

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



First Sunday of Lent

18 February 2024

Noah's Ark by Miguel Holder

Saint Cecilia

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THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

PRELUDE | Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

African American Spiritual
arr. D. L. White
(b. 1929)

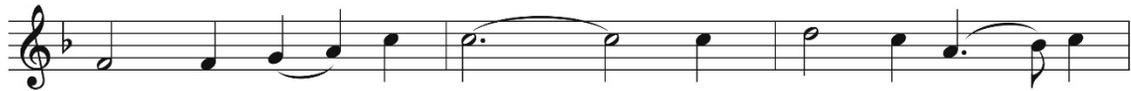
THE ORDER OF THE MASS INTRODUCTORY RITES

PROCESSIONAL HYMN | From Ashes to the Living Font

LAND OF REST



1. From ash - es to the liv - ing font Your
2. Through fast - ing, prayer, and char - i - ty Your
3. *Insert appropriate stanza.*
4. From ash - es to the liv - ing font Your



Church must jour - ney, Lord, Bap - tized in grace, in
voice speaks deep with - in, Re - turn - ing us to
Church must jour - ney still, Through cross and tomb to



grace re - newed By your most ho - ly word.
ways of truth And turn - ing us from sin.
East - er joy, In Spir - it - fire ful - filled.

3. From desert to the mountaintop
In Christ our way we see,
So, tempered by temptation's might
We might transfigured be.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Priest, Deacon, or Cantor, then All

(Invocation) Ky - ri - e, e - le - i - son.

Priest, Deacon, or Cantor, then All

(Invocation) Chri - ste, e - le - i - son.

Priest, Deacon, or Cantor, then All

(Invocation) Ky - ri - e, e - le - i - son.

COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Genesis 9: 8-15

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Ps. 25: Your Ways, O Lord

Marty Haugen

Refrain

Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth, to
those who keep your cov - e - nant.

1. O Lord, make me know your ways. Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation.
2. Remember your compassion, O Lord, and your merciful love,
for they are from of old. In your merciful love remember me, because of your goodness, O Lord.
3. Good and upright is the Lord; he shows the way to sinners.
He guides the humble in right judgment; to the humble he teaches his way.

SECOND READING | 1 Peter 3: 18-22

Glo - ry to you, Lord Je - sus Christ, Son of the li - ving God!

Glo - ry to you, Lord Je - sus Christ, Son of the li - ving God!

GOSPEL | Mark 1: 12-15

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!

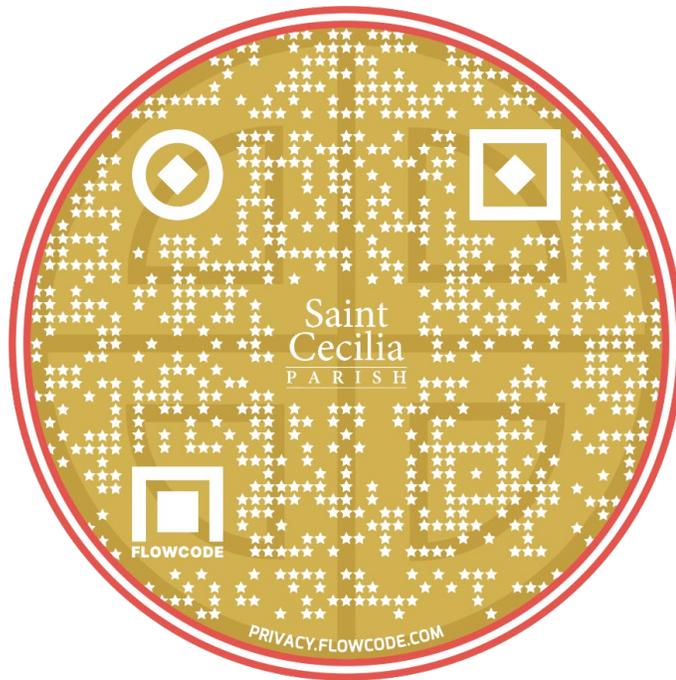
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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 | Hosea

Gregory Norbet



1. Come back to me with all your heart.
 & Trees do bend, 'though straight and tall;
2. The wil - der - ness will lead you
 In - teg - ri - ty and jus - tice,
3. & You shall sleep se - cure with peace;



Don't let fear keep us a - part.
so must we to oth - ers' call. *(To refrain)*
to your heart where I will speak.
With ten - der - ness, & you shall know. *(To refrain)*
faith - ful - ness will be your joy. *(To refrain)*

Refrain



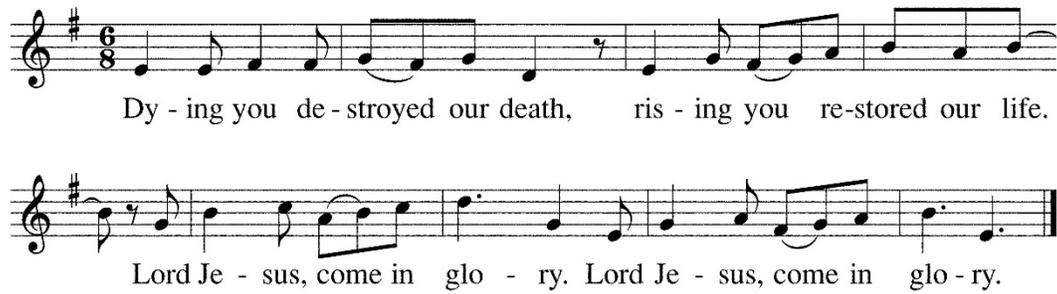
Long have I wait-ed for your com - ing home to me and



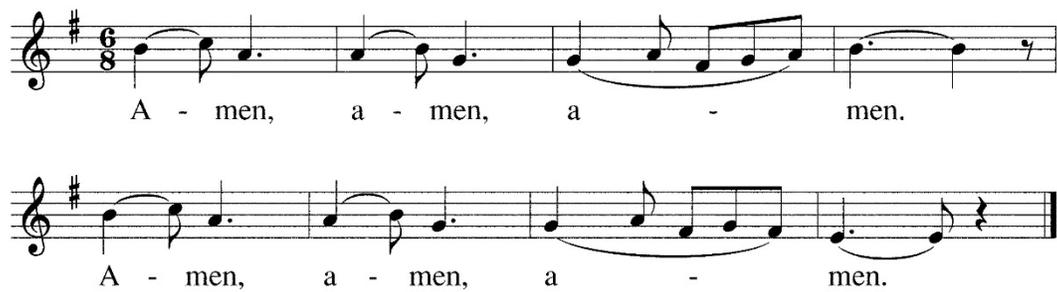
liv - ing deep - ly our new life.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na, ho -
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Dy - ing you de - stroyed our death, ris - ing you re - stored our life.
 Lord Je - sus, come in glo - ry. Lord Je - sus, come in glo - ry.



