Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
12 June 2022
2022 Saint Cecilia Confirmation Class
with Bishop Reed
12 June 2022
THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

PRELUDE | The Celestial Banquet
Olivier Messiaen
(1908-1992)

ENTRANCE PROCESSION | Holy! Holy! Holy!
NICAEA

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

The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God,
Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen, amen.

Collect
FIRST READING | Proverbs 8: 22-31

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Psalm 8: O Lord, Our God, How Wonderful Your Name  

Tony Alonso

1. When I see the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you arranged, what is man that you should keep him in mind, the son of man that you care for him?

2. Yet you have made him little lower than the angels; with glory and honor you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hands: you put all things under his feet.

3. All of them, sheep and oxen, yes, even the cattle of the fields, birds of the air, and fish of the sea that make their way through the waters.

SECOND READING | Romans 5: 1-5

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Franciscan Alleluia  

Peter M. Kolar

GOSPEL | John 16: 12-15

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 | Holy God, We Praise Thy Name

GROSSER GOTT

1. Holy God, we praise thy name!
2. Hark! the celestial hymn
3. Holy Father, Holy Son,

Lord of all, we bow before thee;
Angel choirs above are raising;
Holy Spirit, Three we name thee,

All on earth thy scepter claim,
Cherubim and Seraphim,
While in essence only One,

All in heav’n above adore thee;
In unceasing chorus praising,
Undivided God we claim thee,

Infinite thy vast domain,
Fill the heav’ns with sweet accord:
And adoring bend the knee,

Ev er last ing is thy reign.
Holy, holy, holy Lord!
While we own the mystery.

Repeat ad lib.
EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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

HOLY, HOLY | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte
**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.

**SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

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

**ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

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

John Foley

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**COMMUNION MEDITATION | O Trinity, O Blessed Light**

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**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. O God, al-might-y Fa-ther, Cre-a-tor of all things, The
2. O Je-sus, Word in-car-nate, Re-deem-er most a-dored, All
3. O God, the Ho-ly Spir-it, Who lives with-in our soul, Send

heav-ens stand in won-der, While earth your glo-ry sings.
glo-ry, praise, and hon-or Be yours, O sov-reign Lord.
forth your light and lead us To our e-ter-nal goal.

O most ho-ly Trin-i-ty, Un-di-vid-ed u-ni-ty,
Ho-ly God, might-y God, God im-mor-tal be a-dored!

MARCELIN LEPOPOLITA
(1537-1584)

Marcin Leopolita was a sixteenth century contrapuntalist from Lviv, Ukraine. This Kyrie is excerpted from the first Mass setting written in Ukraine.
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 Massachusett 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.
MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, June 11 | 5:00 p.m.
Rev. Peter Grover, OMV, celebrant
Cynthia Wanner, lector

Sunday, June 12 | 8:00 a.m.
Rev. Terry Devino, SJ, celebrant
Bob Mann, lector

Sunday, June 12 | 9:30 a.m.
Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ celebrant
Virgen Palermo, Mark Vachon,
and Rosaria Salerno, lectors

Sunday, June 12 | 11:30 a.m.
Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ celebrant
Letitia Howland and Nikko Mendoza, lectors

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Saturday, June 11 | 5:00 p.m.
Marilyn Nirk, Memorial

Sunday, June 12 | 8:00 a.m.
John & Angelina Machado, Memorial

Sunday, June 12 | 9:30 a.m.
Dr. Gerry Doyle, Memorial
Sr. Ann Kelley, Memorial
Monica Glover Mngerem, Special Intention
Paul Zumbusch, Memorial
Anne Pasechnick, Memorial
Robert Yobaccio, Memorial
Edward Flannery, Memorial

Wednesday, June 15 | 8:00 a.m. Elizabeth
A. Hope, The Maciora & Mik Families,
Memorial

Thursday, June 16 | 8:00 a.m.
Pil-Yun Son & Soum-Ok Bae Son, Memorial
Jong-Jao Chung, Memorial
Kyung-Seok Son, Memorial
Mee-Na Choo, Memorial

THIS SUNDAY’S READINGS
Proverb 8:22-31
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

NEXT SUNDAY’S READINGS
Genesis 14:18-20
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
Luke 9:11b-17
Our Sick
Please pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially Charlie Naughton, Bob Haas, Bob Roppolo, Mary Walters, Marc Pelletier, Ray Cronin, Rosalind Sica, Rick Gaillardetz, Michael Mulrenan, Michele Maniscalco, Nick Hungerford, and Fred Tufts.

