.JamesAlison.com.

REMINDER TO ALL SAINT CECILIA VOLUNTEERS!

The Archdiocese of Boston, in compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has firm guidelines for volunteers in parish ministries. One of these requirements is that every year volunteers complete a CORI. As a parish, we do this each January and when a new volunteer begins. We also ask each volunteer to fill out a ministerial involvement form. This can be returned to the Parish with your CORI form so that we can be sure we have updated information. If you have not completed a CORI yet, please pick up a form from a Reception team member or download it from our website (www.stceciliaboston.org/volunteering/). If you have any questions please contact Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Pastoral Director of Operations, at her parish email address. Thank you!



LENT APPROACHETH!

As winter Ordinary Time draws to a close, we look toward Lent, the Church's annual retreat. Lent is a time of renewal and preparation for the feast of Easter and is marked by the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Taking some time to get ready for Lent will ensure that we aren't going to miss the first week or two because we are just getting started. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, but we want to be ready to really take off on that day, rather than just beginning to think about it. Part of what makes a vacation or a significant anniversary so special is the build-up to it.

There are various 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—an endurance test of sorts. Rather, the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, along with whatever else we may take on, are aimed at bringing us into closer relationship with God and making us more loving people. If our Lenten practices do not bear this fruit, we may need to reevaluate. We hope you'll be able to participate in either our 8:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. liturgy, but we also invite you to give some thought to other more personal ways to make the beginning of Lent special.

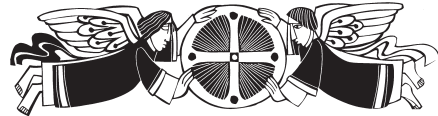
It doesn't take a lot of time to prepare for the beginning of Lent. It just takes desire and focus; God can do so much with that. By beginning to establish some simple patterns, we create a bit of space where God is able to touch our hearts. Perhaps we might begin the day mindful that we are entering a period of renewal and refocus. We might ask God to help us to be agents of mercy and reconciliation.

Lent is also a good opportunity to practice gratitude, mindful of the many gifts and graces we have in our lives. These types of simple practices can help stir our spirits and bring us closer to God. And remember, Lent is meant to be a joyful season and a time to keep in mind how much God desires to be in relationship with us. In the words of the prophet Hosea, Jesus says, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Lent then, is a time to pay attention to matters of the heart.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday begins our forty days of joyful renewal in preparation for the celebration of Easter! Those who are mindful of the call to hear the Gospel more fully, receive ashes as a sign of repentance. The ashes we use are the burnt palms from last year's celebration of Passion (Palm) Sunday. We will distribute ashes at both the 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Masses on Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday is a day of universal fast and abstinence. In addition to whatever personal penitential practices you might take up during Lent, Catholics are also asked to observe the practices of fast and abstinence during the forty day period. The Lenten Fast and Abstinence Regulations are as follows:



1. Everyone 14 years of age and older is bound to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent.
2. Everyone 18 years of age and under 59 years of age is bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (the obligation of fasting ceases with the celebration of one's 59th birthday).
3. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, only one full meatless meal is allowed. Two other smaller meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs; but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted on these two days, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices, are allowed. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige.
4. Catholics should not lightly excuse themselves from these prescribed penitential practices. By the threefold discipline of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, the Church keeps Lent from Ash Wednesday until the evening of Holy Thursday. All of the faithful and the catechumens are encouraged to undertake the practice of these three Lenten practices. Fasting and abstinence, along with prayer and almsgiving, are the foundations of a good and holy Lent.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FAST?

To fast is to do without food. The purpose of fasting is to experience the effects of not eating. It also serves as a penance or sacrifice—with the goal of strengthening us. When we don't eat, for even a little while, we become hungry. When we are aware of our hunger, we have a heightened sense of awareness. If, when we eat too much, we have a sluggish feeling, when we fast, we have a feeling of alertness.

Fasting is a wonderful exercise whenever we want to sincerely ask for an important grace from God. It is not that our fasting “earns” God's attention, but by fasting, we clarify our thinking and our feeling. It is purifying and prepares us to pray more deeply.

WHEN DO I FAST?

Catholics, as a group, are required to fast on only two days of the year—Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On these days, fasting means something very specific and limited. It means that one eats only one full meal in a day, with no food in-between meals. It is understood that two other meals, if one eats three meals a day, should not total one full meal. One might fast in a more complete way, i.e., eating only a portion of a single meal. Of course, anyone is free to fast at any time that it is helpful for their prayer and reflection. It is not recommended that anyone with impaired health should fast in any way.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ABSTAIN?

To abstain is to not eat meat. Abstinence is meant to be an act of penance—an act of sacrifice that helps us grow in freedom to make much bigger sacrifices. Of course, it would be nonsensical to make the sacrifice of not eating meat only to then indulge in a wonderful meal of seafood that one might enjoy even more. Many people keep a vegetarian diet and, for them, eating meat is not an issue. In the spirit of Lent, one possibility is to abstain from a non-meat meal that one really likes, on all the Fridays of Lent.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Praying the Stations of the Cross is a wonderful Lenten tradition in the Church. We will pray them as a community on Good Friday, but you can pray the Stations online by visiting www.stjames-cathedral.org/Prayer/jkblstations/stations.htm

ADULT FAITH FORMATION EVENTS

BOSTON COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

CAMPUS EVENTS/WEBINARS

Children's Spirituality: Perspectives from Leaders in the Field

Presenters: Ann M. Garrido, associate professor, Aquinas Institute of Theology, formation committee, US Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd; Rev. Cheryl V. Minor, director of the Center for the Theology of Childhood for the Godly Play Foundation; and Hannah Sutton-Adams, Ph.D. candidate, Boston College, research assistant at the Center for the Theology of Childhood for the Godly Play Foundation
Thursday, February 22 | 6:00–7:15 p.m. | Webinar
Registration Required | Free

