

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



Two Women in the Garden

Edvard Munch, c. 1919

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 March 2025

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 2 MARCH 2025

PRELUDE |

Brett Maguire, *parish organist*

ENTRANCE PROCESSION | City of God

Dan Schutte

1. A-wake from your slum-ber! A - rise from your
2. We are sons of the morn-ing; we are daugh - ters of

sleep! A new day is dawn - ing
day. The One who has loved us

for all those who weep. The peo - ple in
has bright - ened our way. The Lord of all

dark - ness have seen a great light. The Lord of our
kind - ness has called us to be a light for his

long - ing has con - quered the night.
peo - ple to set their hearts free.

Refrain

Let us build the cit-y of God. May our tears be
turned in - to danc - ing! For the Lord, our light and our
love, has turned the night in - to day!

Verse 3

3. God is light; in him there is no
dark-ness. Let us walk in his light, his
chil - dren, one and all.
O com-fort my peo - ple; make gen-tle your
words. Pro - claim to my cit-y
the day of her birth.

D.S.

Verse 4

4. O cit-y of glad-ness, now lift up your
voice. Pro-claim the good tid-ings
that all may re-joice! **D.S.**

PENITENTIAL RITE

GLORIA | Mass of Joy and Peace

Tony Alonso

Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the
high-est, and on earth peace, on earth peace to
peo-ple of good will. We praise you, we
bless you, we a-dore you, we glo-ri-fy you, we
give you thanks for your great glo-ry, Lord God,
heav-en-ly King, O God, al-might-y Fa-ther.
Lord Je-sus Christ, On-ly Be-got-ten Son,

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Fa - ther, you
 take a-way the sins of the world, have mer - cy on us;
 you take a-way the sins of the world re -
 ceive our prayer; you are seat - ed at the
 right hand of the Fa - ther have mer - cy on us.
 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One,
 you a - lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the
 Most High, Je - sus Christ,
 with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo-ry of God the
 Fa - ther. A - men. A - men.

COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Sirach 27: 4-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Ps. 92: Lord, It is Good

Tony Alonso



It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to make music to your name,
O Most High,
to proclaim your loving mercy in the
morning,
and your truth in the watches of
the night. R.

The just one will flourish like the
palm tree,
and grow like a Lebanon cedar.

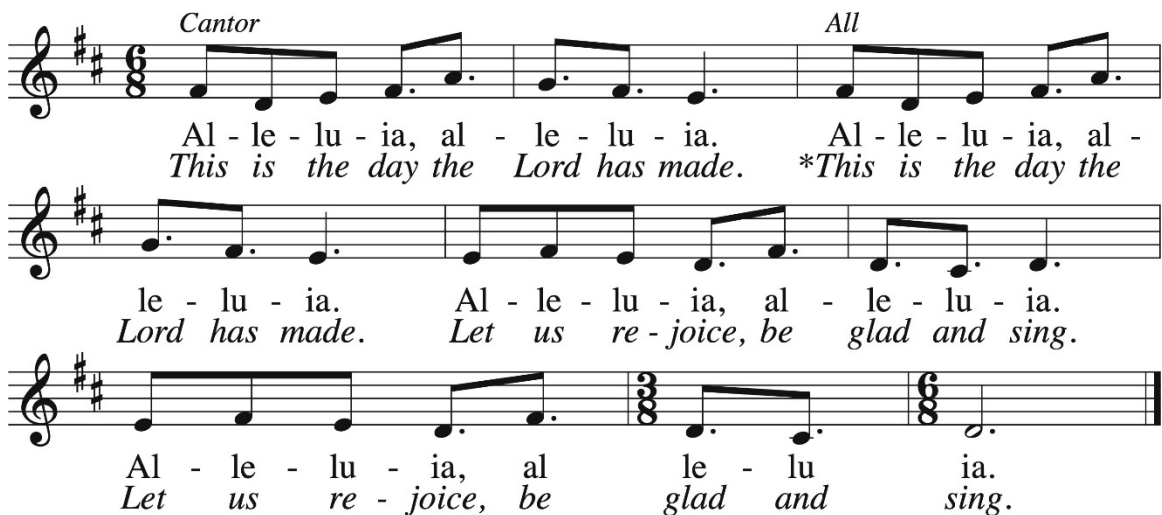
Planted in the house of the LORD,
they will flourish in the courts of
our God. R.

They still bear fruit when they are old,
still full of sap, still green,
to proclaim that the LORD is upright.
In him, my rock, there is no
wrong. R.

SECOND READING | 1 Corinthians 15: 54-58

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Ruah Mass of the Breath of God

Ian Callahan



GOSPEL | Luke 6: 39-45

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!

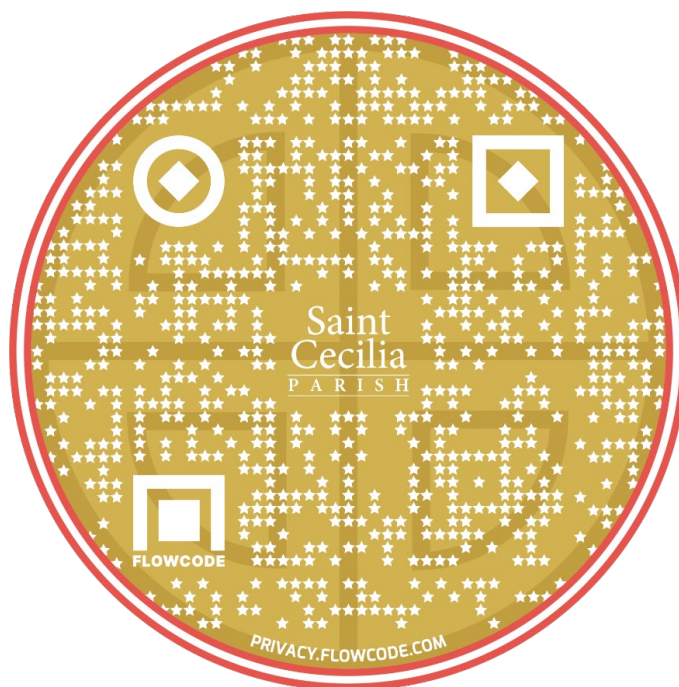
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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.

