

# Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



The Burning Bush

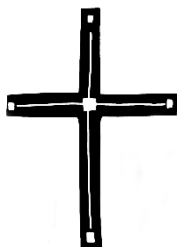
He Qi, c. 2018

## Third Sunday of Lent

23 March 2025

# Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



## THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

23 MARCH 2025

PRELUDE | *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, BWV 639  
Brett Maguire, *parish organist*

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

ENTRANCE PROCESSION | Merciful God

INDIGO

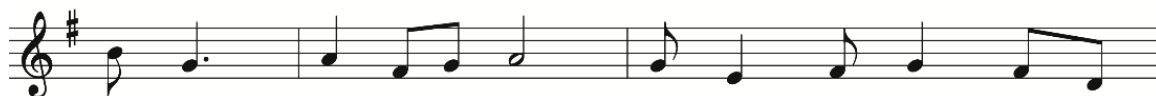
### Refrain



*Ash Wednesday:* Sign us with ash - es, mer - ci - ful God,  
*Lent Gathering:* Gath - er your peo - ple, mer - ci - ful God,  
*Lent Communion:* Feed us and guide us, mer - ci - ful God:



Chil - dren of dust, as to dust we re - turn. Sign us with  
Gath - er the long - ing, the lost, and un - sure. Gath - er your  
Light, when the shad - ows of life cloud our view. Feed us and



ash - es, mer - ci - ful God; Mark us and make us your  
peo - ple, mer - ci - ful God, Name us and claim us as  
guide us, mer - ci - ful God, Peo - ple who hun - ger for



*To verses* own. own, mark us and make us your own.  
yours. yours, name us and claim us as yours.  
you. you, peo - ple who hun - ger for you.

# Verses



1. Sure-ly, you a - lone can save us. You pay our price with
2. Sure-ly, you a - lone up - hold us. You give us strength for
3. Sure-ly, you a - lone can heal us. Yours is the will to
4. Sure-ly, you a - lone can free us. You break the bonds of
5. Sure-ly, you a - lone re - fine us. You give us grace for
6. Sure-ly, you a - lone re - deem us. You fill our dust with



pre - cious blood. Reach - ing through your great com -  
all our needs. Shield - ing with a fa - ther's  
make us whole. Sooth - ing with a moth - er's  
guilt and sin. Brac - ing, till we walk up -  
lives made new, Forg - ing, through your fire and  
ho - ly breath. Burst - ing from the grave in



pas sion, You lift up your peo - ple with love.  
fa - vor, You bless us with par - don and peace.  
kind - ness, The con - trite of heart you con - sole.  
right - ly, You bol - ster our hope once a - gain.  
ra - diance, A sac - ri - fice wor - thy for you.  
glo - ry, You rise from the ash - es of death.

## PENITENTIAL RITE

## COLLECT

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Exodus 3: 1-8a, 13-15

## Refrain

The Lord is kind and mer - ci-ful; the Lord is kind and  
mer - ci - ful. Slow to an - ger, rich in  
kind-ness, the Lord is kind and mer - ci - ful.

## Verses

1. Bless the Lord, O my soul; all my being bless God's name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul; forget not all God's blessings.
2. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, full of kindness.  
God is good to all creation, full of compassion.
3. The goodness of God is from age to age,  
blessing those who choose to love.  
And justice toward God's children; on all who keep the covenant.

## SECOND READING | 1 Corinthians 10: 1-6, 10-12

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ, Light of the Nations

Tony Alonso

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.  
*Lent: Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.  
*Glo-ry to you, Word of God, Lord Je - sus Christ.*

## GOSPEL | Luke 13: 1-9

## HOMILY



## NICENE CREED

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

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE PARISH!

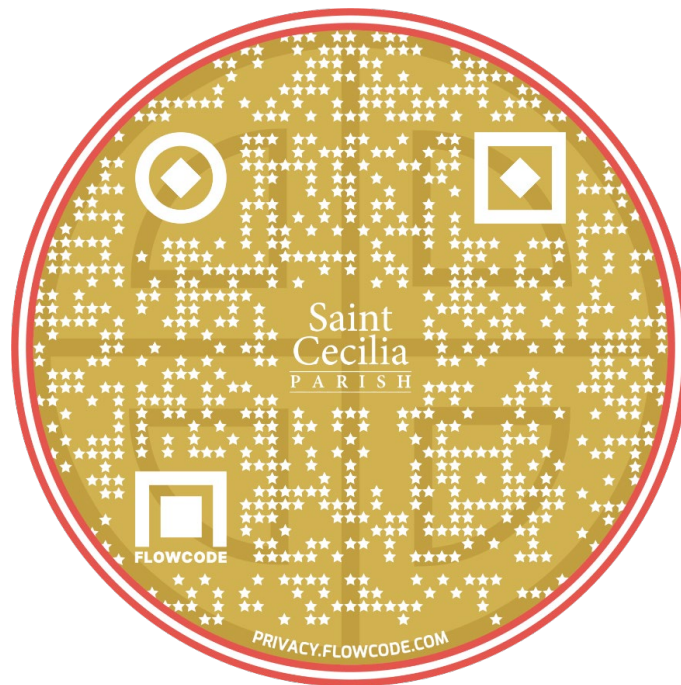
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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

If the Flowcode doesn't work for you, please visit [www.flowcode.com/page/stceciliaboston](http://www.flowcode.com/page/stceciliaboston).