For further details or to register for these events, please check the STM Online: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/stm/continuing-education/featured-events.html>

ONLINE COURSES

Franciscan Spirituality

February 21 – April 2, 2024 | 6-Week Online Course | Registration Required | \$60.00

Sacraments: The Fabric of Catholic Life

February 21 – March 26, 2024 | 5-Week Online Course | Registration Required | \$60.00

For more information or to register for these events, please check the STM Online: Crossroads website: https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/stm/continuing-education.html#tab-stm_online_crossroads

SAINT SUSANNA PARISH — DEDHAM

Awaken to the Divine:

Contemplative Reflections to Transform Your Spirit

Presenter: Paul Coutinho, international scholar, and speaker
Monday, February 19 | 7:00-9:00 p.m. | Zoom Presentation

For further details on this presentation, please check the website: https://www.saintsusanna.org/adult_faith_formation.html

Lenten Wednesdays—Mass & Reconciliation

On all the Wednesday evenings of Lent (February 21, 28; March 6, 13, 20, and 27) we will celebrate Mass in the sanctuary at 6:00. Following Mass, confessions will be heard until 8:00 for anyone who wishes to celebrate the sacrament. If you've been away from the sacrament for a long time, rest assured, the clergy will guide you through reconciliation and there's no need to be nervous about the structure of the rite. Come celebrate the sacrament of God's mercy and healing love this Lent.

LOOKING AHEAD TO LENT: CRS RICE BOWLS

1. What is CRS Rice Bowl?

CRS Rice Bowl is Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program for families and faith communities in the United States who want to put their faith into action. Through CRS Rice Bowl, participants learn about their sisters and brothers in need around the world and devote their Lenten prayers, fasting, and alms to change the lives of those in poverty.

2. How is the money used?

Lenten alms go to alleviate hunger and poverty in communities around the world and in the U.S.: 75% percent of gifts support CRS' International humanitarian programs, including:

- Agriculture projects help farmers improve harvests
- Water and sanitation projects bring clean water to communities
- Microfinance projects support small businesses
- Mother and child projects offering health and nutrition services
- Education projects provide resources and training
- **For us in Boston, 25% of the donations collected funds the work of our friends at Catholic Charities of Boston!**

3. What is Catholic Relief Services?

Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. CRS is motivated by Jesus's example and assists poor and suffering people in more than 120 countries based on need, not creed, race, or nationality. CRS is efficient and effective. In 2022, 94% of their expenditures went to CRS programming that benefits people experiencing poverty around the world. CRS' programs touch more than 250 million lives.

Your Lenten alms change lives globally and in your own community.



Your donations help provide lifesaving support to more than **250 million people** in more than **120 countries**.

75%

of your CRS Rice Bowl donation supports our work around the world.

25%

of gifts stay in each U.S. diocese for hunger and poverty alleviation efforts.



Rooted in the history of the Eucharistic Congress, CRS Rice Bowl began in 1975 as a way for families in the United States to share their blessings with communities experiencing hunger around the world.



What does your donation provide?

\$40

for chickens that provide protein-rich eggs.

\$80

for a baby goat to provide milk and income.

\$150

for a household garden for nutrition.



SCYA LENTEN REFLECTIONS—PRAYER, FASTING, & ALMSGIVING

Mondays (2/12, 2/26, 3/11) | 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Hybrid [In-Person in the Community Room & on Zoom] | Open to: Young Adults (18-40)

How is God inviting you to draw closer to him this Lent? Each Lent, we're invited to pray, fast, and give alms, but what does that look like in 2024? Do you want to try something new this year, but don't know where to start? Consider joining the Saint Cecilia Young Adults (SCYA) in a three-part series as they dive deeply into each of these three Lenten practices! The group will discuss the spirit of these challenging calls and share ideas of how to put them into practice in new ways. Deepen your relationships with God and fellow young adults through this journey of Lenten reflection. RSVP here: <https://bit.ly/3vOQI2A>

FAST FOR A GREENER LENT

Can you fast from meat not just on Fridays in Lent, but for all of Lent? Join Catholics throughout the Archdiocese this Lenten season with a new take on fasting.

Our Climate Justice Group encourages you to help care for Creation this Lent by cutting down on your meat consumption, as meat production is a large source of global greenhouse gas emissions. If you feel like the jump to vegetarianism for Lent is too much, consider reducing your meat intake. The Greener Lent program (<https://greenerlent.org/>) provides four different levels of meat consumption reduction that you can sign up for as a means of accountability this Lent. When you register, please be sure to pick "Boston Catholic Climate Movement" as your group. Also, if you need some vegetarian recipes, check these out: <https://goodnewsveg.com/good-recipes/>. You can also sign up for almsgiving for "Wells of Salvation" to provide clean water to people in Zambia and Malawi, or commit to daily prayer.



WINTER WALK BOSTON

Ending homelessness is within our reach! For the eighth consecutive year, a consortium of agencies focused on homelessness are sponsoring a 2-mile fundraising walk through the streets of Boston. The event takes place on Sunday, February 11 at 8:30 a. m. and we will walk during the coldest month of the year. The Walk will begin and end on the Boston Common at the open field at the corner of Beacon and Charles Streets. Participants, housed and unhoused, will walk shoulder to shoulder and then share a meal together. It is hoped that each adult walker will raise \$100—either by paying it as a registration fee or raising it from friends and family. There is a Saint Cecilia Hunger & Homelessness Ministry team again this year—we've participated each year since the event began. We would like to designate Women's Lunch Place as the recipient of the funds we raise this year. If you would like to join or support our team, please go to: <https://secure.ggiv.com/event/winterwalk2024-boston/team/943814/>. Please contact Mark Lippolt at the Hunger and Homelessness email with questions.