Welcome to Saint Cecilia Parish
We are pleased to welcome the following new members of our parish who have recently registered: Michelle and Peter Wagner-Skinner of Brighton, Kim Smith of Arlington, Kelsey Barrett and Salem Salem of Boston, Audrey Walsh of Boston, Mary Gordon of Dorchester, Jack Coolahan of Boston, and Erin McLaughlin of Allston. If you have not previously registered, you can do so online at www.stceciliaboston.org/joining-our-parish/.

Second Collection Next Week
Next week’s second collection will be shared by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) and the Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC). These two organizations communicate the Gospel by promoting works of justice, education and the dignity of human life. Your generous donations will give those in poverty the support they need to make lasting changes and will support our local communications needs, such and Catholic TV programming.

Thank You
Last week’s second collection was designated to support the formation and training of seminarians in the Archdiocese of Boston. Due to your generosity, we were able to collect $1,950 to help these efforts. Thank you very much!

Welcome to our Newly Elected Parish Pastoral Council Members
Let us welcome the newest members of our Parish Pastoral Council. Elected to a three-year term are Peter Lin-Marcus, Ryan Egan, and Uma Staehler. We thank those who ran and pray that our council members serve the parish with open minds and hearts. We also offer thanks to Chika Offurum, Natasha Hartmann, and Kathryn Brown, who will conclude their term of service this year.

Happy Pride Month!
Saint Cecilia wishes a Happy Pride to our LGBTQ+ siblings. Thank you for the courage you show in living lives of authenticity and for reminding us all that love always wins. May we never forget that every one of us is made in the beautiful image of God and is entitled to be treated with "respect, compassion, and sensitivity" ~Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Ordinary Time & Today's Solemnity
With the celebration of Pentecost, Easter drew to a close last Sunday and we’re now back in Ordinary Time. We have been renewed and strengthened by our ninety day journey through Lent and Eastertide.

What a wonderful Easter we had here at Saint Cecilia! Easter is the primary season of initiation into the church community, and we were privileged to perform the sacraments of initiation for both children and adults during this season. We celebrated the initiation of twelve men and women at the Great Vigil of Easter; fourteen of our youngsters were welcomed to the table of the Lord on Saturday of the Third Week of Easter; and on Pentecost Sunday, eleven of our high school parishioners received the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation.

Though we are now in Ordinary Time, the "ordinal" or "numbered" Sundays are still two weeks away. The Church eases us into Ordinary Time with two solemn feasts: the Most Holy Trinity (today) and the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (next Sunday). With today’s feast, the Church expresses our Trinitarian faith by professing a belief in the oneness of God in whom there are three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This feast is ancient—its origins can be traced to the seventh century and it has been on the Church’s universal calendar for nearly seven hundred years.

It would be impossible to overstate the significance of the mystery we celebrate today: "The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life," the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us. "It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them." The history of salvation is the history of how God gradually reveals himself to humanity as the one true God, unity in Trinity. Today the liturgy holds this mystery before us, not explaining or defining, but simply showing us some of the facets of the mystery through the readings and prayers.
COMMUNITY STORY SHARING

"No matter what anyone tells you, words and ideas can change the world." ~Robin Williams

The Social and Racial Justice Ministry (SRJM) is pleased to announce a new Story-Sharing Initiative, which, with God’s blessing and a bit of steady work, we hope will be an ongoing part of parish life. Sharing our stories has been identified in the course of the parish’s Journey Toward Racial Justice process as a way to help us deepen our sense of belonging to each other and to the Saint Cecilia community.

For the first iteration of this initiative, we are asking you to share your experiences of the pandemic. On June 12, after the 9:30 and 11:30 liturgies, members of the SRJM will be at a table in the narthex, to distribute papers and prompts. We encourage you to use whatever format feels most appropriate for you—essay, poem, fictional story, drawing, etc. Submissions can be anonymous, if you so choose. You may also email submissions to Angelo at lancasterman2016@gmail.com. You will be able to drop your submissions downstairs, in a box labeled "SRJM Story Sharing." After a month, we will compile the entries for all to read. This idea is a work in progress. We welcome your suggestions!

WISDOM AND MATURE SPIRITUALITY

The Wisdom and Mature Spirituality Group meets weekly—in person from 10:00–11:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of the month, and on Zoom from 8:30–9:30 a.m. on all other Sundays. Please RSVP for the location, Zoom link, and more info going forward. Anyone who is in the second half of life is welcome to join. The current book for the Zoom group is The Meaning of Mary Magdalene by Cynthia Bourgeault of The Center for Action and Contemplation. To RSVP please email Deb Garcia at sc.wisdomandmaturespirituality@gmail.com.