You can also mail a check to:

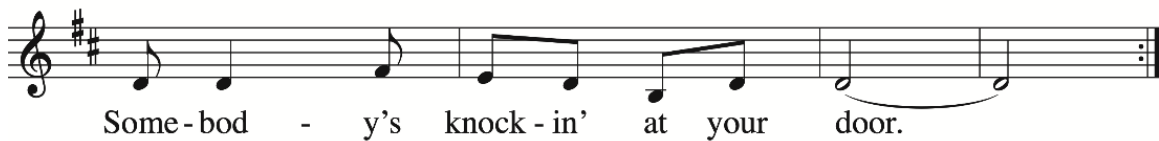
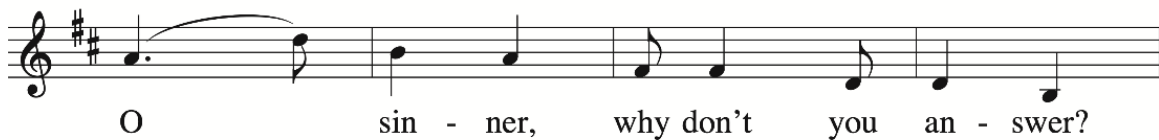
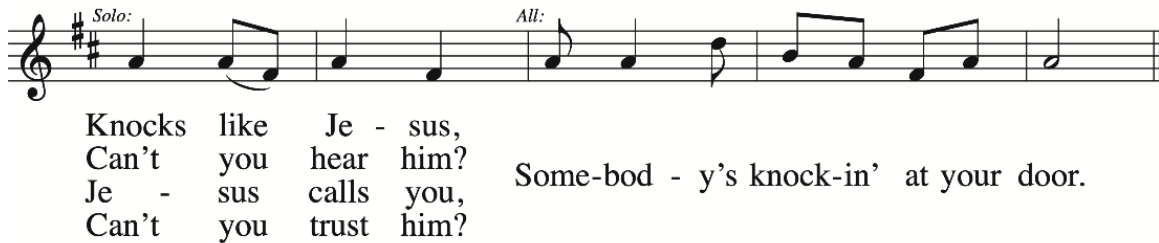
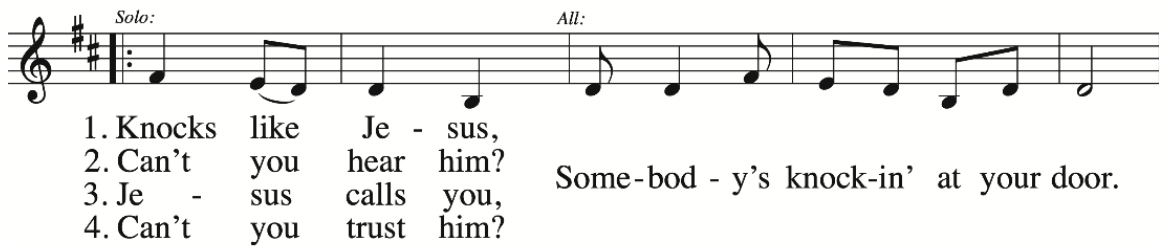
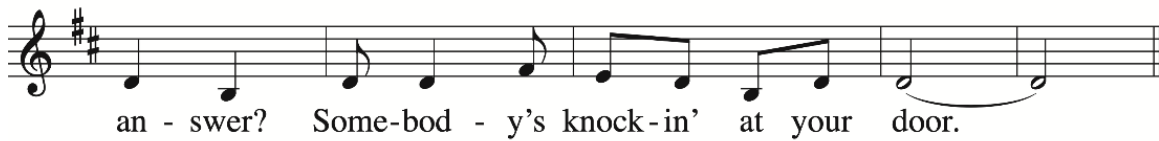
Saint Cecilia Parish  
18 Belvidere Street  
Boston, MA 02115



# LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS | Somebody's Knocking at Your Door

African American Spiritual

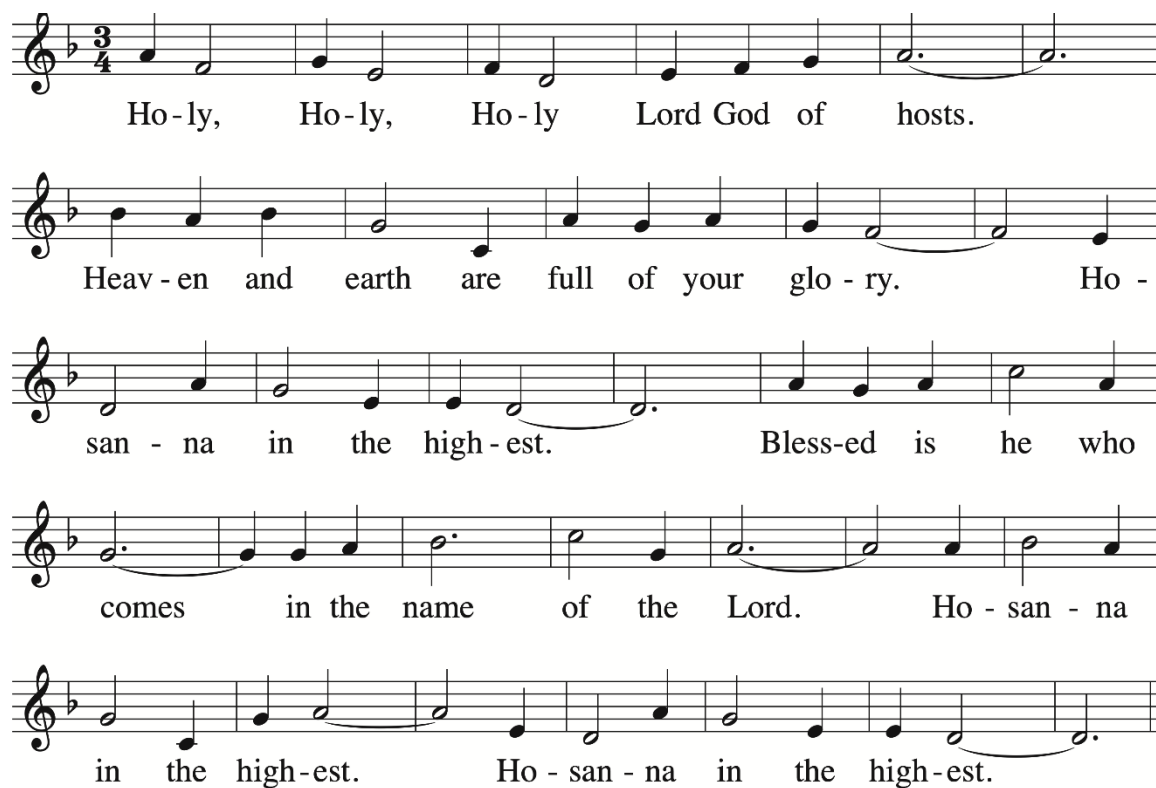


## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

- ✧ 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.

## SANCTUS | Mass of Christ, Light of the Nations

Tony E. Alonso



Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Ho-ly Lord God of hosts.

Heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho -

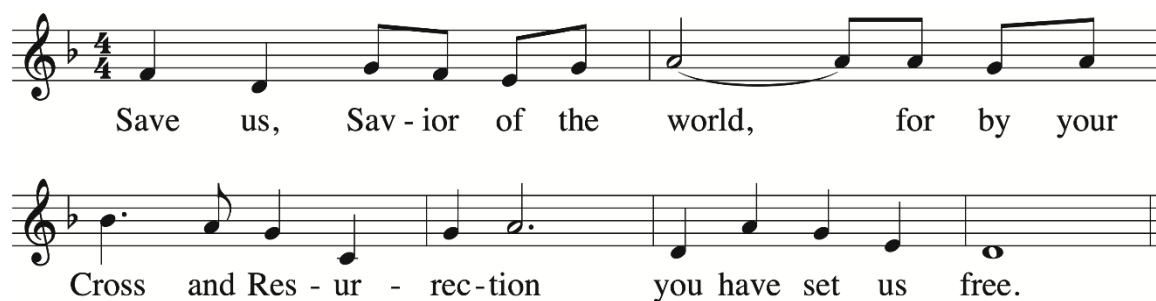
san - na in the high-est. Bless-ed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na

in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high-est.

## MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ, Light of the Nations

Tony E. Alonso



Save us, Sav-ior of the world, for by your

Cross and Res - ur - rec-tion you have set us free.



## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

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

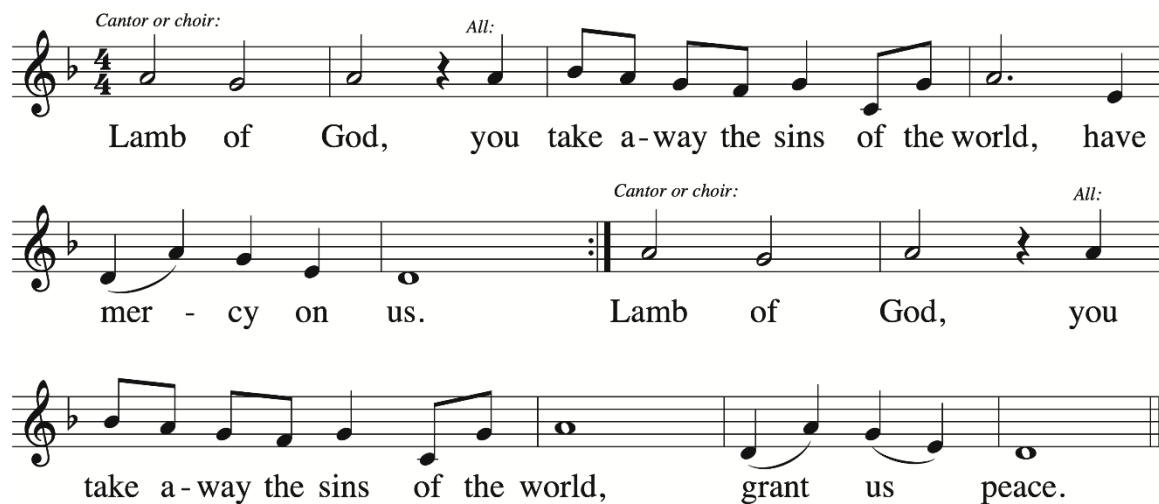
## THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And with your spirit.

## AGNUS DEI | Mass of Christ, Light of the Nations

## Tony E. Alonso



## 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.

### COMMUNION | Be Not Afraid

Bob Dufford, SJ

1. You shall cross the bar-ren des-ert, but you  
shall not die of thirst. You shall wan-der far in  
safe-ty though you do not know the way. You shall  
speak your words in for-eign lands and all will un-der -  
stand. You shall see the face of God and live.

Refrain

Be not a-fraid. I go be-fore you al-ways.  
Come, fol-low me, and I will give you rest.

Verse 2

2. If you pass through rag - ing wa - ters in the  
 sea, you shall not drown. If you walk a - mid the burn - ing flames,  
 you shall not be harmed. If you stand be - fore the  
 pow'r of hell and death is at your side,  
 know that I am with you through it all. **D.S.**

Verse 3

3. Bless - ed are your poor, for the king - dom shall be  
 theirs. Blest are you that weep and mourn, for  
 one day you shall laugh. And if wick - ed tongues in -  
 sult and hate you all be - cause of me,  
 bless - ed, bless - ed are you! **D.S.**

By your mercy find in me Your image, Lord, that I may be a true reflection of Your face, by Your mercy.

By your mercy speak to me clear words of hope and victory; Your loving voice assuring me of Your mercy.

Your righteousness exalts me to Your throne where I may stand by faith in Christ alone;  
not by any merit of my own, but by your mercy.

By your mercy set me free in child-like faith to trust and see Your truth in radiant robes displayed, robes of mercy.

## CONCLUDING RITES

RECESSIONAL | There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

IN BABILONE



1. There's a wide - ness in God's mer - cy Like the wide - ness  
2. For the love of God is broad - er Than the meas - ures  
3. Trou - bled souls, why will you scat - ter Like a crowd of



of the sea; There's a kind - ness in God's jus - tice  
of the mind; And the heart of the E - ter - nal  
fright - ened sheep? Fool - ish hearts, why will you wan - der



Which is more than lib - er - ty. There is plen - ti -  
Is most won - der - ful - ly kind. If our love were  
From a love so true and deep? There is wel - come



ful re - demp - tion In the blood that has been shed;  
but more faith - ful, We should rest up - on God's word;  
for the sin - ner, And more grac - es for the good;



There is joy for all the mem - bers  
And our lives would be thanks - giv - ing  
There is mer - cy with the Sav - ior,



In the sor - rows of the Head.  
For the good - ness of our Lord.  
There is heal - ing in his blood.

POSTLUDE | *Wo soll ich fliehen hin*, BWV 5  
Brett Maguire, *parish organist*

Johann Sebastian Bach

*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](mailto: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.