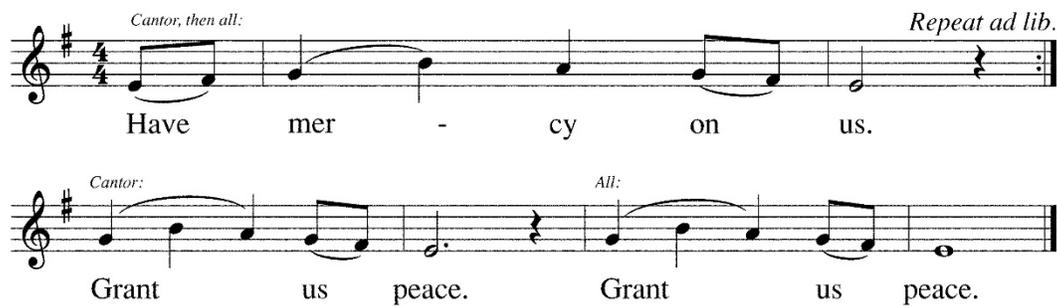
A - men, a - men, a - men.
 A - men, a - men, a - men.

COMMUNION RITE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

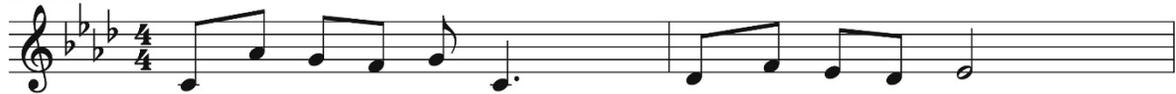
DOXOLOGY

SIGN OF PEACE



Cantor, then all: Have mer - cy on us. *Repeat ad lib.*
Cantor: Grant us peace. *All:* Grant us peace.

Refrain



Bro-ken for the bro-ken, poured out for the poor:



Bless-ed feast of God's cre - a - tion, giv-en for us all.



Bro-ken for the bro-ken, shared for hu-man-kind, we pro -



claim your death, O Lord: God's sac-ri-fice and sign.

Verses



1. For	the hun - gry ones,	for the thirst - y ones,
2. For	the ones a - bused,	for the ones con-fused,
3. For	the voice-less ones,	for the help-less ones,
4. For	the wound-ed ones,	for the shat-tered ones,
5. For	the ones in chains,	for the ones in fear,
6. For	the ail - ing ones,	for the hurt - ing ones,
7. As	we break this bread,	as we take this cup,
8. As	we trust your word,	as we live your way,
9. Change	our hearts, O Lord,	give us will - ing hearts,



for the lone - ly ones,	you call us to serve,	to be
for the ones re - fused,	you call us to love,	to be
for the home-less ones,	you call us to speak,	to be
for the ti - red ones,	you call us to help,	to be
for the ones in debt,	you call us to give,	to be
for the dy - ing ones,	you call us to care,	to be
as we share this meal,	you call us to change,	to be
as we walk by faith,	you call us to share,	to be
hearts that rec - og - nize	the cour - age to serve	and share

D.C.



1.-8. Christ for each oth - er, bro - ken for the world.
 9. Christ with each oth - er, bro - ken for the world.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

CONCLUDING RITES

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

RECESSIONAL | Again We Keep This Solemn Fast

OLD ONE HUNDREDTH



1. A - gain we keep this sol - emn fast,
 2. The law and proph - ets from of old
 3. More spar - ing, there - fore, let us make
 4. Let us a - void each harm - ful way
 5. We pray, O bless - ed Three in One,



A gift of faith from a - ges past,
 In fig - ured ways this Lent fore - told,
 The words we speak, the food we take,
 That lures the care - less mind a - stray;
 Our God while end - less a - ges run,



This Lent which binds us lov - ing - ly
 Which Christ, all a - ges' Lord and Guide,
 Our sleep, our laugh - ter, ev - 'ry sense;
 By watch - ful prayer our spir - its free
 That this, our Lent of for - ty days,



To faith and hope and char - i - ty.
 In these last days has sanc - ti - fied.
 Learn peace through ho - ly pen - i - tence.
 From schem - ing of the En - e - my.
 May bring us growth and give you praise.

POSTLUDE | Jubilate

Fela Sowande
(1905-1987)

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.

LENT 2024

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GRACE



ALMSGIVING

CRS Rice Bowl

Rice Bowls to support Catholic Relief Services (CRS) are available in the narthex.

Children's Faith Formation Easter Basket Project

Baskets will benefit Catholic Charities. Material donations due to parish office March 3.



RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

The Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election

Saint Cecilia Church
Sunday, February 18,
11:30 a.m. Mass

The Rite of Election

Cathedral of the Holy Cross
Sunday, February 18, 2:00 p.m.

The Scrutinies of the Elect

March 3, March 10, March 17,
11:30 a.m. Masses



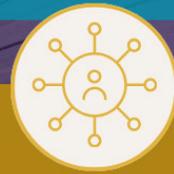
EDUCATION

Guest Speaker Events

Sponsored by Rainbow Ministry

Thursday, February 15,
6:30 p.m. (Hybrid)
Fr. James Alison

Thursday, March 14
6:30 p.m. (Hybrid)
Fr. Mark-David Janus, CSP



RECONCILIATION

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesdays: February 21,
28; March 6, 13, 20, 27 —
6:30 to 8:00 p.m.,
following 6:00 p.m. Mass



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Pine Street Inn

Parishioners often serve dinner at Pine Street Men's Inn and Yawkey House (formerly the Women's Inn).

The next opportunity will be Sunday, March 10 at 4:30 p.m.

Our Hunger and Homelessness Ministry is looking for drivers to assist with weekend morning food rescue. We are in need of drivers for Saturdays and Sundays in February and March.

For more information, email
HungerAndHomelessness
@stceciliaboston.org.



PRAYER

Weekday Mass

Wednesdays, Thursdays,
& Fridays — 8:00 a.m.
Wednesdays — 6:00 p.m.

The Way of the Cross

Young Adults
Traveling Stations
on the Fridays of Lent

Good Friday | Stations of
the Cross | (In-person &
Livestreamed), 3:00 p.m.

Liturgy of the Hours Evening Prayer

(Facebook Live/Zoom)
Thursday, February 22, 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 27, 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 5, 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 12, 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 19, 6:00 p.m.

Parish Day Retreat

Saturday, February 24,
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Tuesday, March 5,
7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
in the sanctuary

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/3vOQ12A>

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. 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.