You can also mail a check to:

Saint Cecilia Parish
18 Belvidere Street
Boston, MA 02115



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS | O Breath on Me, O Breath of God

ST. COLUMBA



1. O breathe on me, O Breath of God, Fill
2. O breathe on me, O Breath of God, Un -
3. O breathe on me, O Breath of God, My -
4. O breathe on me, O Breath of God, So



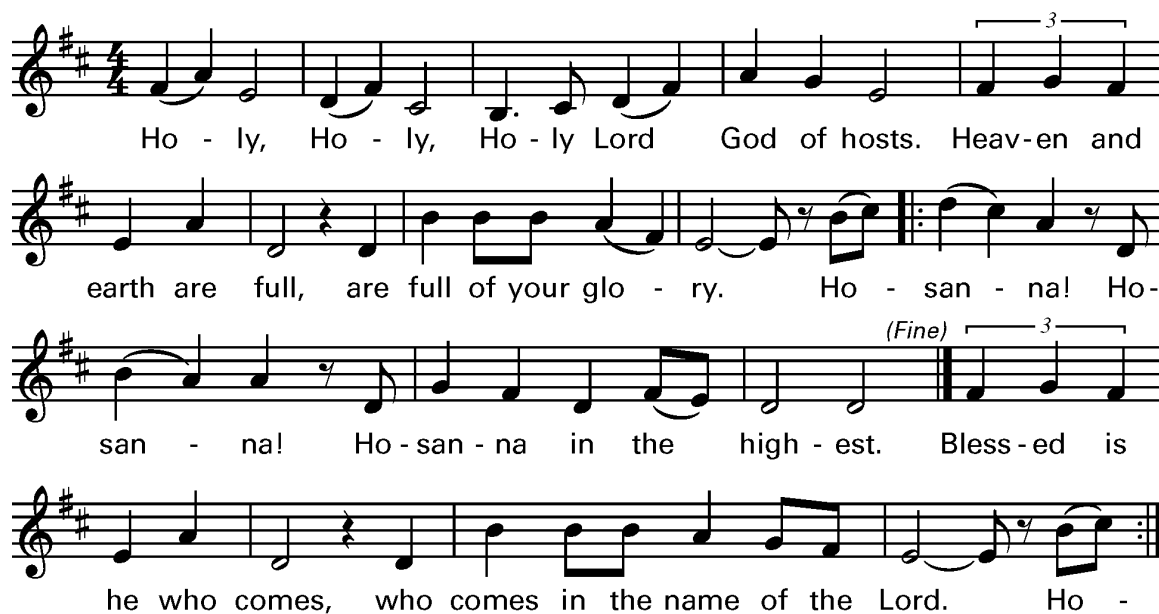
me with life a - new, That I may love the
til my heart is pure; Un - til my will is
will to yours in - cline, Un - til this self - ish
shall I nev - er die, But live with you the



things you love And do what you would do.
one with yours, To do and to en - dure.
part of me Glows with your fire di - vine.
per - fect life Of your e - ter - ni - ty.

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.



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

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte



We pro-claim your Death, O Lord, and pro-fess your
 A-nun - cia - mos tu muer - te, pro-cla - ma - mos tu
 Res - ur - rec - tion un - til you come a - gain.
 re - su-rrec-ción. ¡Ven, Se - ñor Je - sús!

AMEN | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte



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

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 the Savior

Dan Schutte

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world, have mer-cy on us. world, grant us peace.

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.



1. My life flows on in end-less song. A -
 2. Through all the tu - mult and the strife I
 3. What though my joys and com-fort die? The
 4. The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, A



bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion I hear the clear though
 hear that mu - sic ring - ing. It finds an ech - o
 Lord my sav - ior liv - eth. What though the dark - ness
 foun - tain ev - er spring-ing! All things are mine since



far - off hymn That hails a new cre - a - tion.
 in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?
 gath - er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
 I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?



No storm can shake my in-most calm While to that Rock I'm



cling - ing. Since Christ is Lord of heav-en and earth,



How can I keep from sing - ing?

*Panis angelicus
Fit panis hominum
Dat panis coelicus
Figuris terminum
O res mirabilis
Manducat dominum
Pauper, pauper
Servus et humilis*

May the Bread of Angels
Become bread for mankind;
The Bread of Heaven puts
All foreshadowings to an end;
Oh, thing miraculous!
The body of the Lord will nourish
the poor, the poor,
the servile, and the humble.