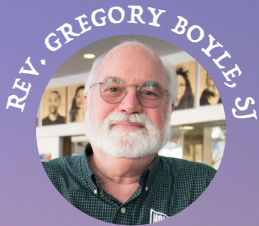
Today we are experiencing something of an awakening within these old walls. Our numbers are increasing by 350 new households each year, and we continue to grow in our commitment to issues of peace, justice, and service to our neighbors, both near and far.

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.

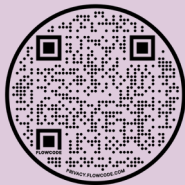
Father John Unni presents...

# AN EVENING WITH MY FRIENDS

**THURSDAY, APRIL 24th**  
**6:30 - 8:30 P.M. | Saint Cecilia Church**



SCAN HERE TO



RESERVE TICKETS

## DETAILS

- \* Tickets are free and required to attend
- \* Doors open at 5:30 P.M.
- \* Seating is first come, first served

For more information, visit:  
[www.stceciliaboston.org/an-evening-with-my-friends](http://www.stceciliaboston.org/an-evening-with-my-friends)

# OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

## MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

**Saturday, March 22 | 5:00 p.m.**

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV, celebrant  
Mary Kane, lector

**Sunday, March 23 | 8:00 a.m.**

Rev. John Predmore, celebrant  
Maggie Giles, lector

**Sunday, March 23 | 9:30 a.m.**

Rev. John Unni, celebrant  
Kate Vasinda, Rosaria Salerno, Peter Haley,  
lectors

**Sunday, March 23 | 11:30 a.m.**

Rev. John Unni, celebrant  
Gina Filloramo, Moira Macdonald, Karen  
McMenamy, lectors

**Sunday, March 23 | 6:00 p.m.**

Rev. John Unni, celebrant  
Megan Altendorf, lector

## SPECIAL INTENTIONS

**Sunday, March 23 | 9:30 a.m.**

Stanley Greenwood Jr., *1st Anniversary*  
Carmina Garcia, *Memorial*  
John Solomon, *Memorial*  
Steven Yovino, *Memorial*  
Constance Sears, *Memorial*  
Sr. Maisie Picardo, *Memorial*  
Edward Harrington, *Memorial*

**Sunday, March 23 | 11:30 a.m.**

Miguel Ventura-Henriquez, *Memorial*  
Vincent Duffy, *Memorial*

## TODAY'S READINGS

Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15  
1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12  
Luke 13:1-9

Exodus 17:3-7\*  
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8\*  
John 4:5-42\*

## NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12  
2 Corinthians 5:17-21  
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a\*  
Ephesians 5:8-14\*  
John 9:1-41\*

*\*Readings for 11:30 A.M. Mass only*





# PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

## Our Sick

Pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially **Glenn Gallo, Marc Pelletier, Michele Maniscalco, Fred Tufts, Baby Eloise Josephine Mason, and Kevin J. Owens.**

## Welcome to Saint Cecilia!

We are pleased to welcome the following new registrants: **Farah Djunaedi** of Allston and **Kristin Blount** of Boston. If you have not previously registered, you can do so online at [www.stceciliaboston.org](http://www.stceciliaboston.org).

## The First Scrutiny

This week at the 11:30 a.m. liturgy we will celebrate the first scrutiny of our Elect. Just as Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, we pray that He will dispel any darkness from our Elect, and draw **Mariam, Anna, Stephanie, Jennifer, Gina, Matthew, and Tomas** closer to his great love and light. Please pray for our Elect on their continued journey toward receiving the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

## Lectionary Note

You might notice that starting this Sunday the readings are different at the 11:30 liturgy. This year, the Church's lectionary cycle follows Year C for Masses on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, but it is part of the Church's ancient tradition that at liturgies during which the Scrutinies of the Elect take place, the readings assigned for Year A are used. The gospel reading that will be proclaimed at most of our weekend liturgies is The Parable of the Fig Tree and the gospel reading that will be proclaimed at the 11:30 liturgy is The Samaritan Woman at the Well.

## Easter Flowers

We invite you to remember your loved ones by donating towards our Easter flowers. Please fill out this form: [forms.levinforms.com/2025/03/13/st-cecilia-parish-easter-flowers-form/](https://www.levinforms.com/2025/03/13/st-cecilia-parish-easter-flowers-form/), which has the donation link: [www.osvhub.com/stceciliaboston/giving/funds/2025-easter-flowers](https://www.osvhub.com/stceciliaboston/giving/funds/2025-easter-flowers). Envelopes will also be available in the narthex for people who would like to print the names of their loved ones. The names of those remembered will be printed in the Easter bulletin. Palm Sunday (April 13) will be the last opportunity to donate.

## Lenten Wednesdays — Mass & Reconciliation

On all the Wednesday evenings of Lent (March 12, 19, 26; April 2, 9, and 16) 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.

## Catholic Appeal 2025: Commitment Weekend

This weekend, the 2025 Catholic Appeal launches across the Archdiocese of Boston! Please enter into solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need and spread hope by making a gift today. Thank you to those who have already responded generously to Father John's invitation to contribute. Through early support, our parish has already reached 33% of our goal and, together, we are on our way to greater success. Thank you for your support!

## Pope Francis

As of Tuesday, according to the Holy See Press Office, the pope remains in stable condition within a complex clinical framework and is showing slight improvements in his motor and respiratory functions. In addition to undergoing treatments, the Holy Father is spending time in prayer and doing some light work. We are grateful to God for this positive turn of events. Please continue to keep Pope Francis in your prayer.

## IN THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>This Week's Liturgies.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Prayers and Occasions.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Coming Up at Saint Cecilia.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>St. Patrick's Day Breakfast.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Age of Trump Has Its Prophet: Pope Francis by David Gibson.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>When Our Spirits Are Down, It Is Time To Lean on God's Own Spirit by Christine Schenk, CSJ.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Women's History Month: Liz Walker.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Last Weekend in Pictures.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Parish Resources.....</b>	<b>17</b>



## SIMEON & ANNA SENIORS

**THURSDAY MARCH 27TH | 10AM | PARISH HALL**

The next Simeon and Anna Seniors Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 27th. From 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. there will be coffee/tea and conversation, and at 10:30 there will be time for prayer. All parish seniors are invited to participate.