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS



MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, February 17 | 5:00 p.m.

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV, celebrant
Cynthia Wanner, lector

Sunday, February 18 | 8:00 a.m.

Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ, celebrant
Jordan Barnes, lector

Sunday, February 18 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Bobbi Moran, Letitia Howland, and Chika Offurum, lectors

Sunday, February 18 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Virgen Palermo, Pat Scofield, and Zachary Boutin, lectors

Sunday, February 18 | 6:00 p.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Maggies Giles, lector

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Sunday, February 18 | 9:30 a.m.

Edward J. Power, *5th Anniversary*
Carol Howland, *11th Anniversary*
Siobhan Tahn, *Memorial*
Brad & Patty Griffith, *Memorial*
J. Albert Johnson, *Memorial*
John C. Power, *Memorial*

TODAY'S READINGS

Genesis 9:8-15

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

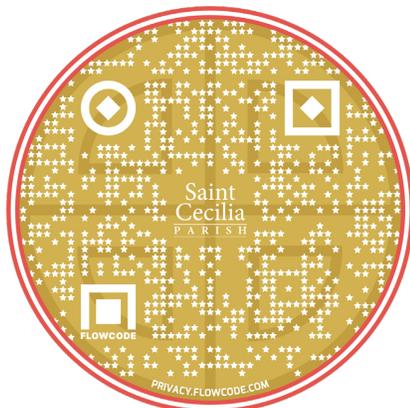
NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Romans 8:31b-34

Mark 9:2-10

SCAN THIS CODE
FOR OFFERTORY GIVING.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS
SUPPORT OF SAINT CECILIA PARISH!



PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Deceased

We were deeply saddened to hear that **Larry Kessler** died on February 1. Larry helped lead the local and national response to HIV/AIDS and was one of the founders of the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, serving as executive director from 1983 to 2002. Larry was also the former program director of the Boston Living Center. Larry was a beacon of hope and compassion to so many Bostonians and was a crusader against war, poverty, intolerance, and ignorance. If you are reading this online, the funeral Mass will be celebrated at Saint Cecilia this Friday, February 16 at 11:00 a.m. There will be a gathering to celebrate Larry's life at a later date. Pray for Larry's eternal repose, as well as for the consolation of his husband, Dana Ellsmore. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Chuck Olivieri's mother died on February 6. Pray for the repose of the soul of **Mary Olivieri** and for the consolation of Chuck and his family. May her soul and all the souls of 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 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: **Kara Cleary** of Boston, **Gregory Meila** of Boston, and **Olivia Schuler** and **Cody Edwards** of Boston. If you have not previously registered, you can do so at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Take a Little Black Book for Lent

Lenten Little Black Books are available in the narthex. Please take one home and spend just six minutes a day this Lent with daily Lenten reflections. If you aren't coming to church in person, you can order your Little Black Book directly from the website of Little Books of the Diocese of Saginaw 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 available for iOS and Android devices at littlebooks.org/pages/little-books-on-the-go

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.

Parish Offices Closed for Presidents' Day

Please note that the Parish Offices will be closed on Monday, February 19 in observance of Presidents' Day.

Happy Anniversary!

This week we celebrate the baptismal anniversary of **Johanna Essenwanger** who was baptized on February 21. May the Lord continue to bless Johanna with the grace to live out her baptismal call. Happy Feast Day, Johanna!

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.

Remembering Dr. Paul Farmer

Paul Farmer, M.D., Ph.D., died on February 21, 2022. He was Kolokotronis university professor and chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School, chief of the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and co-founder and chief strategist of Partners In Health. Farmer and his colleagues pioneered novel, community-based treatment strategies that demonstrated the delivery of high-quality health care in resource-poor settings. He wrote extensively on health, human rights, and the consequences of social inequality. As access to healthcare is a fundamental aspect of recognizing and respecting the inherent dignity of all people, let each of us foster a world where people like Dr. Farmer have the resources to care for the poor and those on the margins. And let us use our voices and resources to create systems where the wellbeing of all members of society are championed.

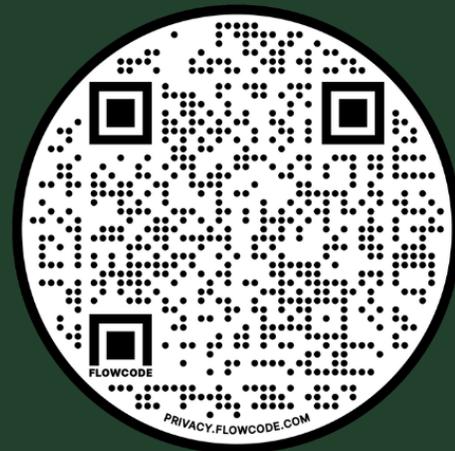


Help Our Faith Formation Classes Make Easter Baskets for Catholic Charities!

For the past two years, our Faith Formation students created Easter Baskets for Catholic Charities to distribute to local families experiencing poverty. We were FLOORED by the generosity of our community members who donated goodies for our baskets last year.

This year, we're hoping to spread Easter joy to even more local children by creating 110 Easter baskets. *Can you help us gather the materials we need?*

Along with our normal Easter materials, we ask that you donate baby food, bibs, sippy cups, teething rings, and more as we look to support the Yawkey Center in Dorchester. Help support local young families by providing essential food and resources by scanning the Flowcode with your smartphone and signing up!



If you're in the area, you can bring these items to the parish office. If you worship with us from afar or aren't in the area this week, you can order any of these items online and have them shipped directly to Saint Cecilia. We need these items by Sunday, March 3, so if you can help out, please hop to it!

RITE OF SENDING

The First Sunday of Lent is always a very special moment in the life of the Church. In churches throughout the world, a special gathering takes place in which the catechumens who will receive the Easter sacraments at the Great Vigil of Easter gather to celebrate the Rite of Election, which closes the period of the catechuminate. It is an extraordinary sign of both the Church's growth and the ministry of evangelization. At Sunday's 11:30 liturgy, we celebrate the Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election. In this rite, the parish community is invited to express its support of our catechumens by sending them forth to the Rite of Election. We thank God for the gift of new life in our Church and commend to God's care our catechumens who ask to be numbered among the Elect. During this rite, upon the testimony of godparents and catechists, the affirmation of Saint Cecilia parishioners, and the catechumens' own affirmation of their desire to enter fully into the life of the Church, the Church makes its "election" of these catechumens to receive the Easter Sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist. Cardinal Seán will declare them to be members of the Elect, to be initiated into the sacred mysteries at the Easter Vigil. They now begin a Period of Purification and Enlightenment—the final, intense preparation for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation. On the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, three scrutinies (rites for self-searching and repentance) will take place at the 11:30 liturgy. Please pray for these newest members of our community—both our catechumens and our candidates for full communion.