CONCLUDING RITES

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



1. Come to me, all you wea - ry, with your bur - dens and
 2. Though we walk through the dark - ness, e - vil we do not
 3. We de - pend on God's mer - cy, mer - cy which nev - er
 4. Do not fear death's do - min - ion, look be - yond earth and
 5. At the door there to greet us, mar - tyrs, an - gels, and



pain. Take my yoke on your shoul - ders and
 fear. You are walk - ing be - side us with your
 fades. We re - mem - ber our cov - e - nant and the
 grave. See the bright - ness of Je - sus shin - ing
 saints, And our fam - 'ly and loved ones, ev - 'ry -



learn from me: I am gen - tle and hum - ble,
 rod and your staff. On - ly good - ness and kind - ness
 prom - ise Je - sus made: If we die with Christ Je - sus,
 out to light our way. Lov - ing Fa - ther and Spir - it,
 one freed from their chains. We shall feel their ac - cep - tance,



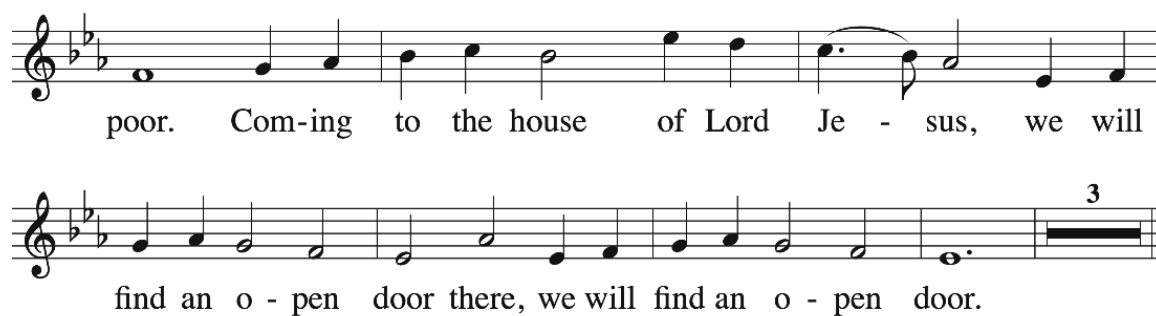
and your soul will find rest, For my yoke is
 fol - low us all our lives. We shall dwell in the
 we shall live with him, And if we are
 lov - ing Je - sus the Son, All God's peo - ple to -
 and the joy of new life. We shall join in the



eas - y and my bur - den is light.
 Lord's house for so man - y years to come!
 faith - ful, we shall reign with him!
 geth - er, we shall live on as one!
 gath - er - ing, re - u - nit - ed in God's love!



We shall rise a - gain on the last day with the faith - ful, rich and



POSTLUDE |

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.

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

WELCOME!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS



MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, March 1 | 5:00 p.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Emily Bogert, lector

Sunday, March 2 | 8:00 a.m.

Rev. John Predmore, SJ, celebrant
Bobbi Moran, lector

Sunday, March 2 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Tom Skorupa, Kate McGillicuddy, Tim McGillicuddy, lectors

Sunday, March 2 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Moir Macdonald, Karen McMenamy, Eileen Maguire, lectors

Sunday, March 2 | 6:00 p.m.

Rev. Jay Woods, OFM, celebrant
Maggie Giles, lector

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Sunday, March 2 | 9:30 a.m.

Robert E. Sullivan, *2nd Anniversary*
Jim Nance, *6th Anniversary*
Carol Howland, *12th Anniversary*
Jane Sullivan, *Memorial*
Jeff Flagg, *Memorial*
Joe Coppola, *Memorial*

Thursday, March 6 | 8:00 a.m.

Bob McBride, *Memorial*

TODAY'S READINGS

Sirach 27:4-7
1 Corinthians 15:54-58
Luke 6:39-45

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Deuteronomy 26:4-10
Romans 10:8-13
Luke 4:1-13



PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Deceased

Pray for the eternal repose of **Liam F. “Billy” Kennedy** who died on February 5. Liam was a member of the Jesuit Urban Center before moving to Clearwater, Florida. A liturgy in his memory will be celebrated at Saint Cecilia at a date to be determined. For more information, please call Father Shaughnessy at the parish number. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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, Kevin J. Owens, and Jason Reich.**

Welcome to Saint Cecilia!

We are pleased to welcome the following new registrants: **Cindy Mader** of Ada, MI, **Kate and Brian Duffey** of Scituate, **Gina Sullivan** of Waltham, **VanNashlee Ya** of Cambridge, and **Mary Brennan** and **Anna and Bret Scholtes** of Boston. If you have not previously registered, you can do so online at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Pray for the Holy Father

We continue to pray for Pope Francis, who remains in critical condition. May his strength be renewed, and may he feel the love and support of the worldwide community during this challenging time. If it is God’s will to call the Holy Father to himself, may his passing into new life be painless and peaceful.

Ash Wednesday Special Collection

This Ash Wednesday, a special collection for Catholic Charities Boston will be taken up. Supporting nearly 100,000 people across the Archdiocese of Boston, Catholic Charities is a safety net providing food, shelter, advocacy, and emergency resources to our most vulnerable community members in need. The charity strives to empower individuals and families to find long-term economic stability through education, childcare, and job training programs. Any amount helps Catholic Charities respond to urgent community needs and emergencies. To donate, please visit: www.osvhub.com/stceciliaboston/giving/funds/ash-wednesday-2025.

Catholic Appeal 2025

Once a year, Catholics in the Archdiocese are asked to join together to support their parish and the greater Church by contributing to the Catholic Appeal. The Appeal is a primary means by which we enfold our siblings into Christ’s circle of

care. We hope you can help us launch our parish campaign! To make an online donation, visit bostoncatholicappeal.org.

Ash Wednesday

The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, March 5th and Mass will be celebrated at 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. These are the only times ashes will be distributed at Saint Cecilia.

Ramadan Mubarak!

We wish our Muslim brothers and sisters a happy Ramadan—the commemoration of God’s revelation of the first chapters of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad over 1,400 years ago. Like Easter and Passover, the dates of Ramadan are set by the lunar calendar. This year Ramadan begins on the evening of Friday, February 28 and concludes on the evening of Saturday, March 29. Nearly two billion Muslims around the world will observe this holy month as a time to grow closer to God, to spend time with one’s family, and to give to those in need. Following dawn-to-sunset fasting and prayer, Muslims often gather in the evenings in mosques, homes, restaurants, and elsewhere, to break their fast together. We pray that our Muslim friends and neighbors are showered with God’s mercy and grace this Ramadan and are filled with blessings, forgiveness, and peace.