FEBRUARY PARISH RETREAT

We are pleased to report that the number of parishioners who have registered for our February 24 day retreat has been overwhelming! Thank you to everyone who diligently registered. We have nearly 150 people signed up and are now at capacity. If you would like to be added to our waitlist, please contact Scott MacDonald at his parish email address. We look forward to spending a day together cultivating community!

CATIE'S CLOSET

For the third year, we are excited to invite you to support Catie's Closet! Catie's Closet assists kids aged 4-18 who are experiencing poverty by giving them clothing discreetly and respectfully through their schools, including Boston Public Schools. Their goal is to improve school attendance and graduation rates. They have targeted 100 schools locally and serve 70,000 students, on average, daily. This February, in honor of Saint Valentine's Day, we are holding a virtual clothing drive for Catie's Closet. You can get detailed information about their Amazon Wish List at <https://amzn.to/4b7YrZO> or check their website for opportunities to get involved—www.catiescloset.org. We are unable to accept donated items at Saint Cecilia at this time.

THIS WEEK AT SAINT CECILIA FEBRUARY 11 – FEBRUARY 18

Sunday, February 11

Wisdom Group, 8:30 a.m. | Zoom

Monday, February 12

SCYA Lenten Reflection Group,
7:00—8:00 p.m., Hybrid

Tuesday, February 13

RCIA, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 14

Ash Wednesday

SCYA Men's Group, 7:30 a.m. | Zoom
New & Expecting Parents Faith Sharing Group,
10:30 a.m. | Family Flex Center
Communion Circle at Saint Cecilia House, 10:30 a.m.
Communion Circle at Mount Pleasant, 3:00 p.m.
SCYA Women's Group, 7:00 p.m. | Zoom

Thursday, February 15

Communion Circle, Hale House, 4:00 p.m.
Wisdom Group, 7:30 p.m. | Zoom
Theologian James Allison, 6:30 p.m.,
Parish Hall & Livestreamed (YouTube)

Friday, February 16

SCYA Traveling Station of the Cross

Sunday, February 18

Wisdom Group, 8:30 a.m. | Zoom
The Rite of Sending, 11:30 a.m. Mass
The Rite of Election, 2:00 p.m.,
Cathedral of the Holy Cross



PARISH OPERATING STATEMENT

We are pleased to present the Parish Operating Statement for the first half of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. We ended the first half of the year with a surplus of \$62,406. This is very close to our budgeted surplus of \$75,068. Father John and the staff have done an admirable job of operating the parish within the budget, and we are very pleased that Saint Cecilia is in a financially stable condition.

This financial stability of our parish and the amount of support for the less fortunate that Saint Cecilia offers is a direct result of your generosity. Please know how very much you are all appreciated for enabling Saint Cecilia to play such a positive role in our community.

Saint Cecilia Finance Council

Father John Unni, Pastor	Jason Grapski
Matt Maguire, Chair	Mark Lippolt
Bonnie Blanchfield	Cole Young
David Castaldi	Colleen Melaugh, Director of Finance
Alicia Cooney	Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Pastoral Director of Operations
Mark Duggan	

OPERATING STATEMENT

	Quarter Ending December 31, 2023 ACTUAL	Quarter Ending December 31, 2023 BUDGET
INCOME		
Sunday Offertory Income	\$ 997,580	\$ 1,025,000
Special Donations Income	\$ 317,216	\$ 493,500
Operating Income	\$ 207,430	\$ 166,750
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 52,067	\$ 63,750
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 1,574,293	\$ 1,749,000
EXPENSES		
Personnel Expenses	\$ 650,671	\$ 690,264
Office Expenses	\$ 96,927	\$ 108,875
Liturgy Expenses	\$ 35,251	\$ 53,825
Building Expenses	\$ 483,218	\$ 538,500
Other Expenses	\$ 245,820	\$ 282,469
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,511,887	\$ 1,673,933
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENSES	\$ 62,406	\$ 75,067
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL REPAIRS ACCT	\$ (75,000)	\$ (75,000)
FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR OPERATIONS	\$ (12,594)	\$ 67



A FEW SLOTS OPEN FOR RETREAT

Father Jim Shaughnessy, SJ, is interested in talking to anyone who might want to consider coming on a six-day silent retreat that he is helping with at Eastern Point Retreat House in Gloucester. The retreat begins on the afternoon of Thursday, February 29, and ends on the morning of Wednesday, March 6. If you're interested in this retreat, please leave a message for Father Jim at the reception desk by calling 617-536-4548 or by emailing the reception desk.



CONCERT TO BENEFIT WOMEN'S LUNCH PLACE

"Music for Food" is a musician-led initiative to fight hunger in our local communities. Music for Food's concerts have already raised funds to create more than 1.5 million meals! Music for Food's 14th season continues at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 18 in New England Conservatory's Williams Hall. This special concert will feature guest artists from Musicians from Marlboro, performing music by Coleridge-Taylor, Dvořák, Webern and Schoenberg. Concert tickets are \$30 and additional donations are welcomed at the door and online. 100% of donations will go to Women's Lunch Place, which is celebrating its 41st anniversary of providing vital resources to vulnerable women in Boston.

HELP THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HELPED BY CATHOLIC CHARITIES' FOOD PANTRY IN DORCHESTER

As you may know, the Catholic Charities' Yawkey Center in Dorchester also operates an infant and young child's daycare center. Three years ago, the pantry received a donation from a 4-year-old parishioner who sent cake mix through Amazon so that one of the families who receive assistance from Catholic Charities could make a birthday cake. That has sparked an interest in creating a "Birthday Pantry" within the food pantry so that families in need can have some items needed for their children's birthday celebrations. Here's the link to Catholic Charities' Wish List on Amazon: <https://amzn.to/3OAm3wq>

Most of the items are reasonably priced, and we hope that, by everyone doing just a little, we can turn this 4-year-old's generosity into an ongoing program. Let's see if we can amplify young Owen's giving by adding to it in the next week. If you send an item through Amazon, consider putting in a note saying, "Great idea, Owen!"