CATECHUMENS

(Those preparing for baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist)

Eliana Coy • Junyi (Karen) Fang

**Motoy Kuno-Lewis • Andy Moore • Mike Sheridan
Matthew Steinschneider • Nima Valibeig**

CANDIDATES FOR FULL COMMUNION

(Those already baptized in non-Catholic churches and who are preparing for confirmation, and Eucharist)

**Maria Chandler • Mackenzie Dwyer • Stuart Fross
Ryan Maloney • Josh Neuberger • Rebekah Neuberger
Aleksandra Picariello • Aitana Rodriguez
Eleanor Sanderson**

CATECHIZED CATHOLICS

(Those who have already been baptized and received first Eucharist in the Catholic Church and are preparing for confirmation)

Andrew Le • Leon LeBlond

SAINT CECILIA FAR-FLUNG FLOCK ONLINE COFFEE HOUR

Sunday, March 3, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. ET

The Far-Flung Flock's leadership team is excited to announce that, once again, Sebastian Gomes, executive editor of audio and video at America Media, will be the March online coffee hour guest speaker! Since 2019, Sebastian has created several podcasts which he chatted about during the September online coffee hour. This time, Sebastian will break down the activities, discussions, discernment process, and interviews that occurred in the first part of the Synod. Join us for a first-hand account of the Synod, conversation, and bring your questions for Sebastian!

If you have not registered or attended any online coffee hour in the past, you must register for the FFF email list with this link (<https://bit.ly/45pDVRa>). There is no need to re-register if you've attended in the past. If you have registered, but are not receiving FFF email notifications, please email the ministry to confirm your email address.

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.



VISIT OUR FAMILY CENTER



As we gather together to celebrate Mass, we are reminded of the importance of community and the shared experience of worship. However, we understand that attending Mass with young children can sometimes be challenging. That's why we encourage you to visit our Family Center, located to

the left of the parish café and underneath the staircase on Saint Cecilia Street. The center is open during liturgies and provides a comfortable environment for parents with young children. Here, parents can watch Mass as their children play, and nursing mothers can enjoy a quieter, more private space. If you have any questions about the Family Center, please contact Director of Facilities and Events Lisa Pickering at her parish email.



FORWARD IN FAITH

Once a year, Catholics throughout the Archdiocese are asked to partner with one another to support their parish and the many outreach ministries by contributing to the Catholic Appeal. Many of you have received a letter from Cardinal Seán requesting your participation and early support of the 2024 Appeal. We hope that you will respond to his invitation with a generous gift, knowing that each contribution has a significant impact on the lives of thousands across the Archdiocese. You can make a gift by returning your pledge card or by making an online donation at www.bostoncatholicappeal.org. For those who have already made a gift, thank you for your early support! The Appeal is a primary means by which we care for our brothers and sisters and move forward in our faith together.



YOUNG FAMILIES MINISTRY
UPCOMING EVENTS

The Saint Cecilia Young Families Ministry (SCYF) invites our young families to attend the following events:

Regular Fellowship Meeting

Sunday, February 25 (following the 9:30 a.m. Mass)

In person (Saint Cecilia Family Flex Center)

Weekly New & Expecting Parents Faith Sharing Circle

Wednesday, February 28, 10:30 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Open to: Children Aged 0-12 Months and their Parents

In person (Saint Cecilia Family Flex Center)

Please Note: This group meets weekly on Wednesdays!

Our gathering begins at 10:30 a.m. with time for arrival, settling-in, and socializing; programming begins at 11:00 a.m. Learn more and register for these events by visiting the SCYF's Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/scyfboston>

More about the New Parents Faith Sharing Circle

Life with a newborn is filled with physical, emotional, and spiritual joys and challenges. This drop-in faith-sharing circle welcomes all parents of infants, and those who are expecting, to support one another in navigating the challenges of parenthood in 2024 and to build community within the context of our shared Catholic faith. Bring your babies to share what is on your mind and in your heart with others from your faith community. Light refreshments will be provided. Please sign up for reminder emails and updates here: <https://bit.ly/48dywgu>

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 email Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Pastoral Director of Operations, at her parish email. Thank you!



"MUSIC FOR FOOD" 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.

Lent 2024
Liturgy of the Hours

JOIN US FOR EVENING PRAYER AT 6 PM

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

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/SFDSPhiladelphia>
 Recording available afterwards: <https://bit.ly/SFDSchannel>

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?

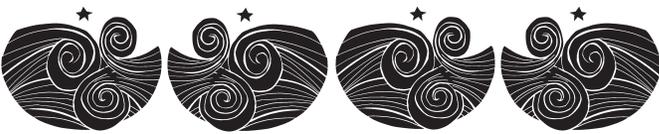
\$40
for chickens that provide protein-rich eggs.

\$80
for a baby goat to provide milk and income.

\$150
for a household garden for nutrition.

LENTEN ALMS CHANGE LIVES

On Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, we are called to repentance and deeper communion with God and neighbor through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In a special way, Lenten almsgiving enables us to grow in generosity, actively participate in the body of Christ and respond to God's call to love and care for others. Your Lenten alms through Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl program make a global difference for millions of our sisters and brothers experiencing the greatest need. They help families in countries like Uganda, El Salvador, and Indonesia to access nutritious food, build sustainable livelihoods, and adapt and thrive in the face of climate change. Please consider donating today and join us in praying that we may grow closer to God by serving one another this Lent. We invite you to donate here: <https://bit.ly/42FAtRR>



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER CHOIRS

In about two months, we will celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus with Christians everywhere, with the church universal, with all our talents, and with faith-filled and hopeful hearts. This holiest of weeks is a golden opportunity to welcome thousands of Saint Cecilia community members to a joyous and sacred time of prayer and celebration.

If you would like to add your voice to the choirs that uplift and breathe life into these liturgies, please contact Director of Music Robert Duff at his parish email for more information or to schedule a vocal hearing/audition. To commit, attendance at Thursday night rehearsals (7:00-9:00 p.m.) beginning on March 7 is required. The choirs will sing at the following liturgies:

- Palm Sunday Masses (3/24)** 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
- Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper (3/28)** 7:30 p.m.
- Good Friday Liturgy of the Lord's Passion (3/29)** 7:30 p.m.
- Easter Vigil Mass (3/30)** 8:00 p.m.
- Easter Sunday Masses (3/31)** 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.



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.