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NIGHT OF WORSHIP

THIS TUESDAY, MARCH 4 | 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.



FAR FLUNG FLOCK COFFEE HOUR

SUNDAY, MARCH 2 | 4:00 P.M. EST

We are happy to announce that our March 2 Far-Flung Flock coffee hour guest will be Mary Wessel, one of Saint Cecilia's newest staff members. Mary joined the staff as a pastoral associate on December 1, overseeing ministries, CARES outreach, and OCIA. With experience in pastoral ministry, grief education, and chaplaincy, Mary hopes to build upon the incredible foundation of outreach ministry, accompaniment, and pastoral care that exists at Saint Cecilia. In all endeavors, Mary seeks to create sacred spaces where faith, healing, and love converge. Join us as we explore what that looks like for the Far-Flung Flock.

To register for the FFF email list, please use this link:

bit.ly/45pDVRa.



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. We will be offering a retreat at Saint Cecilia on Saturday, May 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for adults who wish to prepare for the sacrament of confirmation. Participants will be confirmed at Saint Cecilia on Pentecost Sunday, June 8 at 3:00 p.m. If you would like more information or would like to register for this retreat, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

PIZZA THIS SUNDAY

Join us this Sunday after the 6pm Mass for some pizza and fellowship in the Parish Hall. All are welcome to join!



SIT & KNIT

SUNDAY, MARCH 2 | 9:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Please stop by the table in the Cafe and meet some of Knitting and Crochet Ministry Members.

Love to knit or crochet? Our warm and welcoming group meets monthly to enjoy fellowship while creating handmade items for those in need. From prayer shawls and baby blankets to hats, mittens, and scarves, our knitted gifts have brought comfort to communities at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston Medical Center's NICU, Women's Lunch Place, and Catholic Charities.

Join us and be part of something meaningful—one stitch at a time! For more information, please contact reception.

SAVE THE DATE: AN EVENING OF SACRED STORIES

MARCH 14 | 6:30 - 9:00 P.M.

The Greater Boston LGBTQIA Catholic Collective is hosting an event at Saint Cecilia on Friday, March 14 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. The seven parishes and churches of the Collective will come together to celebrate our diversity, equity, and inclusion through storytelling, music, and art. Refreshments will be served and we look forward to building our community through some social time at this event. All are welcome and there is no charge to attend. For more information about the Collective, please see the [Rainbow Ministry's Facebook Page](#).

NEW BEREAVEMENT GROUP BEGINS MARCH 12TH

We are pleased to announce our Lenten Bereavement Group, a compassionate and faith-centered space for those grieving from loss. Grounded in the teachings of Christ, this six-week support group offers a community where individuals can share their stories, find solace, and experience healing through prayer, Scripture, and loving support.

Based on feedback to date, we are offering two sessions: Wednesdays 6 PM via Zoom - begins March 12th
Sundays 1 PM in person - begins March 16th

Registration is encouraged before Thursday, March 6th to get materials in time for the first session.

Please [register here](#).

YOUNG FAMILIES PRAY AND PLAY

A PARISH GROUP FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Do you have a young child (or children) who enjoy playgrounds? If so, we invite you to join our new group of Saint Cecilia Young Families for Pray and Play. These outings are perfect for children who enjoy a good playground but are also intended for parents who want to upgrade their playground chitchat. Beginning on March 8, the group will meet monthly at a variety of playgrounds in Boston and the surrounding suburbs. The two-hour gatherings will include playground time, snacks, and prayerful discussion for parents. If you're interested, please register for the dates that you plan to attend and you will receive updates and information about the location. Most children will be between the

ages of 2 and 6, but there are no strict age limits. Here are the first three Pray & Play sessions:

March 8 | 10-12 p.m. | Somerville

April 12 | 3-5 p.m. | Newton/Watertown

May 10 | 3-5 p.m. | South Boston

To stay updated on the latest SCYF news and updates, please register your email address [here](#).

LAUDATO SI' GOALS: ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

Each month, Saint Cecilia will focus on a different goal from the Laudato Si' Action Platform as part of the effort to create a Parish Climate Action Plan.

This month we are focusing on the goal of ecological spirituality, which springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to "discover God in all things", both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities. Actions could include promoting creation-based liturgical celebrations, developing ecological catechesis, retreats and formation programmes, etc.



The Saint Cecilia Climate Justice group will meet on Sunday, March 2, at 1:00 p.m. in Classroom 1. All are welcome to attend!

HELP CATHOLIC CHARITIES

NEWLY-ARRIVED REFUGEES NEED OUR SUPPORT

For the past eight years, Saint Cecilia has provided ongoing support to Catholic Charities programs that provide aid to refugees. We have offered to provide refugee families with supermarket and retail gift cards so that they will have food and household items while their applications for asylum are processed. If you are able to purchase one or more gift cards (Visa, Target, Market Basket, Stop & Shop, and Shaw's/Star Market—no more than \$25 per card, please—please either drop them in the offertory basket at Mass or mail them to:

Mark Lippolt
Saint Cecilia Parish
18 Belvidere Street
Boston, MA 02115

COMING UP AT SAINT CECILIA

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 5

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH

Senior's Group | 10am | Parish Hall

Wisdom Group | 7:30pm via Zoom

SUNDAY, MARCH 2ND

Wisdom Group | 8:30am via Zoom

Sit & Knit | 9:30am - 12pm | Parish Hall

Climate Justice Meeting | 1pm | Classroom 1

SCYA Contemplative Prayer | 2pm | Family Flex

FFF Coffee Hour | 4pm via Zoom

MONDAY, MARCH 3RD

Knitting Ministry Meeting | 4:30pm via Zoom

SCYA Women's Group | 7:30pm via Zoom

TUESDAY, MARCH 4TH

SCYA Holy Hour | 6pm | Sanctuary

RCIA | 6:30pm | Parish Hall

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5TH

SCYA Men's Group | 7:30am via Zoom

Ash Wednesday Mass | 8am + 6pm

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.