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean."

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean."

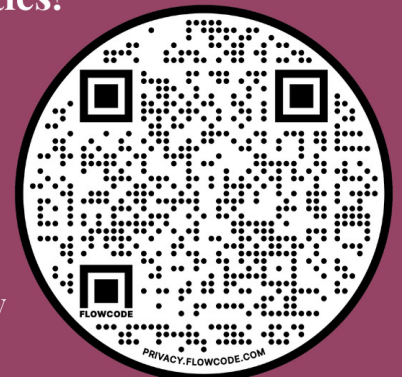
*The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean.
~ Mark 1:40-42*



Help Our Faith Formation Students Make Easter Baskets for Catholic Charities!

Can you help us gather the materials we need?

For the third year, our students are creating Easter Baskets for Catholic Charities to distribute to local families experiencing poverty. We were FLOORED by the generosity of our community members in previous years and we're hoping to make 75 baskets this year. Scan the Flowcode to learn more about sending/dropping off supplies to the parish office by our deadline of March 3. Thank you so much for your generosity!





Seizing Freedom is a podcast hosted by Dr. Kidada E. Williams, a historian, author and professor of U.S. History, with a focus on African Americans. This week, we're sharing the transcript of an interview with Kelly Brown Douglas, who shares what church has meant to the Black community, both historically and currently, as well as how to find God in times of struggle and injustice. This episode aired in February of 2021.

Kidada Williams: Hi everyone. It's Kidada. This is *Seizing Freedom*, the show where we dig into the archives to bring you stories about how African Americans freed themselves during the Civil War and built new lives during Reconstruction. And where we talk to the historians and artists who know the archives best.

In this episode, I speak with Reverend Kelly Brown Douglas, Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary. We talk about how African Americans adapted their African religious practices during enslavement, why many embraced the Christian faith, and why that faith persists today. We also talk about the power of the Black church, and where to find God in times of injustice.

What do we mean when we say African-American religion? Was there ever a time when it was only one thing?

Kelly Brown Douglas: No...(laughs)...is the short answer. No. Certainly that wasn't the case in Africa and even if we just narrow it to West African traditions, we've got a variety of religious traditions and those would come here and influence the enslaved Africans as well and, of course, create a legacy. The other thing that we know is that there would be people who were of the Islamic faith tradition, who would also be enslaved...So no, it's never been, uh, just one.

The majority probably became Christian during this period called the great awakenings in the late 17th and early 18th century. And so, then we get a variety of understandings of Christianity. So no, it's never been one tradition because, you know, Black people aren't monolithic.

KW: Do we know what parts of West and Central African spiritual and religious practices they hold on to?

KBD: You know, there was a time when some said, "Oh, there are no African carryovers." Well, that's absurd...but in terms of ritualistically and what one can see that you don't have to be a theologian to see? You know you might see, for instance, what they used to call the ring shout, which is really a sort of a counter-clockwise kind of dance.

Well, that ring shout becomes "the shout" in the black faith tradition. The other thing that you see is the call and response; that is an African carryover. As well as you see the honor that they give to ancestors. So you see all of these little carryovers. The other thing that you see is this full, embodied kind of expression of worship, right? So you see these little rituals...these little things that take on—or have lost, perhaps, the original meaning—and take on new meaning. But what you're seeing is this sort of African, uh, carry over.

The other thing, you know, in black faith traditions—in the black community—is this whole notion of the wakes after a person's death and the significance of wakes. So these little things that you see that have become a part of black culture, of black religious culture...while we may not understand its original meanings, that the original imprint is in Africa.

KW: So, you know, as they absorb the faith—as they find their God in the faith—how do they modify and adapt it in their own interests—in their own voices—to suit their needs and realities, not only as African captives or their descendants, but as enslaved people?

KBD: Yeah. Because we know that if indeed their enslavers allowed them to practice Christianity, they had to do it within the eyesight, if you will, of their enslavers.

And so, how did they practice a Christianity that they made their own? Well, you know, they hid away at night in the hush harbors or in their cabins at night. And here's the interesting thing: that, oftentimes, they would turn over a pot in the center...the sort of "overturned pot." Now, we don't know if that is a ritual that they brought from Africa and its meanings changed, but what the meaning became as they overturned that pot was the belief that it would absorb the sound of their worship. So they would sneak away.

The other way in which you see this manifest is in the spirituals that they sang. These spirituals had double meanings, right? On the one hand they would...might sing, a spiritual that would say that they're going...going over yonder or something and, to their enslaver's ear, they're thinking about going to heaven, right? No, no. They are talking about their sort of spiritual needs, if you will, being met, but they're also indicating that they are going up North.

These spirituals are signals that “Hey, you know, it’s time to flee.” That’s their sort of understanding of Christianity: That it is always the...the sense of God’s justice is always manifest. God’s freedom, also on earth; it’s just not about heaven. Then the other way in which, of course, it manifests itself in their practical daily lives is that it inspired them to be free and to fight for freedom. And even those who, who never breathed a free breath...never dreamt that they would breathe a free breath...but they fought for freedom anyhow, because they believed in the freedom that was the justice of God. And that’s why you and I can be here talking. This enslaved Christianity inspired insurrections of those like Nat Turner, Gabriel Prosser, et cetera.