THIS WEEK AT SAINT CECILIA
FEBRUARY 17 – FEBRUARY 25

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

Tuesday, February 20

RCIA, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 21

SCYA Men's Group, 7:30 a.m. via Zoom
New & Expecting Parents Faith Sharing Group;
10:30 a.m. Arrival & Social Time; programming
beginning at 11:00 a.m., Family Flex Center
Communion Circle at Susan Balis House, 3:30 p.m.
SCYA Women's Group, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Thursday, February 22

Evening Prayer, 6:00 p.m. | Zoom
Wisdom Group, 7:30 p.m. | Zoom

Friday, February 23

SCYA Traveling Station of the Cross

Saturday, February 24

Parish Retreat, 10 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 25

Wisdom Group, 8:30 a.m. | Zoom
Young Families Gathering, following the
9:30 a.m. Mass, Family Flex Center

JOIN OUR WISDOM & MATURE
SPIRITUALITY GROUP!

The Wisdom and Mature Spirituality Group holds two online gatherings each week. They meet on Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday mornings from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. to share the ways in which faith informs and enriches the second half of life. Although the group is not a book club, their conversation is informed by the spiritual book or article that they read together each week. For the next several weeks, they'll continue reading *Ladder to the Light* by Steven Charleston. For more information about their meetings or to be added to their mailing list, please email wisdom@stceciliaboston.org.



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!"



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

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

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

Beyond the Veil: Exploring Death in Buddhism and Christianity

Presenters: Gen Kelsang Khedrub, the Resident Teacher of the Kadampa tradition in Boston, and Professor Félix Palazzi from the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College

Thursday, February 29 | 5:30–7:00 p.m. | In person Theology and Ministry Library, Auditorium - Room 113 Brighton Campus, 117 Lake Street, Boston, MA 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

John In Holy Week and Easter

February 28 – March 19 | 3-Week Online Course Registration Required | \$30.00

Revitalize The Church

February 28 – March 19 | 3-Week Online Course Registration Required | \$30.00

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

MEET OUR 2024 RCIA COHORT



Maria Finch Chandler will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Maria was born and grew up in Los Angeles, California. At the age of seven, she made a conscious decision to become a Christian. She went to numerous churches in her youth, and as a college student attended The Vineyard Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational Protestant church that grew out of Calvary Chapel, the birthplace of the "Jesus movement." Maria was baptized in the Pacific Ocean in the late 70s during this time of "revolution" taking place in California when thousands of young adults were coming to Christ. Eventually, she found her way to the Episcopal Church which she attended for the last 30 years. The journey of her life has included marriage, children, divorce, death, and a career as a speech pathologist. Four years ago she reconnected with an old friend, fell in love, and moved to Boston/Cape Cod to be near him. He led her to the Catholic Church and introduced her to Saint Cecilia. His strong faith and committed relationship to the Church, as well as the beautiful and welcoming spirit she experienced with the Saint Cecilia community and Father John, inspired Maria to pursue the RCIA. Maria would like to thank Philip for his constant love, interest, knowledge, and support throughout this process. She would also like to thank the very knowledgeable and supportive RCIA instructors who have taught her so much about the Church and what it means to be Catholic.



Eliana Coy will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Eliana found Saint Cecilia in January of 2023 after taking a leap and moving to an entirely new part of the country to create a new beginning. While originally attending for the music, she found a people and an experience she has come to cherish. Eliana's journey to Catholicism started as a teenager as she let her curiosity and love of culture propel her to visit and learn about many religions and their branches. In this, she discovered a love of the beauty and of the spirituality belonging to the music, art, and stained glass in the Catholic Church. At university, she studied art history and relished the opportunity to understand and interact with spiritual experiences in vivid new ways. In her daily life, Eliana is fascinated by the magnificent and wondrous things surrounding us. A few examples of these, include mist surrounding the Prudential Tower on a cold stormy night, golden hour sunlight illuminating pansies in front of Saint Cecilia in early spring, the resonance of music ascending to the rafters in melodic harmony, and the progression of golden light coming through the stained-glass windows on a Sunday morning. Eliana would like to thank the choir for the music they provide every Sunday and her sponsor, Tanya Chermak, for the understanding and support she has provided on this journey.



Mackenzie Dwyer will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. A lifelong Massachusetts resident, she studies psychology and religious studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Mackenzie is grateful to Tanya Rybarczyk, Christopher Brolly, SJ, her sponsor, Eileen, the entire RCIA team, and her inspiring RCIA cohort on this shared journey of faith. She is excited to come into full communion with the Church and to participate fully in worship with the wonderfully warm and welcoming parish community at Saint Cecilia.



Junyi Fang will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Junyi was born and raised in Tianjin, China, and came to Boston five years ago to pursue her master's degree in computer systems engineering at Northeastern University. She currently works as a software engineer at Whoop, a wearable technology company. Junyi started her faith journey with her fiancé Andrew Le, who introduced her to Catholicism. She would like to thank Father John Unni, who led her to Saint Cecilia and the beginning of her journey. Junyi also would like to thank her family, her fiancé and his family, and especially her sponsor, Thomas Le, for their continued support throughout this process. In addition, she would like to thank Tanya Rybarczyk, her fellow RCIA candidates and catechumens, and the amazing community of Saint Cecilia Parish, for supporting her and encouraging her throughout this journey.

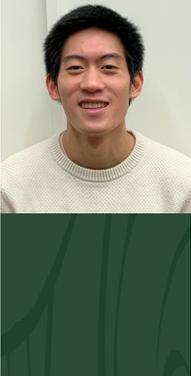
SAINT CECILIA PARISH



Stuart Fross will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. As a Trinitarian Christian, Stuart was baptized as a 15-year-old. Stuart's spiritual journey, culminating this Easter Vigil with reception into the Church, was inspired by attending Mass with his wife Catherine for many years, and even prayers at the Vatican! Stuart would like to thank Tanya Rybarczyk and Christopher Brolly, SJ, and looks forward to joining the Saint Cecilia community in communion.



Motoy Kuno-Lewis will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Raised in England, Motoy moved to the United States at the beginning of high school. He attended Harvard University, earning a bachelor's degree in environmental science and public policy, and has since worked to address food insecurity in Malawi with the Peace Corps as well as in Massachusetts with a local nonprofit. Currently, he studies international economics for development as a graduate student at the Harvard Kennedy School. Motoy is deeply grateful for the endless optimism, love, and support from his partner Melissa. He would also like to thank the RCIA team and the Saint Cecilia Parish community for their guidance and encouragement throughout his journey.