## TRIDUUM & EASTER CHOIR

The Saint Cecilia Choir invites any parishioner interested in singing at Triduum and/or during the Easter season to join the choir for these important liturgies. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings, March 20-April 10 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. All interested are invited and we are particularly welcoming tenors and basses. If you are interested, please contact our director of music, Robert Duff, at [rduff@stceciliaboston.org](mailto:rduff@stceciliaboston.org).

## ARCHDIOCESAN JUSTICE CONVOCATION: HOPE FOR OUR COMMON HOME—CATHOLICS CARING FOR CREATION

**SATURDAY, MARCH 29TH | 9AM - 3PM  
BOSTON COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL**

Keynote: Prof. Andrea Vicini, S.J., Boston College, followed by a diverse panel and exciting workshops and exhibits – everything from Gardening for God's Creation to Eco-Spirituality to Youth Leadership, Green Investing, and Parish Weatherization. More details can be found at [tinyurl.com/Convo-poster](http://tinyurl.com/Convo-poster). To register for free, go to: [tinyurl.com/Creation-Mar29](http://tinyurl.com/Creation-Mar29).

## PROTECTING OUR MENTAL HEATH: BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH FAITH

**SUNDAY, MARCH 30TH | 2 - 3:30 PM | PARISH HALL**

Join us for a special **Mental Health & Resilience** presentation at Saint Cecilia, where faith and mental well-being come together. During times of uncertainty, it's easy to feel overwhelmed, but God calls us to persevere with hope and strength. Guided by psychiatrists Kathy Sanders and Michael Murphy, this session will offer practical strategies rooted in faith, psychology, and community support to help navigate uncertainty with resilience.

Come and learn how to lean on your faith, manage stress, and cultivate inner strength through prayer, reflection, and meaningful connections. Whether you're facing personal struggles or seeking ways to support others, this event is open to all.

Please register at: [forms.gle/rP9rXZNYU8MsgBRP7](https://forms.gle/rP9rXZNYU8MsgBRP7)

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES BOSTON SEEKS PLAYSPACE VOLUNTEERS

The Saint Catholic Charities Inn, a Safety-Net Shelter run by Catholic Charities Boston, is looking for volunteers to watch children while their caregiver(s) are in an onsite English as a Second/Other Language (ESOL) and Workforce Development class. Children and volunteers will be in the shelter playroom, which is stocked with toys and activities. Volunteers are expected to supervise the children; keep them safe; and engage in play, reading, and other activities with them. Shelter staff are onsite for support as needed.

Volunteers are needed on Tuesdays from 10am-1pm and on Thursdays from 10am-12pm at the Brighton, MA location. We welcome people to volunteer for one or both shifts. If interested, please email Holly Clark at [holly\\_clark@ccab.org](mailto:holly_clark@ccab.org). For more information on Catholic Charities' many volunteer opportunities, please visit [www.ccab.org/ways-to-give/volunteer/](http://www.ccab.org/ways-to-give/volunteer/).







## NIGHT OF WORSHIP

**TUESDAY, APRIL 1 | 7:00-8:00 P.M.**

Join our Young Adult ministry this Tuesday for their monthly Night of Worship. Parishioners of all ages are welcome to come and find rest and healing by spending an hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Praise and worship music will be led by members of the Young Adult ministry. Please use the pavilion entrance located on St. Cecilia Street and ring the bell to enter. If you cannot be here in person, this hour will be livestreamed over Zoom.

To receive the Zoom link, please scan the QR code below or call/email the parish office. If you are already on the worship night email list, you will automatically receive the Zoom link.



## FAST FOR A GREENER LENT

Lenten spiritual traditions include fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. Deepen your ecological spirituality this Lent by signing up for the Greener Lent program at [greenerlent.org](http://greenerlent.org) where there are opportunities to reduce meat consumption beyond the usual Fridays in Lent, donate to Cross Catholic's "Water for Life" project, or commit to daily prayer for Care for God's Creation. When you register, please be sure to pick "St Cecilia Boston" as your group. Also, if you need some vegetarian recipes, check these out: [goodnewsveg.com/good-recipes/](http://goodnewsveg.com/good-recipes/).

## FFF COFFEE HOUR: FEATURING KATHLEEN HIRSCH ON "WRITING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE"

**SUNDAY, APRIL 6 | 4PM EST VIA ZOOM**

Do you keep a journal? Have you tried your hand at poetry, or ventured into a weekend writing class? How many of us have attended retreats in which we've put our thoughts and prayers on paper, and left thinking, "If only I could do this more often!" Join us, along with author and newly published poet, Kathleen Hirsch, as she discusses the practice of writing as an essential tool for spiritual growth. Hirsch will share her decades-long personal practices, and describe the many ways in which we can use writing to draw us closer to the bedrock of inner truth, grow nearer to God's presence in the world, and to heal. She will read from her new book of poems, *Mending Prayer Rugs*, a collection that celebrates the healing and prophetic work that ordinary women and men perform in faith, even in the darkest of times, and offer writing prompts for those that wish to participate.

Kathleen Hirsch was an award-winning journalist before turning to literary non-fiction and poetry. Her work took her into homeless shelters and prisons, churches, art studios and libraries, to capture the depth and range of modern women's experience. She teaches in the Philosophy Department at Boston College and facilitates the Contemplative Writers Group at Bethany House of Prayer in Arlington, MA, where she is a spiritual director.

If you have not yet registered for the online coffee hour, please use this link: [bit.ly/45pDVRa](https://bit.ly/45pDVRa).

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES INN: FAMILIES

Catholic Charities Inn continues to welcome new residents experiencing homelessness each month, both immigrants and longtime Massachusetts residents. And, in some cases, there have been babies born while their families have been living at the Inn.

We are looking to provide much-needed items to the infants and children at Catholic Charities Inn. You can get detailed information about their Amazon Wish List at: [www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3D73H6OCOQH4K](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3D73H6OCOQH4K).

We are unable to accept donated items at Saint Cecilia at this time. If you would like your donation to be acknowledged, please provide your name and address in the "Gift Message" when checking out. Thank you for your generosity.

## COMMUNITY SERVINGS' LIFESAVER EVENT

On Wednesday, April 9, Community Servings will hold its annual LifeSaver fundraiser. LifeSaver begins with an elaborate cocktail reception at Davio's Northern Italian Steakhouse Galleria in the Back Bay after which guests transition to 50 of Greater Boston's finest restaurants for a multi-course dinner for ten guests.