After the antebellum period, it continued to function in the same way. Right? And we see that many of the leaders—for instance, of the 1960s civil rights movement—were faith leaders, and those movements for the most part centered... were centered in the church, right? The church was the center. As W.E.B. Du Bois would say, it was the religious and social center, taking care of not simply political needs, but filling in the gaps that a white supremacist, anti-black society does not.

That’s the way in which the Christianity of the enslaved—our enslaved ancestors—has continued to function, both practically (helping for survival, taking care of needs) and I guess we can say politically (inspiring people to move toward freedom).

KW: So how do you think that black folks reconciled the idea of Christianity being “the white man’s religion” with their own deep commitments to faith?

KBD: Yeah. You know, and this was Malcolm X’s critique in the 1960s, that black people adopted the religion of their enslavers. It’s not a new critique. Others have, uh, made the critique even during the antebellum period. I think what we have to understand is that they never believed that they did. They believed that the Christianity of their enslavers was not Christianity at all.

We will see from time to time throughout the history of the black faith tradition, that sometimes, you know, it loses that radical edge. It loses its...what I like to say, it loses its blackness. But for the most part, the black faith tradition has been grounded in this notion of a God who’s on the side of the oppressed and a God who is working with the oppressed toward freedom and liberation. Now that doesn’t mean the black church has always leaned into that, but that has, for the most part been its central theme, which is why the Exodus and the cross have been so important.

So, short answer, those who adopted the faith tradition would say that they did not adopt the white man’s religion.

KW: Could you tell us a little bit more about the kinds of stories—biblical or otherwise— they flock to, and why?

KBD: Well, the central story is the Exodus story, right? And if you simply look at the spirituals, you see that Exodus story coming up over and over again: “Go down Moses, way down in Egypt’s land. Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.” And then different stories that come out of that. “Didn’t my Lord deliver Daniel? Then why not everyone?”

So they flocked to these stories that suggested a God who was liberating and freeing of people. In terms of the gospel witness, they flocked to the cross, to the story of Jesus on the cross, let alone the story of him being born in a manger. “Sweet little Jesus boy, sweet little Jesus boy, born in a manger world. Treats you so mean. Treat me mean, too.”

Or “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” Now, have you ever heard that song sung in a black church and then sung in a non-black church? In a non-black church it sounds like an anthem. In a black church, you feel the pathos because through the cross, Jesus becomes one with the black oppressed, and the black oppressed become one with Jesus.

So when they say, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?,” they really mean they’re there. Right? And so, because the cross indicates Jesus’ utter solidarity with those who are of the—as I like to say—the crucified classes of people in our time, the oppressed, the least of these. So these would be the two sort of seminal, normative stories.

Black women would flock to the story of Hagar. And you see in poetry, as well as in song and testimonial, Hagar becoming central as Sarah and Abraham—the master and mistress—really exploit Hagar and Hagar’s body. And so, so you see also the Hagar tradition as a significant tradition that moves through the black faith tradition.

KW: So one of the things we tried to make clear in the show is that black church isn’t just the building, and infrastructure.

KBD: Oh my goodness, yes.

KW: Uh, indeed, many are formed before they even have structures. So what is the black church to you?

KBD: The black church...first of all, when we talk about the black church is as diverse and as rich and as complicated and complex as is, uh, the black community, and as are black

people. However, when we talk about the black church, we are talking about a church that is accountable to the history of black faith that began in the hush harbors of slavery...that is rooted in that history of a people who understood not the Christianity of their slaveholders, but what Howard Thurman would say, the religion of Jesus. Or what Frederick Douglass would call the Christianity of Christ, the Christianity of the God of the Exodus, of the God of Jesus on the cross, that was a God toward freedom.

And so it inspired...it was a faith tradition that inspired a faith people to fight for the freedom of their people. That's the first thing. So the blackness in the black church stands for an accountability to a history of a people who fight for their freedom as they are compelled by the freedom that is the justice of God.

It also signals a faith community that holds itself not only accountable to that history, but in so doing is accountable to the survival and the wellbeing of the entire black community. The black church has—when it's at its best—always has tried to meet the needs of the community that society has ignored. It has filled in the gaps. For the black church, and indeed the black faith tradition, there has never been this separation, if you will, of sacred and secular realities, the political and the religious.

First of all such a separation, as far as I'm concerned, doesn't take seriously what it meant for Jesus to die on the cross, because Jesus didn't die on the cross because he prayed too much; he wasn't crucified because he prayed too much. He was crucified because he resisted, forcefully, those systems—whether they were ecclesiastical, political, social—whatever kind of systems of oppression that indeed were not reflective of the just future that God promised us all. So the black faith tradition takes that seriously.

KW: One of the things we've been trying to do is make sure we balance the realities of life—sometimes the harsh realities of life—for black people with those moments of joy. And so, can you tell us about the joy in religious faith, specifically Christianity?

KBD: The joy is being able to, to say Hallelujah, and I mean that, and here's what I mean by that: You know, to me, Hallelujah really doesn't mean anything, but it's like, God's last laugh, right? It's God's last laugh on a world that would dare to think that it could destroy black life and destroy the black imagination for what life can be.

But again, I think the through line is that African-Americans have never, at our best, allowed ourselves to be defined by the limitations of the world. And my mother used to sing to

us—my two sisters and brother and I—the song “Jesus loves you, this I know, because the Bible tells me so” and it is as if she wanted us to take that song in because she knew that her four children were going to grow up in a world that would not love them in all of their blackness. And she wanted us to be able to understand that, but Jesus loves you...God loves you, that you are not defined by the parameters of a white gaze.

And to me, the joy of black faith is a people coming together, praising and saying hallelujah to a God that is freedom. Because to me that is an affirmation of life in the face of death. It's God's “No!” to anything that would deny black life. And so to me, just black faith itself is joy because Black faith itself is a resistance, is...resisting and denying and saying, “Nope. Sorry, you don't have the last word. God does. And God's last word is freedom.”