Andrew Le will receive the sacrament of confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Originally from Central Massachusetts, Andrew moved to Boston for college and remained in the area after graduation. Currently working in the technology industry, Andrew began RCIA looking to explore his faith more deeply. Andrew grew up around Catholicism but wasn't able to learn about it deeply, ultimately was not confirmed, and was absent from the Church after high school and through college. Andrew attended a Mass at Saint Cecilia in 2023 with his brother, who was previously confirmed at Saint Cecilia. The welcoming community and messages being conveyed from the church were so moving and meaningful that they sparked a curiosity and desire to learn more. He is undergoing RCIA with his fiancée Junyi, who has been a huge motivation for him. He would like to thank Tanya and Christopher for supporting this journey, and Father John for having relatable homilies.



Leon LeBlond will receive the sacrament of confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Leon grew up in both Upstate New York and Southeast Louisiana and studies jewelry and metalsmithing at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. In his artistic practice, Leon creates vessels to embody his faith in both process and perfected piece. He is a transgender man who feels blessed to have found an accepting community at Saint Cecilia.



Ryan Patrick Maloney will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Ryan grew up in Rhode Island and now lives in New Hampshire. He stumbled upon Saint Cecilia when he attended a Mass with his father in September. Ryan was moved by the music, the architecture, and Father John's warm and humorous homily. All this was so unlike the experiences that he had with Catholicism growing up. During the Mass, Mark Donohoe mentioned that there was a meeting on Tuesday nights for people wanting to find out more about the Church. Ryan attended, hoping to learn how to respectfully conduct himself during Mass as a non-believer as he wanted to return on Sundays with his father. He was so impressed that night with the deep conversation and varied and fascinating lives of the people in the RCIA group that he returned the next week and the week after and so on. RCIA has been an introspective journey that has led him to a life of faith and a clearer understanding of Catholicism. Ryan's life has changed, and his eyes have been opened to what it really means to lead a fulfilling life by serving humanity with the gifts that he was given. He deeply thanks Tanya Rybarczyk, his sponsor Nancy, Christopher Brolly SJ, Mark Donohoe, Father John Unni, all his new friends in the RCIA group, and his father, Ronald Maloney, for opening his eyes to what truly matters in life.

SAINT CECILIA PARISH



Andy Moore will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Andy is from Maine and is a first-year student at Northeastern University, where he studies business and plays hockey for the Huskies. Andy met Father John during the pandemic, and ever since has been excited to become a member of Saint Cecilia. He is looking forward to becoming a part of the Church and community. Andy would like to thank Father John for his inspiration and support.



Josh Neuberger will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Originally from Cottage Grove, Minnesota (a suburb of the Twin Cities), Josh was raised in an Evangelical-Lutheran setting. After graduating from high school, he moved to Chicagoland to study English literature; it's here he met his wife, Rebekah. During this time, he discovered the writings of Saint Augustine and Thomas Merton. The rich intellectual and contemplative history revealed by these two thinkers was both nourishing and challenging—slowly pulling him toward the Catholic Church. During Josh's final year of undergrad, he and Rebekah were married in an Episcopal ceremony just before the start of the pandemic. They moved to Boston to attend seminary at Boston University School of Theology. Through relationships in seminary (and through Rebekah's persistent encouragement), Josh finally decided to commit to pursuing adoption into the Catholic Church. Josh is currently finishing his final semester of studies at seminary and will graduate this spring. Josh would like to thank Rebekah for her untiring love and encouragement. He would also like to thank his parents for their love and guidance that instilled the importance of conviction and commitment in one's life. Finally, he would like to thank his dear friend (and sponsor) Holden Marshall for the many hours of dialogue (and disagreement), and graciously offered musing over theological questions and church doctrine.



Rebekah Grace Oakley Neuberger will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Rebekah grew up in a Baptist family in the Chicago suburbs and earned a degree in English literature at Wheaton College (IL), where she met and married (in a rebelliously Episcopal ceremony!) her husband, Josh Neuberger. Together, spurred by theological questions, the two of them moved to Boston in 2021 to attend the Boston University School of Theology. In her first year of her master of divinity program, Rebekah fell in love with the writings of female Catholic mystics like Hadewijch von Brabant, Hildegard von Bingen, and Beatrice of Nazareth. The writings of these women of faith, in addition to long conversations, pen pals, new friendships, and a school trip to Rome, confirmed for Rebekah her deep pull to the Catholic Church. She would like to thank her dear family friend/adopted aunt Theresa Brandys (a feisty and faithful Polish Catholic), her sponsor and close friend Eilis Leptein, who broadened the Church for Rebekah and explored it alongside her, and her husband Josh, who has been steadfast through highs, lows, and existential questions of life and faith.



Aleksandra Picariello will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist this Easter Vigil. Originally from Beverly, MA, Aleksandra graduated from Berklee College of Music in 2013 and now resides in Waltham. After exploring several Protestant denominations, Aleksandra began her conversion to Catholicism after reading *The Universal Christ* by Franciscan priest Richard Rohr and after watching several Saint Cecilia Masses on YouTube. She joined RCIA at Saint Cecilia in September 2023. Aleksandra would especially like to thank Father John, Tanya Rybarczyk, and her sponsor Katie Balian.



Aitana Poey will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Born and raised in Havana, Cuba, in a Catholic family, Aitana attended the Guanabacoa Conservatory and graduated as a classical clarinetist. In 2016, she migrated to Guatemala City with her parents. In 2021, she moved to Boston to study at Berklee College of Music, where she met her boyfriend, Andy Popescu, who reintroduced her to the Church, the teachings of the Bible, and the lifelong journey to live a holy life. She would like to thank her sponsor, Diana Carolina Bedoya Pereira, and her godfather/grandfather, Lazaro Poey Varona, for their guidance and support in this process. She extends special gratitude to Saint Cecilia Parish, Tanya, and Christopher, for opening the doors of this amazing community.

SAINT CECILIA PARISH



Eleanor (Ellie) Susan Sanderson will receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Ellie was baptized Catholic right here in Saint Cecilia almost 21 years ago and was called back to continue her journey of faith where it all started. She is from Westfield, New Jersey, and came to Boston for her studies. She is currently a student in her junior year at Emerson College pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies. Ellie is also involved with the church as a receptionist and is so grateful to be a part of the team here at Saint Cecilia. She would like to thank Tanya, Christopher, Father John, Mark, and all the incredible people in RCIA and Saint Cecilia who have made her experience here worthwhile. She would also like to thank her aunt Sus, cousin Jane, her dad, and her friends and family who have supported her through this journey of faith. Ellie especially wants to thank her mom, who is also her sponsor, for encouraging her and being her number-one fan throughout her life.