Tickets for the cocktail reception and dinner are \$500 each. Each dinner ticket provides 16 weeks of free, medically-tailored meals for a neighbor in need. Or you can purchase a ticket just for the elegant cocktail reception for \$250. For more information, or to purchase a ticket: [www.servings.org/lifesavor/](http://www.servings.org/lifesavor/).

## ST. CECILIA HOUSE AND ROBERT MCBRIDE HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since sponsoring their construction thirty years ago, Saint Cecilia Parish has enjoyed a beneficial relationship with St. Cecilia House and Robert McBride House. Located on Kilmarnock Street in the Fenway neighborhood, these two residences provide 140 units of affordable housing in the City of Boston. We are currently seeking dedicated and passionate individuals to join the Board of Directors and contribute to its mission of providing quality, affordable housing in our community.

Board members play a key role in overseeing operations, ensuring sustainability, and advocating for the needs of the residents. If you are passionate about community development and making a positive impact, we invite you to apply. For more information, please email Dan Hart at [dhart@hartdevllc.com](mailto:dhart@hartdevllc.com).

## 2025 CATHOLIC MEMORIAL GALA

### THURSDAY, APRIL 10 | SHERATON FOUR POINTS

Join the Catholic Memorial community in honoring the late Michael D. McNally '79, P'22 and Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley, OFM Cap. The evening will also celebrate a decade of success under Dr. Peter F. Folan and his team's outstanding contributions to the beloved school.

Full details about the honorees and the evening can be found at [www.catholicmemorial.org/give/gala](http://www.catholicmemorial.org/give/gala).

## COMING UP AT SAINT CECILIA

**MARCH 20 - 27**

### THURSDAY, MARCH 20TH

Communion Circle | 4pm | Hale House  
Wisdom Group | 7:30pm via Zoom

### SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND

Lenten Retreat | 9am - 3pm  
Marriage Ministry | 10am via Zoom

### SUNDAY, MARCH 23RD

Wisdom Group | 8:30am via Zoom  
First Scrutiny of the Elect | 11:30am Mass  
Bereavement Group | 1pm | Family Center

### MONDAY, MARCH 24TH

Returning Citizens | 5:30pm | Parish Hall  
SCYA Women's Group | 7:30pm via Zoom

### TUESDAY, MARCH 25TH

OCIA | 6:30pm | Parish Hall

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26TH

Lenten Mass + Reconciliation | 6pm  
Bereavement Group | 6pm via Zoom

### THURSDAY, MARCH 27TH

Seniors Group | 10am | Parish Hall  
Wisdom Group | 7:30pm via Zoom





# ST. PATRICK'S DAY BREAKFAST

Last Sunday at Dorchester's annual St. Patrick's Day Breakfast, Saint Cecilia Parish had the privilege of being honored alongside the other recent inductees to the Dorchester Hall of Fame.

Money raised at the breakfast went towards supporting the Mary Ann Brett Food Pantry, one of our cherished partners. Thank you to Father John and Mark Lippolt for representing the parish and to Bill Brett for these photos!



# THE AGE OF TRUMP HAS ITS PROPHET: POPE FRANCIS

BY DAVID GIBSON



*Pope Francis in St Peter's Square, Vatican City on June 14th, 2014.*

*Photo: Alfredo Borba | Wikicommons*

Pope Francis has been in a Rome hospital for a month, battling double pneumonia and its complications. His condition would be serious for anyone but could be more threatening for an 88-year-old man who had part of a lung removed as a youth and who stubbornly refuses to slow down. While the Vatican reported this week that he is improving, he may be so weakened that, some have speculated, he could decide to step down.

Either way, the fate of a pope remains of great concern among the world's approximately 1.3 billion Catholics and a source of heightened curiosity for those who see Francis as an increasingly lonely moral voice on the world stage and wonder what kind of pope will eventually succeed him.

The yearning for a leader who puts the needs and interests of others — including the least powerful — ahead of his own is felt especially among the many Americans today who desperately seek a light inside the darkness of Donald Trump.

For this pope has emerged in the face of perilous global trends that have at times left the forces of liberal democracy reeling — nationalism, populism, disinformation, xenophobia, economic inequality and authoritarianism. A world without a pope like Francis will in some ways resemble a Hobbesian dystopia without a prophet pointing to our better angels or a sensible idealist showing a better way.

Francis has become even more outspoken as those worrisome political trends have accelerated, especially with Mr. Trump's electoral victory. Shortly before the onset of his current illness, Francis took direct aim at Mr. Trump's mass deportation policy and demonization of immigrants. "What is built on the basis of force," Francis warned in an extraordinary letter to American bishops, "and not on the truth about the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly."

The pope proclaimed his vision almost immediately after he was elected 12 years ago this month as the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere, the first



Jesuit pope, the first to take the name of the saint from Assisi. He traveled in the sweltering heat to the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, where so many migrants have landed or where their boats and bodies were lost, and celebrated Mass on an altar made from the wood of refugee boats.

Francis has also consistently denounced the destructive temptation of populism and the rise of “a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism.” On a 2021 visit to Athens he warned against the global “retreat from democracy,” a political system he called “the response to the siren songs of authoritarianism.” Unifying world powers in a shared battle against global warming has been a central theme of his papacy as well.

The pope is no starry-eyed moralist. “Reality is greater than ideas,” as he likes to say, and he is realistic about how the world works. He hates ideologies that hijack minds and hails the old-fashioned politics that gets stuff done. Politics “is a daily martyrdom: seeking the common good without letting yourself be corrupted,” he has told aspiring politicians.

Warning against “propaganda that instills hatred, divides the world into friends to be defended and foes to be fought,” the pope has forcefully pushed for an inclusive church and an inclusive world. Like the Gospels, Francis was a D.E.I. exponent before that became a bad thing, and he remains convincing because he focuses on the moral core of what diversity, equity and inclusion mean and why they are important. The keys are humility and mercy.

Read the pope’s remarkable address to a joint session of Congress in 2015: Francis channeled not just Catholics such as Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day but also figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln. “To imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants and murderers is the best way to take their place,” Francis said, adding, “We must move forward together, as one, in a renewed spirit of fraternity and solidarity, cooperating generously for the common good.”