KW: What progress is the black church making today that excites you the most?

KBD: These sparks that I see with where the black church remembers who it is. I am excited when black church leadership understands itself, not in the way in which it has to be in the forefront in some authoritarian manner, but in the way in which it makes a space and opens up the space for the creative imagination of those others.

And that...and I've seen that in terms of the Black Lives Matter movement. I've seen that in terms of the movement that is black women that got us to this electoral moment. And I'm seeing that as the black church takes responsibility for the life and survival of...of its community in terms of this COVID crisis. Those are glimpses. Those are glimpses. But look, we know that the black church, as I said, it's a complicated reality. Right? And it reflects all of the strands, all of the complications, the strengths and the weaknesses of the black community itself.

And we also see, of course, this generation of Black Lives Matter protesters and others that find themselves alienated from the institutional realities of, uh, the black faith tradition. And one of the reasons for that is indeed because of this adoption of a top-down hierarchical kind of model of leadership. If the black church is to survive, it has to indeed be led by the community itself, and be responsive to the voices, the needs, the leadership of the very people who are indeed struggling.

And so when it's been at its best, that's what it's been. You know, the tension with the black church and within Christianity period—but certainly within the black church—is the reality, the tension between being church and being a

social institution. And those two things aren't the same.

And so the black church has to decide whether or not it's going to be a black social institution that happens to be religious, or if it's going to be a black church. And if it's going to be a black church, then it cannot mimic the very hierarchical structures of racialized patriarchy that if indeed oppressed and enslaved black people. And I should add, not only racialized patriarchy, but heteropatriarchy that has enslaved black people. And when it does that, Kidada, as far as I'm concerned it's betrayed its blackness and what it means to be a church.

KW: We're going to follow up on that. How have black women's roles in the church changed over time?

KBD: Yeah, first we should say black women have always been in positions of leadership, always given voice to their faith and have been more than simply the backbone of the church, whether or not the church has recognized it. And we know that without black women, there would just simply be no black church. But, this we do know: that they ignore women to their peril, because women are the ones in the pews and women are the ones that are leading the way.

We can see what's going on politically. Now, it is always, as Anna Julia Cooper once said, uh, "when and where I enter," meaning the black women, "the whole race enters with me." All right. And so we see today that it is...it has been and are black women who are leading the way, whether we're talking about, you know, a Jarena Lee or a Harriet Tubman or a Stacy Abrams, right? Or Alicia Garza or Patrisse Cullors. They are the Sojourner Truths and the Fannie Lou Hamers of our day. Black women have always been in the forefront and they've carried with them their faith or, I should say, it is their faith that carried them out there in that fight and in that struggle.

And so when the black church has been at its best, it's because black women have led it there. When this country has moved toward being a democracy, well, it's because black women have led it there. So the black church has to catch up with that if it's going to be church. Sometimes it's open to that and sometimes it's resistant to the leadership of women.

KW: And how has the church changed, or not changed, the strength of its resistance to sexual minorities?

KBD: First of all, the black community, and the black church in some respects, has gotten a bad rap as being more homophobic and heterosexist and LGBTQ terroristic than the wider society. I don't think it is more so; it is not, but

there is a different kind of passion, if you will, which grounds it and almost makes it sometimes immovable. And so this is a struggle that is an ongoing struggle within the black faith community.

But here's what I say, Kidada: One, it doesn't make sense for a people who have been oppressed to use the tools of their very oppressor to oppress one another and to oppress anybody else. And so I always say to people, if you can't figure it out theologically, then just look around and say—ask yourself—do you want to be in the same brown paper bag as the very people who would enslave you or the very people who talk about making America great again? Because those people ain't your friends.

Then if we really believe in this God that we say is love and just and freedom, then how in the world are we able to, on the one hand, talk about that God, and then talk about a God that would indeed damn somebody that God has created? It's inconsistent theologically and it's a betrayal of our very faith.

KW: I always come back to whether or not people believe in justice. Because there's just saying that you believe in justice, and then there's the practice of believing in justice. And that should be guiding what we're doing here.

KBD: Mm, yeah. You know...when, especially, I wrote my book "Sexuality in the Black Church," there were voices—and there still are voices—who loudly proclaim me anything other than a child of God. And that's all fine, and there have been times when I've been disinvited from places to speak.

I remember one time and I said, "Well, you know, that's what you get for not doing your homework." I was invited to a church to speak—by the women of the church—and my name, which is Kelly, the pastor...I don't know, must have assumed that I was male. And so when I arrived to the church, there was this great sort of kerfuffle going on that I'm like, "what's going on?" And they guided me downstairs into the undercroft of the church and like, you know...what's the deal?

So women came to me crying and saying, you know, our pastor won't let you preach from the pulpit. He didn't know that you were a woman. And so I thought, hmm, now I could have decided, well, I'm not preaching at all...you know, I'm out. But the women really wanted me to stay and preach. So I did.

And the pastor probably didn't like the message I preached either, but too bad. Obviously it was a message about freedom and women and empowering women and the

significance of women's voices and the sin of oppression and sexism—even as I had to preach from the aisle (laughs) in the church. So you know, things like that, and you know, what makes me persist? Because not to persist is to be held captive to the very sin that is racism, that is heterosexism, that is sexism, that is LGBTQ terrorism. And I refuse to be held captive to that.

And if I were to not persist, that would be to give in to the sin that would dare dehumanize and disrespect someone else's sacred humanity, and let alone mine. I mean, my mother taught us, "Jesus loves me, this I know." So I just sing that song and keep on moving.

KW: I love that answer. In your book, "Stand Your Ground," you trace back the subjugation and following criminalization of black people, starting with the ideas of American exceptionalism and manifest destiny. What made you want to write "Stand Your Ground"? Do you remember the moment you decided to do it?