This February, in honor of Saint Valentine's Day, 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 [here](#).

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.

LENT APROACHETH!



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

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

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

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

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

ASH WEDNESDAY

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

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

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

Holy Thursday. All of the faithful and the catechumens are encouraged to undertake the practice of these three Lenten practices. Fasting and abstinence, along with prayer and almsgiving, are the foundations of a good and holy Lent.



What does it mean to fast?

To fast is to do without food. The purpose of fasting is to experience the effects of not eating. It also serves as a penance or sacrifice—with the goal of strengthening us. When we don't eat, for even a little while, we become hungry. When we are aware of our hunger, we have a heightened sense of awareness. If, when we eat too much, we have a sluggish feeling, when we fast, we have a feeling of alertness. Fasting is a wonderful exercise whenever we want to sincerely ask for an important grace from God. It is not that our fasting "earns" God's attention, but by fasting, we clarify our thinking and our feeling. It is purifying and prepares us to pray more deeply.

When do I fast?

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

What does it mean to abstain?

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

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

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

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.

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 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/.



THE PROBLEM WITH JD VANCE'S THEOLOGY OF MASS DEPORTATION

BY GREGORY J. BOYLE, SJ



Deportation protest in Dallas, Texas on February 2, 2025.

mikhail.kelner | flickr.com | Wikicommons

A homie ended an email to me recently saying, “Today, I will surrender to God’s arms, then choose to be those arms.” Mystic and translator of mystics Mirabai Starr states plainly that “once you know the God of love, you fire all the other gods.” The God of love is the one who loves without measure and without regret. The one with wide-open arms, hoping we’ll love as we are loved.

I won’t pretend to a particularly deep understanding of St. Augustine’s notion of *ordo amoris* — about which Vice President JD Vance has encouraged us all “to google” — or of St. Thomas Aquinas’ further refinement of ordered, hierarchical love in his “*Summa Theologica*.”

Vance’s analysis is that we must prioritize. You love God first, of course, then “you love your family and then you love your neighbor, and then you love your community, and then you love your fellow citizens in your own country, and then after, you can focus and prioritize the rest of the world,” he told an interviewer.

I suspect we need to fire the god who thinks there isn’t enough love to go around.

Pope Francis weighed in a letter to U.S. bishops that rebuked the Trump administration’s plan for mass deportations of migrants. He posited that “the true *ordo amoris* that must be promoted is that which we discover ... by meditating on the love that builds a

fraternity open to all, without exception.”

A puny, self-absorbed, projection-of-ourselves God wants to be loved. But the God we actually have is self-effacing, spacious, wildly expansive and generous with love. In fact, God’s dream-come-true is the “fraternity open to all.”

Loving is our home. Once we discover that, we’re never homesick. Loving is where flourishing joy is located. It can’t be depleted. Indeed, “love never fails” (1 Corinthians: 13) and anyway, it is the thing that makes progress possible.

“Open arms” does not mean “open borders.” (Perhaps I’ve missed it, but I’ve never heard anyone advocate for open borders, for all the times the accusation has been leveled.) The pope in his letter merely asserted that there was enough love to protect the dignity of migrants, to protect our communities and to safeguard the truth that we belong to each other.

The hope is that we align our hearts to the God of love and then become the generosity of God in our world. An ordered, hierarchical love, in contrast, is fearful that we’ll run out of love. It betrays a “too much tribe, not enough village” disposition that shrinks our ability to be as magnanimous as our open-armed God is. Fear will do that.

What Vance, and perhaps even Augustine and Aquinas, couldn’t see is the “God who is always greater,” as St. Ignatius tells us. Always greater than our hierarchical, ordered notions.

It would seem that Jesus took four things seriously: inclusion, non-violence, unconditional loving-kindness and compassionate acceptance. This tracks with being God’s arms in the world.

The God of love wants us to find our way to the margins, knowing that if we do, the margins get erased. Rather than limiting our love to a priority list, we should stand with the poor, the powerless and the voiceless, with those whose dignity has been denied and those whose burdens are more than they can bear. Rather than depletion, we find fullness among the easily despised and readily left out. Our wholeness increases when we accompany the demonized and the disposable, so that the demonizing ends and we stop throwing people away.

For 40 years, I’ve accompanied gang members as they seek to re-imagine their lives, leave behind desperate violence and embrace God’s hope for them. At Homeboy Industries we embrace two fundamental principles: Everyone is unshakably good; no exceptions. We belong to each other; no exceptions.

These principles don’t allow us to limit ourselves to a “first we love here, then we love there” checklist. We cherish as God cherishes. Cherishing is love with its sleeves rolled up. It enhances our ability to conceive of a humane system of immigration, rather than hinders it. It keeps millions of people from dying after the United States Agency for International Development funding stops. It even focuses us to tend to the environment, address mass incarceration and care for those least able to care for themselves.

Let’s fire the gods who keep us from discovering our true selves in loving. Like the homie who chooses to be the arms of God, we can find flourishing joy in welcoming the unwelcomed. We won’t ever be homesick.



Rev. Gregory J. Boyle, SJ is the founder of Homeboy Industries in L.A. His latest book is “Cherished Belonging: The Healing Power of Love in Divided Times.”

Originally published in the Los Angeles Times on February 19, 2025.



RAMADAN LETTER TO MY MUSLIM SISTERS AND BROTHERS

BY JOSEPH VICTOR EDWIN, SJ



People breaking fast together at a public iftar in Iran on May 8th, 2019.