Having a Roman pontiff as a bulwark of liberal values could, of course, be viewed as ironic. The Catholic Church until the middle of the last century was, officially at least, no champion of democracy or religious freedom or other principles that Americans, most notably, see as foundational.

Or used to. Now we have the pope promoting many of the rights and principles that much of America seems to be turning against. But this is where we are. “In

this time of neo-imperial powers, I suspect that the Catholic Church is the best anti-empire — warts and all — that we have,” the Villanova theologian Massimo Faggioli recently said.

That slim hope hinges on who will eventually succeed Francis. Some Catholics (including key players in the U.S. administration) harbor fever dreams of a Trumpian pope who would purge the church of liberals and gays and anyone considered heterodox.

But there are no viable papabili, or papal candidates, in the Trump mold and fewer political conservatives in the College of Cardinals — whose members elect the pope and have been largely appointed by Francis — than there were a few years ago. Mr. Trump’s bullying way of operating may even lead to a backlash among the cardinals and a papal successor less friendly to Trumpist populism than there could have been a year ago.

The outcome of the next conclave could well be considered a political test for Mr. Trump and his movement, much as the conclave of October 1978 sent a message to the Soviet Union. In that election, the cardinals chose Poland’s Karol Wojtyla, a 58-year-old mountain-hiking cardinal from behind the Iron Curtain, who became John Paul II. “How many divisions does the pope have?” Stalin once asked when warned about offending the Vatican. Stalin’s successors learned the answer the hard way: John Paul II helped bring down Communism.

Of course, the delineation between good and evil is less clear today. The Soviet successor is authoritarian Putinism, which does not fit neatly into an East-West paradigm, and Francis, in a recent message from the hospital, lamented what he termed the world’s “polycrisis.” The solution will require what he once called an “artisanal path” to a handmade peace created by the daily actions and decisions of individuals.

This is a harder route in a seemingly more complicated post-Cold War world. But as Democrats flounder about for a message to counter Mr. Trump, they could do worse than listen to a pope who has been preaching one for more than a decade



*Originally published in The New York Times on March 13th, 2025.*

*David Gibson is the director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University and has covered the Vatican as a journalist for four decades.*



# WHEN OUR SPIRITS ARE DOWN, IT IS TIME TO LEAN ON GOD'S OWN SPIRIT

BY CHRISTINE SCHENK, CSJ

I don't know about you but since Donald Trump was inaugurated, I've been having a hard time keeping my spirits up.

Every day a new "unprecedented" (I'm beginning to hate the word) executive order wreaks havoc on human rights and congressionally mandated agencies and programs that serve the common good. The president wants mass deportations of undocumented people even though most are crucial to local economies and international and U.S. laws require due process for asylum claims.

In the U.S. and abroad, Elon Musk's chainsaw is indiscriminately firing or offering buyouts to more than 100,000 civilian workers in 20 government agencies. Budgets are being slashed by 65% at the Environmental Protective Agency and 50% at the General Services Association. The latter oversees government contracts. These draconian cuts do not bode well for combating climate change or providing government oversight of companies such as those of Musk, whose businesses received nearly \$38 billion in government subsidies over the past five years. And those are just the ones in the public record.

Hardest hit (and most painful) is the dismantling of USAID, where 10,000 professionals were fired from an agency that for 65 years has provided lifesaving development assistance to some of the poorest people in the world. And this at a fraction (less than 1%) of the federal budget. Most vulnerable are seven countries in Africa where experts warn that in South Sudan more than half a million people with HIV will die unnecessarily. Abrupt cuts to children's programs including nutrition, maternal child health and disease prevention are causing millions of children to suffer and putting tens of thousands at risk of dying from starvation or easily preventable diseases.

I am shocked, angry and deeply ashamed by this illegal manipulation of my taxpayer dollars. For most of my life I have been proud to be a U.S. citizen. I was proud to support so many grassroots movements that enshrined into law our founding ideals that "all are created equal" and have the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of



*Easter Vigil at Saint Cecilia, March 2024*

happiness."Now? Not so much. Now I'm mostly depressed.

What to do? Here are some thoughts that are helping me endure and meet the present moment. Maybe they will help you, too.

It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

When invoking this mantra and discerning what is my candle to light, I notice how easy it is to forget that the general context is darkness. That's the whole point. We hate to face the darkness and therefore it is easier to simply avoid the news. Or worse we somehow normalize living in the dark.

Now is not a time to deny that it is dark. Very dark.

It is a time to lean on God's own Spirit to help us figure out which candle is ours to light. Maybe our candle is to regularly contact our local, state and federal legislators. Maybe it is to sign take action to save SNAP, Medicaid and more. Maybe our candle is to have that conversation with a friend or relative newly doubtful about Trump policies. Maybe it is doubling donations to your favorite nonprofit serving the marginalized here and abroad.

Do something. It will make you feel better.

**Your/our deepest identity is not that of a U.S. citizen.**

As much as we love our country, we are first and foremost members of the family of God. As such we have no real home here, or in any other country. For me, a silver lining of this time is that I am being pushed to my roots. Who am I really? My deepest home is within the heart of God. I can count on God to be a secure anchor and guide as I navigate this gut-wrenching, scary storm.

**Jesus lived in an oppressive political system. What did he do?**

Now is a good time to remember that throughout human history, oppressive political systems have been pretty much the norm. They were (and are) run by oligarchs, dictators and other elites more concerned about expanding their power than helping the poor and powerless. Too often religious leaders were (and are) complicit.

Jesus' proclamation of the new kin-dom of God was unsettling. He proclaimed that everyone — including the rejected and powerless — were deeply loved and respected by his abba ("dear father") God. In God's kin-dom, everyone — powerful and powerless alike — must love and respect one another.

The Elon Musks and Donald Trumps of our universe have a different agenda.

**So what did Jesus do? Well, he prayed. A lot.**

I find the Lord's prayer very comforting right now because it grounds me in the values Jesus held most dear. Jesus experienced his deepest identity flowing from the heart of his Holy abba-God. From that experience he learned the power of his abba-God to bring heaven's values to earth.