KBD: Yes. And I didn't decide; it was decided for me. I never expected that I would find myself tracing this notion of white supremacy back to the first century, and understanding the depth of the reality of white supremacy in this country. And so I was called into it.

I really...I had thought I had written all that I wanted to write and had no expectation of writing another book and certainly not "Stand Your Ground." Then Trayvon was killed. Then Jordan Davis was murdered. Then Rekia Boyd was murdered, and it went on and it went on and, you know, I'm in my sixties. So I've lived through these things before, but for some reason I really couldn't shake it. And I especially couldn't shake Trayvon and—maybe because by that time I had a son of my own a couple of years older than Trayvon—but to see the way in which Trayvon was demonized? This young...I mean, if you see Trayvon, you know, this young, young-looking teenager, right?

And to hear his mother pleading that he was a good kid and pleading for justice, I couldn't shake it. And so I found myself asking the question, "Why? Why does this continue to happen?" And remember we...President Obama had been elected and...and all of that...all that did was take the killings and the brutality against black people to a new height. It's like they "couldn't get the man in the white house that wasn't supposed to be there, but we're going to get his people." And this is nothing new. This has happened throughout history. So I was compelled to write it. And so I just followed...you know, I said, "Okay, I need to find out why," and I just followed the story.

KW: In your work, you don't just dwell on America's founding sin, so to speak. You also explore black faith and resistance in the face of these injustices. When your congregation asks, "Where is justice? Where is God," especially in dark times—dark times related to white supremacy, for example—what do you say?

KBD: First of all, I should say sometimes I'm asking that same question. And so the thing about faith is that faith is not the opposite of doubt and doubt's not the opposite of faith. Faith always embraces doubt. Doubt is the other side of the same coin, if you will, of faith. And why? Because God is nothing we can readily grasp, right?

The movement, the force, the power that is God is beyond, in so many ways, our imagination. It's beyond that which we have experienced when we talk about the justice that is the love of God. So there are times, Kidada, that I must say that I, too, ask that question: "Where is God? How is it that we can continue to proclaim belief in a just and loving God in the midst of so much injustice, so much hate, so much crucifying death?"

But on the other hand, I look around and I see that we are here, that I'm here. We're here as testimonies in so many ways of faith to a people who—as I mentioned earlier—never experienced, never thought they would ever experience breathing a free breath. Yet, they continued to fight for freedom because they knew that God was there indeed fighting with them, alongside of them, moving this world toward the justice that is the justice of God.

So I find—and indeed this past summer in the time of deep despair for me in the midst of all of the black death that was not only the black death of police brutality, but the black death that was COVID, for which the black community was disproportionately and is disproportionately impacted—in the midst of that I've found myself questioning my faith and wondering about the justice of God.

At that moment, something pulled me down to Black Lives Matter Plaza, in Washington, DC, where I live. And when I went down there, I discovered the God that is moving through history, getting us to that just future that God promises for us all. I discovered that God in protest. And that's what I tell the people of my congregation—that I tell my son, who asked that same question—that as long as people are still fighting for freedom, as long as there are people who still believe in a freedom in which all life will be sacred, then there is a God. Because it is that God that inspires us and keeps us fighting for a more just future.

KW: And I think that's one of the things that we see

historically with African-Americans. So even people who are held in bondage, they fight for a future they may not enjoy. Especially with the betrayal of reconstruction, African-Americans continue fighting for a future that they themselves may not enjoy.

KBD: That's right. But you know what, Kidada, it goes back really...when we talk about that and through the lens of faith, they wouldn't fight for that if they believed that they were created, right, to be anything other than free. So it's that God inside of them, that understanding that that's not how they were created. And we know that through the stories—through various means—these...the African religious heritage, the African cultural heritage lives on in the black community, in our lives. And it's handed down through generations in various ways. And I like to say "the spirit of freedom is within us."

And that's a spirit of freedom that is also beyond us...this innate understanding and belief that we were created in the image of God. And so I think that's why, in spite of it all, black people keep on struggling because we know that we are not meant to be anything less than free sacred beings.

KW: I love that answer. Is there a question that we haven't asked or that no one ever asked you, but you wish they would? Or a message that you'd like to end on that you don't get much of an opportunity to deliver?

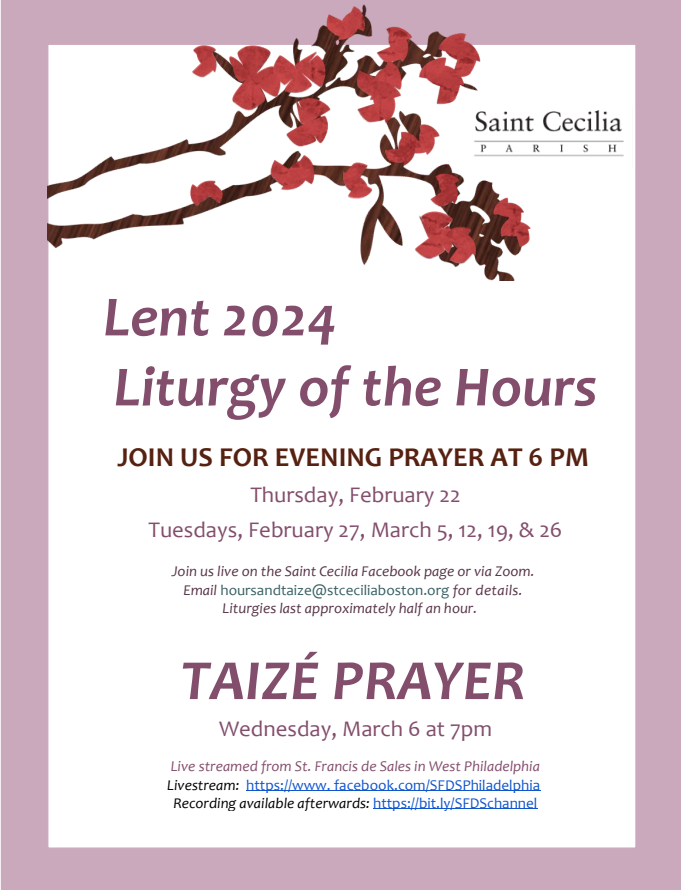
KBD: Yeah. And I've talked about this before and it's become so real to me in these times...but I am the great grandchild of a woman that was born into slavery. I knew her; we called her Mama Mary, and she died when I was about maybe six or seven years old. Too young to appreciate what it meant to have Mama Mary in our life.