Dear Muslim sisters and brothers,

Assalam Aleikum!

In the month of March this year we will celebrate the advent of the month of Ramadan. I consciously use the word 'celebrate', because I have personally experienced and seen Muslim friends-sisters and brothers-really looking forward to the fasting month of Ramadan.

Let me begin with an anecdote from my days in Aligarh. On the day before the advent of the month of Ramadan in the year 2003, a Muslim journalist friend of mine, Shafi, and I went for an evening stroll. There was a lot of expectation in the air. There were people in the streets and on rooftops trying to spot the crescent moon, waiting for the announcement of the commencement of the month of Ramadan. The thought came to my mind how intently these people were looking forward to seeing a sign of God-the crescent moon. It was really beautiful! I felt very happy for that great awareness-looking for a sign of God in Nature.

God is the Creator of all things, and, using the words

of Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Jesuit poet, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God". God's signs are everywhere. One needs to pay attention to them to realise their significance.

I heard an announcement saying that the crescent moon had been sighted. Shafi and I looked in the direction of the moon. An elderly gentleman was before us. Two little children-a boy and a girl-were holding his hands. They were perhaps his grandchildren. The gentleman raised his hands in prayer. He said something, facing the crescent moon. I was moved to see the two little children also raise their hands in prayer. How wonderful it was that this grandfather was teaching, through his own example, these two little children to recognise a sign of God! Even these little children were aware of God! I felt very happy for that.

Dear friends, the Holy Quran says that fasting is prescribed for you. It is a means for developing God-consciousness. This is something very attractive for me. The month of Ramadan is about focussing on God-consciousness. To experience a deep experience of God-consciousness, fasting, prayer and charity are a means. They help us in awareness of the presence of God in the world.

So, God-consciousness is something that the Muslim tradition teaches me, including through the significance of the month of Ramadan in the lives of Muslims. The way Muslim brothers and sisters celebrate the month of Ramadan helps me grow in God-consciousness as a Christian.

Dear sisters and brothers, as a student of Christian-Muslim relations I have asked a number of Muslim sisters and brothers, 'Why do you fast?' Many of you have said that fasting is for purification, fasting is to please God, fasting is an act of obedience to God. Everything that you have said I know you are saying it from your own experience, because I know my Muslim friends and their deep faith in God and their commitment to God. For me, this is a very beautiful experience. What you have said is from the heart of your experience. It inspires me to become God-oriented in my own life. It is an invitation to lead a life that is based on God-consciousness.

As a Christian, something else strikes me very much. The Bible says, in the Gospel of Matthew (6:17-18):

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Dear friends, many years ago, I was a student at the Department of Islamic Studies at the Aligarh Muslim University. There was a professor in the Department who was a wonderful teacher and a very pious person. During the month of Ramadan I would notice that he would be extra careful to look fresh, with oiled and neatly-combed hair and well-ironed clothes. In the other months, he would sit and teach, while in the month of Ramadan he would teach while standing. He would not show any signs of tiredness on account of fasting. He would be fully ready to spend enough time especially with me to explain things. And he would never make any reference to his tiredness or about the time the fast would end. On some occasions I would say to him, 'You must be tired, Sir', but he would reply, 'Victor, it is important that I should explain things to you.'

How beautiful is the message of the Gospel (referred to above) in a way it comes to me through the life of a Muslim! I was able to see the meaning and depth of those Bible verses through my Muslim professor. This was something really amazing, a beautiful experience for me.

While I was a teacher at St. Joseph's School in Baramulla, there would be young Muslim boys telling me, 'Father, this year I am going to start fasting!'. They would say this with great joy. We think fasting must be something very tiring, very difficult. But never in my experience did I find my Muslim friends say that fasting in the month of Ramadan is difficult. They have always looked forward to the month with joy. This joy is on account of fasting being ordained by God in the Quran.

At the same time, I also want to share with you some anxiety that I have experienced on occasion. A few friends have a slightly narrow way of seeing religion. For instance, in some Muslim-majority countries, there may be some unreasonable restrictions on people of other faiths during the month of Ramadan. And so on. But I feel such things have nothing to do with Islam, for the Quran (2:256) says, 'There shall be no compulsion in religion'. In line with this, one could say that pressurising others is not in the spirit of Islam.

Dear sisters and brothers, I pray with you as a Christian brother that this month of Ramadan be a blessing for all of us who desire to grow in God-consciousness, all of us who thirst for God in their lives. May all of us put our heart and soul, hands and feet, together and worship the One God according to our faith traditions. And together as brothers and sisters may we all spread peace, joy and harmony.

Ameen! Amen!

May God bless us all.

Khuda Hafiz,

Your brother,
Joseph Victor Edwin, SJ



Father Joseph Victor Edwin is a Jesuit priest who teaches Christian -Muslim Relations at Vidyajyoti, a Catholic center for higher theological learning in Delhi. He is deeply engaged in seeking to promote understanding and goodwill between Christians and Muslims. He has a PhD in Islamic Studies from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, and has written widely on issues related to interfaith relations.

Originally published in Independent Catholic News on April 11th, 2021. Changes made to reflect the timing of Ramadan in 2025.

TRUMP, MUSK AND VANCE TARGET THE MOST VULNERABLE AND ATTACK CATHOLIC MINISTRIES —AND IT'S WORKING

BY JOHN CARR

After only a month in office, the Trump Administration is targeting the programs that serve the most vulnerable people in our nation and world. This agenda is led by President Trump, carried out by Elon Musk and defended by Vice President JD Vance. They also have a strategy of seeking to intimidate and undermine Catholic leaders and ministries that serve the poor and vulnerable with attacks, falsehoods and the cutting-off of resources. It seems to be working.