LOW-GLUTEN ALTAR BREAD AVAILABLE

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. These hosts are prepared by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Missouri.

JOIN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR SAINT CECILIA HOUSE & ROBERT MCBRIDE HOUSE

The Board of Directors is currently seeking new members who would consider taking on a volunteer commitment to provide oversight and strategic direction for Saint Cecilia House and Robert McBride House, both in the nearby Fenway neighborhood. These residences were originally sponsored by Saint Cecilia Parish and the current board members collaborate with the management company to provide the residents with affordable housing that is well managed as well as with services that foster community among the residents. The board also reviews current financial and operational reports and strategizes around future development in this rapidly changing area.

The board of directors is made up of eleven voting members, including one member appointed from the pastoral staff, and provide their oversight and direction in the spirit of the ongoing mission of the parish. The board meets every other month and members are requested to regularly be present for these meetings. Meetings are planned to continue in a hybrid format going forward so interested individuals may also participate remotely. New members are asked to commit to a three-year term that may then be renewed. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone who may have an interest in developing their knowledge and skills as a board member or continuing to utilize these skills by participating in neighborhood or other types of community development opportunities.

If you would like to further explore this volunteer opportunity, please contact Ed DeMers (edward_demers@hotmail.com), who currently serves as the President of the Board, for additional information. A time will then be arranged for you to meet with other members of the current board to explore this opportunity. Saint Cecilia House and McBride House are 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and both residences were developed to provide safe, dignified housing for some of Boston’s seniors and persons with disabilities.
TRAVEL SIZE TOILETRIES

Please keep in mind that two of our nonprofit partner agencies have an ongoing need for donations of travel-size toiletries. Individual size shampoo, conditioner, body lotion and soap are always needed. Toothpaste, toothbrushes, and deodorant (none of which can typically be found in a hotel room!) are also always in demand. Donated toiletries need to be unused, of course, and there are plastic bins in the narthex for donations. The two agencies are: Women’s Lunch Place (www.womenslunchplace.org) and Y2Y Youth Shelter (www.Y2YNetwork.org).

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A YEAR OF POST-GRAD SERVICE?

Recently a small group of parishioners and staff visited our partners at Red Cloud in South Dakota. We’ll be sharing more about all that we learned and saw, but in the meantime wanted to share this volunteer opportunity with you!

Are you a recent college grad interested in making an impact in student’s lives? In giving a year to service? And immersing yourself in Lakota culture? Our young adult volunteers serve for 1-3 years as teachers, bus drivers, coaches, and much more. Volunteers live in intentional communities with one another and center their lives and service around the pillars of justice, community, spirituality, and simplicity, supporting the Lakota Catholic mission of Red Cloud School, located in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

If interested, please check out the website and send a cover letter and resume to volunteer@redcloudschool.org to get the process started. You do not have to have a background in education, as many of our volunteers apply for an alternative certification that allows them to teach!

A CATHOLIC CHARITIES REQUEST

For nearly 100 years, Sunset Point Camp, operated by our friends at Catholic Charities, has provided a dream vacation at the seashore to over 40,000 children from low-income, aged 6-13 from Greater Boston. Nearly 450 city-based boys and girls travel to Hull, Massachusetts each summer for a one or two-week overnight camp experience letting them enjoy the fresh air, learn new talents, receive academic summer support and simply have fun.

Sunset Point Camp is seeking sunscreen donations. So the next time you’re out, please pick up an extra tube of sunscreen and dropping it in the plastic bin identified for this purpose in the narthex. The higher SPF number, the better. They also need kids’ flip-flops for boys and girls ages 6 to 12.
One of our four Beyond Boston Ministry partners is Red Cloud Indian School, located on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. This school is a Catholic institution guided by the Lakȟóta people and fueled by the Jesuits. At the beginning of May, a small team of Saint Cecilia parishioners and staff had the privilege of visiting Red Cloud Indian School to gain deeper insight into the history and mission of the school and how, back in Boston, we can contribute to the significant work being done on the reservation. This April 12, 2021 article is reprinted from Catholic Extension.

[The] Spring 2021 Extension magazine cover features the Christ figure in “Lakota Trinity,” one of the many beautiful paintings by the late artist Father John Giuliani, a Catholic priest who was dedicated to creating Catholic iconography that celebrates the lives and cultures of Native Americans. It was painted for the Lakota community upon the request of Father John Hatcher, a Jesuit priest who served as president of the Catholic Extension-supported St. Francis Mission on the Rosebud Reservation.