But when I think of Mama Mary—and it goes back full circle to what we've talked about—I think, and this is what I can hardly get my head around really, are those very people that did not have the privilege of Mama Mary, of seeing freedom and literally breathing a free breath, but they literally fought for freedom anyhow. And it is that which keeps me going. And it is that which gives me hope. And because of those people that did not have the good fortune to be free, I feel like I can never dare give up on the fight for those who will come after us.

And I really have little patience for those who have the privilege that we have—to think, to reflect, to have food, to have a home—I have little patience for those folk that are blessed with Ebony grace, with any modicum of privilege that is freedom, who give up and who despair and don't fight for the next generation to be even more free

than we are.

~ *The Rev. Canon Kelly Brown Douglas is the Canon Theologian at the Washington National Cathedral. In 2017, she was named Dean of Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and in 2019, she was appointed to the Bill and Judith Moyers Chair in Theology at Union. Dr. Douglas is considered a leader in the field of womanist theology, racial reconciliation, social justice and sexuality and the Black church.*



The poster features a purple border. At the top right, it says "Saint Cecilia" above "PARISH". To the left is a branch with red flowers. The main text reads "Lent 2024" and "Liturgy of the Hours" in large purple font. Below that, it says "JOIN US FOR EVENING PRAYER AT 6 PM" in bold black font, followed by "Thursday, February 22" and "Tuesdays, February 27, March 5, 12, 19, & 26". Smaller text provides live stream and email information. At the bottom, it says "TAIZÉ PRAYER" in large purple font, followed by "Wednesday, March 6 at 7pm" and more live stream details.

Saint Cecilia
PARISH

Lent 2024
Liturgy of the Hours

JOIN US FOR EVENING PRAYER AT 6 PM

Thursday, February 22
Tuesdays, February 27, March 5, 12, 19, & 26

Join us live on the Saint Cecilia Facebook page or via Zoom.
Email hoursandtaize@stceciliaboston.org for details.
Liturgies last approximately half an hour.

TAIZÉ PRAYER

Wednesday, March 6 at 7pm

Live streamed from St. Francis de Sales in West Philadelphia
Livestream: <https://www.facebook.com/SEDSPhiladelphia>
Recording available afterwards: <https://bit.ly/SFDSchannel>

JOIN OUR WISDOM & MATURE SPIRITUALITY GROUP!

The Saint Cecilia Wisdom and Mature Spirituality Group holds two weekly online gatherings—Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday mornings from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Members of the group gather to share ways in which faith informs and enriches the second half of life. For more information about meetings or to join their mailing list, please contact the group via their ministry email address.

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
Website | www.stceciliaboston.org

Parish Staff

Rev. John J. Unni, Pastor
Rev. James Shaughnessy, SJ, Pastoral Support
Christine Burns, Digital and Print Media Coordinator
Mark Donohoe, Pastoral Associate
Robert Duff, Director of Music
Carly-Anne Gannon, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation
Scott MacDonald, Director of Faith Formation and Parish Visibility
Colleen Melaugh, Director of Finance and Development
Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Pastoral Director of Operations
Lisa Pickering, Director of Facilities and Events
Tanya Rybarczyk, Pastoral Associate

Assisting Clergy

Rev. Terrence Devino, SJ | Rev. Peter Grover, OMV | Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ

Music Ministry

Tyler Cesario, Assistant Director of Music
Daniel Lamoureux, Vigil Organist
Brett Maguire, Parish Organist
Pendexter Macdonald, Assistant Organist

Audiovisual Support

Maureen Deery, Parish Photographer & Creator of Weekly Slide Show
Geoffrey Edwards, Livestream Videographer
Vasily Izumchensky, Livestream Sound Engineer

Reception

Keith Brinkley, Joe O'Brien, Paul Keating, & Ellie Sanderson

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.

Hearing Assistance in Church

The church is equipped with an assistive listening system. If you would like to use one of the small receivers, please ask one of our greeters.

Building Accessibility

Both the church and Parish Hall Center are accessible by elevator.

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.

Parking

There is discounted parking at The Hynes Auditorium Garage (located at 50 Dalton Street next to Bukowski's Tavern), for \$13, available on Sundays until 3:00 p.m., and \$13 after 4:00 every day of the week. To get this discount, ask a greeter 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, place the ticket you received upon entering the garage into the machine, then follow it with the chaser ticket.

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 Faith Formation, contact our Children's Faith Formation Coordinator, Carly-Anne Gannon, at her parish email.

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 (VIR-TUS). They provide consultation and support to anyone who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Maria Roche, Leticia Howland, or Erin Young if you have any questions. 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 policy is available in the narthex, Parish Office, and on our website.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

This 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.

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.

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 around the country and around the world. 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.

Please note:

According to online safety guidelines released by the Archdiocese of Boston, we have removed email addresses from our online parish bulletin to avoid the danger of potential phishing scams. If you need a staff member's email address or ministry email address, please call our reception desk (617-536-4548) and our receptionists would be happy to pass along the appropriate information. Thank you for helping us maintain our parish security online!