I base these judgments on decades of work at the intersection of faith, Catholic social teaching and national public policy. The attacks on the resources and structures that serve the poor and on the religious institutions that serve the most vulnerable are unprecedented in their scale, pace and human impact. After many years at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and advocacy with both Democratic and Republican administrations, I have never seen such reckless actions and sweeping proposals that threaten the lives and dignity of so many people.

Targeting the poor

It is no accident that one of the administration's first efforts to defund and destroy government structures and capacity has been the United States Agency for International Development, which serves the poorest people in the poorest parts of the world with food, medicine, development assistance and disaster relief.

Any agency and all programs can be improved and reformed, and no doubt there have been some unwise and ineffective investments within U.S.A.I.D. But the administration's actions are not about



A Haitian worker moves cooking oil supplied by USAID at Port-au-Prince international airport on September 16, 2008.

reform or improvement; they are focused on destroying our nation's commitment and capacity to help those who are hungry, sick and desperately poor around the world. Mr. Musk, who has played a primary role in President Trump's attack on government agencies, posted on X with pride that "we spent the weekend feeding USAID into the wood chipper." Mr.

U.S. Navy Photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist James G. Pinsky/Released | Wikimedia

Trump wrote “CLOSE IT DOWN” on his social media site Truth Social.

They are not assessing programs for their value and impact but instead ending U.S.A.I.D. completely, terminating many staff and requiring them to immediately leave their work abroad. The Trump administration has promised waivers for vital lifesaving programs, but few have yet been approved, endangering the resources and staff that make those programs possible. These reckless actions will destroy millions of lives and damage U.S. security and the country’s standing in the world.

“Foreign aid” has never been politically popular, in part because many believe it is more than 20 percent of the federal budget; it actually makes up less than 1 percent. At the same time, global anti-hunger programs, H.I.V.-AIDS efforts, and development assistance have had significant bipartisan ownership and support. The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Pepfar) was launched by President George W. Bush; and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Senator Lindsey Graham and other Republican leaders have actively supported development assistance in the past.

At home as well, Republicans in the Trump administration and Congress have targeted programs that serve the poorest children and families. The leading G.O.P. budget proposal in Congress would drastically cut programs that feed the hungry and provide health care to the sick; at the same time, they are pushing for massive tax cuts that will primarily benefit the wealthy and corporations. Under the current G.O.P. proposal, food stamps (now called SNAP) and Medicaid, which serve families and the elderly with the least resources, would be cut by hundreds of billions to pay for such tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations, as well as for increases in defense spending and immigration enforcement. But House Speaker Mike Johnson said in early January that programs that serve seniors, like Social Security and Medicare, “have to be preserved.” Why? Perhaps because older Americans have political power; poor kids and families do not.

These early actions of the Trump presidency and the plans of Republican leadership in Congress have one common element: They target the programs that serve those who are poor, sick or vulnerable at home and abroad.

Attacks on Catholic ministries

This targeting of the most vulnerable contradicts

fundamental biblical values and Catholic social teaching. When the Catholic bishops and other religious voices questioned and resisted these policies, the administration did not explain or try to persuade; instead, they attacked. When the U.S.C.C.B. released a respectful statement identifying areas of agreement and disagreement with the Trump administration’s policies and priorities, Vice President Vance went on the attack specifically and publicly. He said on CBS that the U.S. church served refugees for profit, and that the U.S. bishops were worried about their “bottom line” and were indifferent to “children who have been sex trafficked.”

These attacks are outrageous and false. The U.S.C.C.B., Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities do not profit from federal programs that help them serve those who are hungry, sick and desperately poor. Public information and audits make clear that providing these services costs more than the government pays. These partnerships are a wise investment for the government, because religious groups carry out these programs to reduce hunger, combat disease and promote development with greater compassion, effectiveness and efficiency than government acting alone.

I have been involved in these issues long enough to remember when conservatives and Republicans fought for the rights of religious groups to participate in federal programs to help those in greatest need without violating their religious principles. I have seen the lifesaving work of C.R.S. around the world and the lifegiving care of our Catholic Charities in our own land. These efforts are expressions of our faith and essential contributions to the common good. They should be sources of pride for our church and nation, not targets for misguided attacks.

Recently, Mr. Vance cited a traditional moral principle of *ordo amoris* to suggest that a commitment to protect the lives and dignity of immigrants and the poor and vulnerable violates a more compelling call to love our own families, neighbors and country. As others have made clear, this is a false choice and misapplication of the principle. It also distorts the Gospel and Catholic teaching on solidarity and subsidiarity. In the Gospel of Luke, after the Beatitudes, when Jesus said blessed are those who are “poor” and “hungry,” he warned: “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same” (Lk 6: 32-33).

The vice president's theological defense of the Trump administration's attacks on the church and Catholic ministries, and its policies that target the most vulnerable, seem designed to intimidate Catholic leaders and to divide the Catholic community rather than to advance a dialogue about the demands of our faith and call to serve "the least among us."

Catholic responses

I fear that these attacks and diversions may be working. While many individual bishops have spoken up, the public response thus far from the U.S.C.C.B. to these attacks and the efforts to target the most vulnerable at home and abroad seems to be muted. The bishops have issued a series of specific formal statements commending the Trump administration for its executive orders and actions on gender, abortion and school choice. There have not been similar, specific statements on administration actions halting and cutting international food, health and development assistance programs.

The U.S.C.C.B. has now sued the Trump administration, calling the abrupt halt to funding of refugee programs unlawful and harmful to refugees and to the church's resettlement programs. The lawsuit also challenges the government's failure to pay for services that the church has already provided to refugees in partnership with the U.S. government, which has already led to substantial layoffs.