The work came about when Father Hatcher asked the revered artist to help convey the concept of the Holy Trinity to the Lakota. Father Giuliani painted several depictions, including this one featuring an eagle, the most sacred bird.

Traditional iconography gives witness to the human face of the Sacred. This Icon, imaged in the features of America’s indigenous peoples, reveals anew that sacred power. It celebrates the soul of the Native American as the original spiritual presence on this continent, and as a prophetic sign, it celebrates the reconciliation of the spiritual vision of native and Christian peoples of this land.

Sacred Symbolism

A report published by the Inculturation Office of the Diocese of Rapid City, which is home to the Rosebud Reservation, describes the deep spiritual symbolism of the painting. The Trinity is central to Christian revelation in which God the Father gives the Son to the world as a love offering, confirmed and kept alive in the spirit of their mutual love and unity.

In this image, the great Father—Wakan Tanka—appears with a full headdress of eagle feathers in a halo of light.

His open hands deliver the Son, a victorious Sioux warrior whose raised arms and open hands reflect a similar gesture of self-giving.

He wears a richly decorated buckskin war shirt—heavily fringed, beaded and painted with the four color circle of the universe as its breast plate.

The eagle represents the Holy Spirit and completes the spiral of trinitarian love and unity.

About the Artist

Father Giuliani’s profound artwork has heightened Native American representation in the Church and helped bridge Catholic faith traditions with those of native peoples. He once said: “In my work I try to celebrate a union of a common spiritual understanding to show how a single mystery can be approached through diverse cultures.”

Though he passed away on January 2, 2021, his work lives on, inspiring the faithful in churches all around the country, including in the sacred spaces of Native American faith communities supported by Catholic Extension.
Gabby’s Gabriel is the very definition of a devout Roman Catholic. He even aspired to be a priest. At 12, he became part of his church’s youth ministry in Quezon City, about 10 km from the Philippine capital of Manila. He has attended religious processions of Holy Week flagellants, walking barefoot on sweltering asphalt. Now 35, he’s a regular choir member, and sometimes reads scripture to parishioners. In his free time, he maintains religious statuary and icons used on religious holidays.

With over 1.2 billion members worldwide, the Roman Catholic Church has enormously influenced modern life, laws, and customs. But LGBT rights in Catholic countries have faced strong pushback from conservatives, who cite Bible verses and Church documents to assert their opposition to homosexuality and support their rigid insistence that there are only two genders.

Nevertheless, Catholicism has responded to cultural changes and demands for inclusivity. Pope Francis hinted at these changes as early as 2013, with his famed “Who am I to judge?” remark on gay clergymen. But even his attitude to the LGBT community is complicated: he supports same-sex civil unions, but opposes marriage and gay priests joining the Church. Gender theory for Pope Francis is a “confused concept of freedom,” but he welcomes LGBT individuals into the faith and has taken the issue of inclusivity much farther than any of his predecessors, ruffling orthodox feathers.

The Philippines, with its relatively relaxed social norms on LGBT issues, chimes with the Pope’s message. If an LGBT person is visibly professing the faith, the Catholic laity finds them “tolerable,” says Jayeel Cornelio, a sociologist of religion at Ateneo de Manila University.

**Folk Catholicism in the Philippines**

Pre-colonial animistic religion in the Philippines embraced gender plurality. Indigenous priestesses, known as the babaylan, were revered. While most were female, some were male shamans who “marry other males and sleep with them.” These men would dress like women, a practice permissible in pre-colonial culture. It was only with the arrival of Spanish conquistadores during the 16th century that the status of the babaylan changed. They were vilified and driven out by Roman Catholic missionaries as Spain sought to impose its religion on the archipelago.
Catholicism has since seeped deep into Filipino life, taking on the fervor of a folk religion for many adherents. During Lent, devotees volunteer to get nailed to a cross as both penance and re-enactment of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion. Before Christmas Eve, many attend a nine-day series of Masses in the belief that their wishes will come true. A fiesta in January sees millions don maroon and yellow in praise of the Black Nazarene, walking barefoot and carrying cloths to wipe on the statue in the belief that the fabric will absorb curative powers.

While great store is set on rituals and festivals such as these, Catholic doctrine is not unquestioningly accepted. A law increasing access to contraceptives was still passed, for example, despite stern opposition from Catholic leaders. “I don’t think there is anyone, not even the most conservative or fundamentalist individual can be 100% consistent with everything that his or her own church proclaims,” Cornelo explains.