Jesus spent his earthly life helping a small band of male

and female followers have a faith like his own that God's kin-dom of love, justice and right relationship would come "on earth as in heaven." Today, despite the encroaching darkness, we are invited to a similar faith.

In his book *Jesus Before Christianity*, Albert Nolan explains: "For Jesus, the almighty power that achieves the impossible can be called faith. Faith releases within us a power that is beyond us. ... It was their faith that enabled the sick to be cured and sinners to be released from their sins. So too, it is people's faith that enables the 'kingdom' to come."

Our faith releases a power that is beyond us. It can also strengthen us for hard choices.

The Gospel for the second Sunday of Lent shares what happened when Jesus prayed (Luke 9:28-36). While all three synoptic accounts include the story of the transfiguration, only Luke's Gospel situates it while Jesus is at prayer. Peter, James and John accompany him, signaling that something major is about to happen. The story of the transfiguration comes directly after Jesus' hard teaching that he must suffer and die, and those who wish to follow him must also "lose their lives to find it" (Luke 9:24).

But for now, the disciples (and we the readers) see Jesus in other-worldly glory: "While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white." When Moses and Elijah — representing the law and the prophets — speak with Jesus about his "exodus," we begin to understand that this mystical manifestation connects the horrific ordeal facing Jesus in Jerusalem to the most powerful events in Jewish history.

Jesus' passion is of a piece with God's power to save and liberate. Death and oppression will not have the last word. Jesus will suffer and he will also be glorified.

Both Jesus and his faithful friends receive unprecedented heavenly strength to suffer for God.

Because of their faith — and their willingness to make hard choices — God will be glorified, and that glory will be theirs as well.

What hard choices are you being called to make this Lent?

What candle is yours to light?



*Originally published in the National Catholic Reporter on March 19th, 2025.*

*Sr. Christine Schenk, CSJ is a former nurse midwife to low-income families, a community organizer, a writer-researcher, and the founding director of the international church reform organization, FutureChurch. Currently she writes an award-winning column for the National Catholic Reporter and serves as a board member.*

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH:

**LIZ WALKER**



This week, we are highlighting the Reverend Liz Walker, who you may recognize as the first Black weeknight news anchor in Boston. After retiring from journalism, Walker graduated Harvard Divinity School and became an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal tradition. She was then called into the ministry at Roxbury Presbyterian Church.

In 2013, days after several daytime shootings not far from the steps of Roxbury Presbyterian Church, Rev. Liz Walker brought together Roxbury community members and non-profit leaders to address the violence. The result of these conversations led to the creation of the Cory Johnson Program for Post-Traumatic Healing, named after a Roxbury father who lost his life to gun violence. Like Cory's family, many members of the community continue to grapple with generational cycles of violence, substance abuse, and systemic racism. The program aims to facilitate holistic clinical and spiritual healing in the face of trauma stemming from these injustices.

Rev. Liz Walker's groundbreaking program, "Can We Talk...," arose from this loving and nourishing community engagement. "Can We Talk..." is a grassroots weekly program that offering safe space for adults to share their experiences with trauma, loss, and healing, incorporating music and dance from artists. Since the founding of the program, Rev. Walker has expanded her model of transformative, healing trauma support to 15 replication sites around the country.

!! I would like to encourage you and all those who dedicate their work and intelligence to informing, through communication tools that now connect our world in real time, to feel the full importance of words.

They are never just words: they are facts that shape human environments. They can connect or divide, serve the truth or use it for other ends. We must disarm words, to disarm minds and disarm the Earth. There is a great need for reflection, calmness, and an awareness of complexity. !!

*Excerpt of a March 14 letter from Pope Francis to Luciano Fontana, editor-in-chief of the Italian daily newspaper Corriere della Ser*





# LAST WEEKEND IN PICTURES



Last weekend we had the pleasure of hosting two wonderful events in our Parish Hall: *An Evening of Sacred Stories* on Friday and *Franks & Beans* on Saturday.

Here are some pictures from both events, thank you Mary Wessel and Lisa Pickering for capturing these!



# PARISH RESOURCES

## Parish Office & Mailing Address

18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA 02115

Hours | Seven days a week, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Phone | 617 536 4548; Fax | 617 536 1781

Website | [www.stceciliaboston.org](http://www.stceciliaboston.org)

## Parish Staff

**Rev. John J. Unni**, Pastor

**Rev. James Shaughnessy, SJ**, Pastoral Support

**Mark Donohoe**, Pastoral Associate

**Robert Duff**, Director of Music

**Carly-Anne Gannon**, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation

**Anastassia Kolchanov**, Digital and Print Media Coordinator

**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

**Mary Wessel**, Pastoral Associate

## Assisting Clergy

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV

Rev. John Predmore, SJ

## Music Ministry

**Tyler Cesario**, Assistant Director of Music

[tcesario@stceciliaboston.org](mailto:tcesario@stceciliaboston.org)

**Daniel Lamoureux**, Vigil Organist

**Brett Maguire**, Parish Organist

[bmaguire@stceciliaboston.org](mailto:bmaguire@stceciliaboston.org)

**Pendexter Macdonald**, Assistant Organist

## Audiovisual Support

**Maureen Deery**, Parish Photographer & Creator of Weekly Slide Show

**Geoffrey Edwards**, Livestream Videographer

## Schedule for Liturgy

**Lenten Mass & Reconciliation** | Wed 6:00 p.m. (March 12- April 16)

**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.

## 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.

## Building Accessibility

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

## Parking

There is discounted parking at The Hynes Auditorium Garage (located at 50 Dalton Street next to Bukowski's Tavern), for \$15, available on Sundays until 3:00 p.m., and \$15 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 and third weekends 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.

## Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team

The CAP Team is responsible for training all parish staff and volunteers in mandated reporting laws and the Protecting God's Children program (VIRTUS). They provide consultation and support to anyone who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Maria Roche, Letitia Howland, Erin Young, or Kathy Sanders 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.

## Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)

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. For more information, contact Mary Wessel in the Parish Office.

## Marriage

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

## Care of the Sick

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

## Order of Christian Funerals

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

## 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 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 safely 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 a ministry email address, please call our reception desk (617-536-4548) and our receptionists will be happy to share the appropriate information. Thank you for helping us maintain our parish security online.