The responses of the bishops to Mr. Vance's allegations and other attacks have consisted of generally brief and general descriptions of the church's work, posted without context or even mentioning who wrote them. They often lack a strong public defense of the church's ministries. Surprisingly, there has been little response from U.S.C.C.B. leadership to Vice President Vance's direct attacks on the bishops or his efforts to instruct Catholics on our moral obligations, in contrast to specific statements in the past correcting President Biden and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi on abortion and related issues.

I also fear that the administration is dividing the Catholic community. The outrageous and false claims that Catholic ministries serve people in need for financial reasons and the refugee resettlement programs contribute to human trafficking have been repeated and amplified online by allies of the administration in the Catholic community and beyond.

In this context, Pope Francis wrote an extraordinary

public letter to the U.S. bishops. Offering encouragement for their efforts and emphasizing key elements of Catholic teaching that apply in this time of "crisis," he recognized "the right of a nation to defend itself and keep communities safe." He also warned that "what is built on the basis of force, and not on the truth about the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly." The pope insisted, "The true common good is promoted when society and government, with creativity and strict respect for the rights of all...welcomes, protects, promotes and integrates the most fragile, unprotected and vulnerable."

In the letter, Pope Francis did what the bishops' conference has not done, which is to clarify the demands of Christian love and to challenge the misunderstanding of *ordo amoris* offered by Mr. Vance:

"Christian love is not a concentric expansion of interests that little by little extend to other persons and groups.... The true *ordo amoris* that must be promoted is that which we discover by meditating constantly on the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (cf. Lk 10:25-37), that is, by meditating on the love that builds a fraternity open to all, without exception. But worrying about personal, community or national identity, apart from these considerations, easily introduces an ideological criterion that distorts social life and imposes the will of the strongest as the criterion of truth."

Pope Francis has stepped up to articulate clearly traditional Catholic teaching on the dignity of migrants and refugees and the responsibilities of both Christians and governments. He has directly challenged attempts to introduce theological rationalizations to justify policies and actions that violate that teaching. He has shown faithful, principled and strong leadership when others have sometimes been silent or reticent.

Ways forward

When the lives and dignity of the "least of these" are threatened at home and around the world, it is essential for Catholic leaders and citizens to actively defend and support our nation's efforts to help those in greatest need and contribute to a more compassionate, just, safe and peaceful world. We can reform and renew; we should root out waste or inappropriate spending, but we should not undermine or destroy the structures that help our nation feed the hungry, help the sick and give hope to the poorest people on earth.

When leaders seek massive cuts in resources for nutrition and health care for poor families to fund sweeping tax cuts, it is our responsibility to call on our leaders in the administration and in Congress, in both parties, to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first in budget choices and national priorities. We ought to reach out to our representatives to challenge these actions and proposals.

President Trump pledged many things in his campaign, but taking nutrition assistance and health care from those in need was not what he campaigned on or what people voted for. Whatever their partisan or ideological agendas, I doubt many members of the House and Senate came to Washington to take food from hungry children or health care from their families.

When the church and its charitable ministries are under attack, it is essential for Catholics to come together across political, ideological and theological lines to defend and stand in solidarity with our ministries that bring food, health care and hope to our sisters and brothers here in our nation and around the world. This is Gospel work and reflects the best of our national values.

This is a time for all of us to keep in mind that Jesus explicitly taught that our salvation depended on our response to the hungry, the thirsty, the sick and the stranger (Mt 25), and that in the words of President John F. Kennedy, who created U.S.A.I.D., "here on earth God's work must truly be our own."



John Carr is the founder of the Initiative on Catholic Social Teaching and Public Life at Georgetown University. He previously served as director of the U.S.C.C.B. Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development and as chair of the board of Bread for the World. He is also a leader of the Circle of Protection, a Christian voice for the poor and vulnerable people in national budget debates.

Originally published in America Magazine on February 19, 2025.



SISTER THEA BOWMAN

"What does it mean to be Black and Catholic? It means that I came to my church fully functioning. That doesn't frighten you, does it? I came to my church fully functioning. I bring myself, my black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become, I bring my whole history, my traditions, my experience, my culture, my African American song and dance and gesture and movement and teaching and preaching and healing and responsibility as a gift to the Church."

This quote comes from Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA's address to the American Bishops on June 17th, 1989. Blessed with extraordinary talent and spirit, Sister Thea committed her life to promoting cultural awareness and racial harmony. She spread the joy of the Gospel through her teaching, writing, and music.

During this unprecedented address, Sister Thea educated the bishops on African-American history and spirituality. She urged the bishops to continue focusing on evangelizing the African-American community by promoting the inclusivity of African Americans within Catholic leadership and in Catholic Schools. She ended her address by inviting the bishops to come together and sing with her, "We Shall Overcome," prompting tears and deafening applause.

If you are curious to hear the full address, head to Saint Cecilia's Linktree on Instagram. We have also linked a documentary about Sister Thea Bowman's work entitled, "Going Home Like a Shooting Star: Thea Bowman's Journey to Sainthood."

ASH WEDNESDAY 2024 IN PHOTOS

Here are some parting photos from Ash Wednesday last year, thank you to Maureen Deery for capturing these!



This year, celebrate Ash Wednesday
with us on March 5th at our 8:00AM or
6:00PM Masses.

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

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

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

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.

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 (VIR-TUS). They provide consultation and support to anyone who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Maria Roche (maria.roche15@gmail.com), Letitia Howland (L_howland@hotmail.com), Erin Young (erin.t.young@gmail.com), or Kathy Sanders (sanderno2010@gmail.com) 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 safety guidelines released by the Archdiocese of Boston, we have removed email addresses from our online parish bulletin to avoid the danger of potential phishing scams. If you need a staff member's email address or 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.