So while the Catechism states that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered,” LGBT persons in the Philippines have no difficulty identifying as Roman Catholic.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) stresses that it does not discriminate against those like Gabriel who want to serve. But the LGBT community is also expected “not to change God” and Church doctrines, says Father Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of CBCP’s public affairs committee: “Rather, they should change for God, the Church and its doctrines. And this is true for everyone…God is here to guide the destinies of men. It is not the other way around.”

Catholics against anti-discrimination laws

Around the world, conservative Catholics and other fundamentalist groups have been lobbying against LGBT rights. In the Philippines, a law against discrimination has been languishing in Congress for 20 years. It has support from devout Catholic senators who see equal rights as an extension of the faith, but has run up against determined opposition.

Rey Valmores-Salinas, chairperson of LGBT rights group Bahaghari, blames the Catholic Church and other religious groups for blocking the anti-discrimination law even though “LGBT rights are human rights.”

Some cities have enacted their own anti-discrimination ordinances in the meantime. Absence of these laws can prove to be deadly. Little to no data is available on hate crimes in the Philippines, but data collated by Transgender Europe’s Trans Murder Monitoring project show that at least 77 murders of trans and gender-diverse people took place between 2008 and September 2021. (The report warns that many hate crimes remain undocumented and that the actual number may be much higher.) One of the most notorious cases involved a U.S. Marine who killed a transwoman in 2014. He was later pardoned by President Rodrigo Duterte.

How dialogue can strengthen the Catholic faith

While Gabriel says he abstains from sex with men, and occasionally struggles to reconcile his sexual identity with his religious belief, others from his community are more assertive of their genders and sexual orientation.

Growing up transgender and born into the Catholic Church, Valmores-Salinas said she would not allow herself to be treated as an “abomination.” She argues that if Jesus Christ were on Earth today, the Messiah would stand with the LGBT community. “I think standing up for equality is what it means to be holy,” says Valmores-Salinas, who says she is now agnostic.

Sociologist Cornelo believes younger generations of Catholic laity are showing more impatience with conservative beliefs.

The test of that will come soon. As its social influence wanes, the Church is conducting the so-called Synod on Synodality—a two-year listening process billed as the “largest consultation in human history,” with the faithful invited to share their views on the Church’s future direction.

Many followers of the Catholic faith, including the LGBT community, hope the process will bring about meaningful change. There are signs: last month, senior Vatican official Sister Nathalie Becquart talked to LGBT Catholics worldwide in an unprecedented dialogue “to foster communion and build a consensus” in order to “discern how the Holy Spirit is calling the Church to move forward.”

If the battle can be won in a socially conservative Catholic country like the Philippines, it can be won anywhere. Gabriel recounts how he once confronted a female parishioner who took offense at his feminine attire while he was singing with the choir during Mass. When he asked her why his appearance bothered her, she was at a loss for words, he says.

“I just told her, ‘I understand. You may not be comfortable seeing someone like me in the church,’’ Gabriel tells TIME. “But the people that you said were looking at me, approached me after the service and they even congratulated me because our choir performed really well. They do not see me as how I dress, but how I serve.”

~ Chad de Guzman is a Multimedia Journalist based in Hong Kong. He earned his Master of Arts in International Journalism Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) in 2020 through the Hinrich Global Trade Leader Scholarship.
PARISH RESOURCES

Parish Staff
Rev. John J. Unni, Pastor
Rev. James Shaughnessy, S.J., Pastoral Support
Keith Brinkley, Mike Currier, Rudy Flores, Parker Olson,
Corey Ortiz, Reception
Leah Bennett, Communications and Operations Manager,
Thomas Mellan, Organist
Lisa Pickering, Director of Facilities and Events

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

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

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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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 $11, available on Sundays until 3:00 p.m., and $14 after 4:00 every day of the week. To take advantage of this discount, ask one of our greeters for a chaser ticket at Mass or ask a staff person during the week. Chaser tickets must be used at the machine at the exit gate. To obtain the discount, first place the ticket you received upon entering the garage into the machine, then follow it with the chaser ticket.

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. If you are local, please introduce yourself to a staff member or drop in for coffee on Sunday. We invite both local and long distance individuals and families to fill out a new parishioner form on our website. No matter what your background or location, please know that you are always welcome at Saint Cecilia.
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All of our services are available to this wonderful parish community here in this beautiful worship space.

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