Mike Sheridan will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Mike grew up in the White Mountains of New Hampshire with no specific religion and traveled to Boston at a very young age. He landed in the hospitality industry and loves talking to people from all walks of life. Saint Cecilia became a place of curiosity and calmness unlike anywhere else he's experienced. Mike has chosen to receive these sacraments to deepen his faith and to have purpose. Mike would like to thank Lisa Pickering and Father John for leading him to this journey, and Tanya Rybarczyk, Christopher Brolly, SJ, and the RCIA group for all the support along the way.



Matt Steinschneider will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Matt moved to Boston in the summer of 2023 with his wife Shuzi, so she could complete her post-doctoral fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital. Matt discovered Saint Cecilia the same summer and has been on an incredibly rewarding spiritual journey ever since. He works in product development at AmFam Group, a property and casualty insurance company. Due to Shuzi's clinical training, Matt and Shuzi have lived in three states in three years (Wisconsin, Ohio, and Massachusetts). They've appreciated the chance to experience so many great places but are also looking forward to settling into Boston and being part of the community at Saint Cecilia. Matt was drawn to Catholicism because of the way the church upholds the value and dignity of all human life, welcomes questions, pushes for deeper thinking, and strives for the salvation of all people. As a history major, he also values the Church's historical role in shaping thought. He is grateful to Father John and Father Gyves, Tanya Rybarczyk, Christopher Brolly, and the rest of the RCIA team, his fellow RCIA candidates and catechumens, as well as his sponsor, Joe Maglitta for providing critical support, encouragement, and direction. Matt is also grateful to his parents for having been brought up with an orientation towards the values of the Church. He is also thankful to his wife, Shuzi, for bringing him to Boston, but most importantly, for being a foundation of love and support during the RCIA process and throughout life.



Nima Valibeig will receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Over the past several years, Nima has been getting to know the true face of Christianity, and for the last two years, has been directly involved with the Catholic Church. While in Rome, Nima learned many things about Christianity, and later, in the U.K., pursued further studies on the subject. For the past six months, Nima has been taking numerous courses on Christianity and the Catholic Church. Now participating in the RCIA at Saint Cecilia, he is looking forward with hope to his baptism at the Easter Vigil. For Nima, Christianity signifies love for God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.



COLE ARTHUR RILEY'S
PROJECT OFFERS NEW
APPROACHES TO PRAYER

BY CHINE MCDONALD



Despite her relative youth, Cole Arthur Riley is an old soul, whose way with words has soothed a generation of people through the turbulence of recent years.

In summer 2020, amid the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, where she lives, Riley—a writer in her early thirties—started the “Black Liturgies” project.

Through it, she began to express truths and wisdom about Black dignity, justice, rage, resistance, lament, and rest, in the form of liturgies shared on digital and social media. This led to a following of more than 300,000 on Instagram and the release of her *New York Times* bestseller, *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation and the Stories That Make Us* in 2022.

We first met online when I hosted the book’s UK launch for Church House Publishing (Podcast, 1 April 2022). I was captivated by *This Here Flesh*, after receiving a proof copy with a request for an endorsement some months before. It had landed on my doorstep when the world felt as if it was finally post-Covid, and I was pregnant again, and suffering from debilitating sickness.

Riley, who suffers from a chronic condition, wrote beautifully in that book of what it is to be embodied, and in a body that causes you physical pain—one that seems to be against you. The title had been inspired by a quotation from Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*: “In this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass.”

Last summer, more than a year after our digital meeting, Riley and I sat on the grass at the Greenbelt Festival, eating from one of the stands, and I was struck by the undeniably embodied acts of eating—there is something particularly carnal about eating rotisserie chicken—and sitting and talking face to face rather than on screens across an ocean. Here, at Greenbelt, she had gained a new following as she spoke on stage about what she had learned from her family about Black spirituality, the body, and God, and

about resistance, justice, and love.

Now, Riley and I are back on screens, an ocean apart, speaking about the UK release of her new book, *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human*. For her, this new book is a thank-you to the community of followers that have gathered around the “Black Liturgies” project over the past four years.

“With this book, I really wanted to honour what the project is,” she says. “The only reason I was able to write *This Here Flesh* in the way that I did was because I had started the Black Liturgies Project on social media. I’ve felt really grateful that the audience welcomed that book, even though it was very different to what they may have been expecting. I felt even when writing *This Here Flesh* the responsibility to eventually be able to deliver this book to the community that has honestly opened up so many doors for me.”

The book *Black Liturgies*, however, is not just Riley’s digestible—and yet profound—liturgies merely put into print. The book gives her room to expand her thoughts and stories. The end product is a stunning collection of letters, liturgies, and original poetry.

There is something particularly exposing when a writer showcases their poetry. While Riley has shared her poetry occasionally online, I ask how she feels about including poetry rather than prose, or the narrative non-fiction and story that she has been known for. Was she nervous? “It feels very different, and I was particularly nervous about it,” she says. “But when I narrated the audio book, I felt a little more confident in it.

“Before that, I was just riddled with anxiety. Including the poetry presents a unique kind of vulnerability. Poetry is not an attempt at clarity in the way that non-fiction writing tries to be clear and get a point across: it’s much more about images and fragments. When I was reading it out loud, I was feeling more comfortable in that lack of clarity, more comfortable in the images and realising that poetry definitely brings a different kind of energy, a different kind

of openness to the text.”

Like the fluidity of poetry, the spiritual tradition out of which the book is written is fluid, too. Some of the prayers end with “Amen”, while some close with “May it be so” or “Ase”—a word of affirmation in the Yoruba language of Nigeria, which can be translated as Amen, but also speaks of good luck, fortune, and power.

“When it felt right, and when it felt like it was speaking to that aspect of my spiritual life, I did include Christian scripture, but I’ve tried my best to be honest that I’ve been formed in a Christian tradition,” Riley says, “while also acknowledging that I don’t think that my spiritual life can be totally defined by this.”

Perhaps poetry is to non-fiction prose as spirituality is to religious tradition. “I think of my spiritual life as being comprised of many things, and the Christian tradition is one of them. I think myth and storytelling is another,” she tells me. “So, I’ve tried to be expansive in that way, knowing that the people who follow *Black Liturgies* on social media are coming from a pretty vast array of different spiritual backgrounds and practices.”

I wonder what it is that draws these younger, digital audiences to the liturgical form. What is it that drew Riley herself to this ancient practice? “Initially, as a writer, I think I was attracted to the beauty of the liturgy. I remember walking into an Anglican church service and being enamoured by the beauty in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the poetry in it. But what I didn’t expect was how much I needed the rest in liturgy.”

She writes in the book about being 23 and walking into an Episcopal church “with an overwhelming desire to die”. As she heard the congregation, who were mainly elderly, begin to say words in unison, she initially resisted the recitation of words “like some mindless zombie”—“I had my own thoughts, my own idealised individualism to protect,” she confesses in the introduction to *Black Liturgies*. But then she exhaled.

“It can be difficult to find the words to pray when one wants to die,” she writes. “The independence of personal prayer required more imagination than I could access at the time. It is exhausting enough trying to keep oneself alive; to be expected to articulate love and hope and beauty—and more dangerously, lament—was like trying to float with weights hanging from my neck. Liturgy, I found, was a kind of rest. For the first time, my presence in a spiritual space didn’t depend on my own articulation or imagination. I could rise and sit and kneel and speak or not speak in this

sacred theatre that others had written the script for. I could let others hold a sacred imagination for me.”

It is this sense of rest which, Riley feels, drew Black communities to her liturgies at a time of threat and trauma. While she recognised the wonder in the *Book of Common Prayer*, she knew that some would find it difficult: “For all its beauty, the *Book of Common Prayer* has, for me personally, just been insufficient in terms of speaking to Black grief, Black memory, Black joy, in a meaningful—in a trustworthy—way.

“Of course, there are liturgies written by white men that I can find some solace and companionship in, but there are seasons where it’s just difficult to connect with a text. I know what was happening to my ancestors when Thomas Cranmer wrote the BCP, for example. *Black Liturgies* is one of many reclamation projects that centre the Black voice, the Black interior world.”

Black Liturgies does not need to be read cover to cover, but each chapter takes a different theme that might appeal to the reader at different moments, touching on the broad spectrum of human experience. It is, in essence, a book of liturgical prayers nestled in between quotations from Black thinkers, writers, and activists who have come before—those whom Riley describes as ancestors (James Baldwin, Octavia Butler, Malcolm X). But there are questions for contemplation, too, and reflections on themes.

In part one, the chapters are split “by story”: selfhood, doubt, lament, power, love, dignity, and more. Part two is split “by time”: dawn, Pentecost, Epiphany, Good Friday, Silent Saturday. It also includes a section, “Kwanzaa”, referring to the secular African American festival that takes place in between Christmas and New Year, and in which cultural heritage and traditions are celebrated.

The dedication at the start of the book simply reads: “For us.” I’m struck by to whom the “us” refers. Is it the ancestors of whom she writes in the book, the family into which she was born and which she writes so beautifully about in both books? Does “us” refer to the family that she has created? While I am sure that it is deliberately open to interpretation, my instinct is that the “us” refers to the community of Black people worldwide for whom she originally set out on the journey of *Black Liturgies*.

I’m struck by the number of my own white friends—particularly women—who have been drawn to Cole Arthur Riley’s work and writing, those who quote *Black Liturgies* or reshare her posts on Instagram. The killing of George Floyd and the subsequent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter

movement caused many white people to feel guilt, grief, and rage at the realities of racial injustice. But Riley has been clear that the intended audience of the Black Liturgies Project is black people themselves.

The sense of a collective voice resonates throughout the book, and Riley is committed to de-centring her own voice. This is required in a book that attempts to transcend the whole of human experience, including mortality, wisdom, and loss. There are some experiences that she has gone through herself, and some that she has not.

“As a writer, I find it somewhat restful not to centre myself so much in the writing of a thing,” she says. “The clearest translation of the word ‘liturgy’ is kind of a work of the people. I feel a responsibility not just to my own interior life, but to some kind of imagined and real black interior world that transcends me. I’m drawn out of myself in a way that I think is really beautiful, and is a good practice as a writer to not be so confined to my own mind, my own lived experience.

“In sections like the mortality section, where I felt like my own interior world was lacking, or maybe a bit more quiet, I tried my best to connect with other people and enter theirs as best one can. I’m quite young, I’m 33 years old, and I feel like that section kind of demanded that I really try to enter that space in an honest way.

“I have a few older friends in my life, and have been able to hear their fears of ageing, their sense of being made obsolete. I realised in the process that I have many thoughts about mortality, especially as someone who lives with chronic illness, but I might not attune to them in the same way.”

Riley’s work is at once a voice of her generation and one that echoes from the past. I ask her what she thinks about millennials growing up in the Church and deconstructing Christianity in recent years.

“I personally didn’t deconstruct: I just fled altogether. I went to the artists in my life, the poets; I went to fiction. There was a period of time of real sincere isolation for me from Christianity of any kind. I missed the train on deconstruction, but honour people that are on a deconstructive journey, if that feels right for them. For me, it was more about reconstruction.

“I began to remember so much of what my spirituality was as a child—remembering the spirituality of my father and my grandma, and back further still. I don’t necessarily feel like I had to reconstruct something new once I departed

from more conservative Christian spaces. I felt more like I was on a journey of travelling back and trying to recall something. It felt more like remembering.”

~ *Born and for the most part raised in Pittsburgh, Cole Arthur Riley studied writing at the University of Pittsburgh, but traces her love of words back to her father, who would bribe her and her siblings to write poems and stories to get out of chores, or for cold hard cash; and her grandma who was part writer, part sage. Riley is the creator of Black Liturgies, a space that integrates spiritual practice with Black emotion, Black literature, and the Black body; and a project of The Center for Dignity and Contemplation where she serves as Curator. Some thinkers who have formed her include, Audre Lorde, Octavia Butler, James Baldwin, Thomas Merton, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Julian of Norwich. Riley’s debut book, This Here Flesh, was an instant New York Times bestseller.*

~ *Chine McDonald is a author, journalist, and a regular contributor to BBC Religion & Ethics programs. Her first book, Am I Beautiful?, explores body image among women of faith. McDonald’s second book, God Is Not a White Man?, is part memoir and part social/theological commentary and laments a faith culture that insists everyone is equal in God’s sight, yet fails to confront white supremacy. She currently serves as director of Theos, a religion and society think tank in the United Kingdom.*

Excerpt from *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human*:

For the Disabled and Chronically Ill

God of every ache,

Help us to befriend our bodies. We confess that it is easy to turn against them as the source of our struggle. Awaken a compassion, a tenderness, toward the parts of us that are changing or hurting, remembering that our bodies are doing everything they can to protect us. That our bodies are fighting, are trying their best to hold back the pain and exhaustion. And with every ailing and unseen thing, guide us toward those capable of listening and perceiving when we are not okay, that we wouldn’t feel pressure to pretend or apologise or explain but could exist in the truth of what we need. Remind us that we are not a burden but a beacon to those who are so poorly attuned to their own bodies and needs that they have forgotten what self-compassion looks like. Hold us in love as we resist the demands of this world.

May it be so.

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

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, Letitia 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.

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• **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 po-
• tential 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 help-
• ing us maintain our parish security online!
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