

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



The Assumption of the Virgin

by Francesco Botticini (1475-1476)

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

16 August 2026

Saint Cecilia

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16 AUGUST 2026

THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

PRELUDE | *Lento* from Trio Sonata no. 5, BWV 529

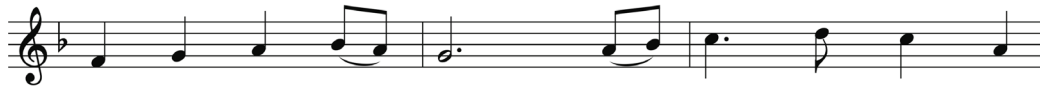
Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

ENTRANCE PROCESSION | All are Welcome

Marty Haugen



1. Let us build a house where love can dwell And
2. Let us build a house where proph - ets speak, And
3. Let us build a house where love is found In
4. Let us build a house where hands will reach Be -
5. Let us build a house where all are named, Their



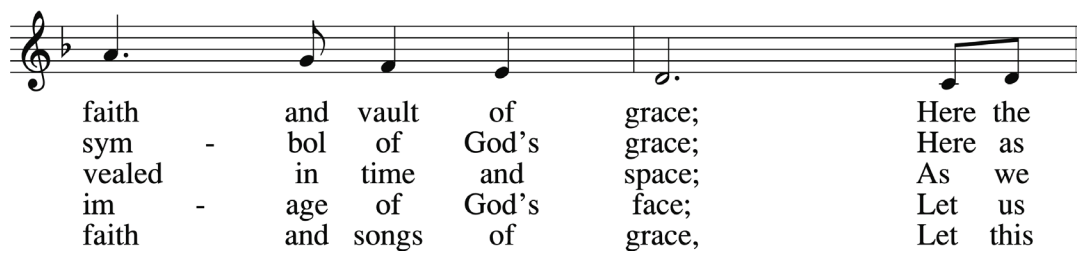
all can safe - ly live, A place where saints and
words are strong and true, Where all God's chil - dren
wa - ter, wine and wheat: A ban - quet hall on
yond the wood and stone To heal and strength - en,
songs and vi - sions heard And loved and treas - ured,



chil - dren tell How hearts learn to for -
dare to seek To dream God's reign a -
ho - ly ground, Where peace and jus - tice
serve and teach, And live the Word they've
taught and claimed As words with - in the



give. Built of hopes and dreams and vi - sions, Rock of
new. Here the cross shall stand as wit - ness And as
meet. Here the love of God, through Je - sus, Is re -
known. Here the out - cast and the stran - ger Bear the
Word. Built of tears and cries and laugh - ter, Prayers of



CALL TO WORSHIP

- ✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

- ✠ The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Refrain

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. A - men.

Verses

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. 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.</p> | <p>you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the
Father,
have mercy on us.</p> |
| <p>2. 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;</p> | <p>3. 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.</p> |

COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Isaiah 56: 1, 6-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Ps. 67: O God, Let All the Nations Praise You!

Tony E. Alonso



1. O God, be gracious and bless us and let your face shed its light upon us.
So will your ways be known upon earth and all nations learn your salvation.
2. Let the nations be glad and shout for joy, with uprightness you rule the peoples;
you guide the nations, the nations on earth.
3. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
May God still give us his blessing that all the ends of the earth may revere him.

SECOND READING | Romans 11: 13-15, 29-32

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Joy and Peace

Tony E. Alonso



GOSPEL | Matthew 15: 21-28

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!

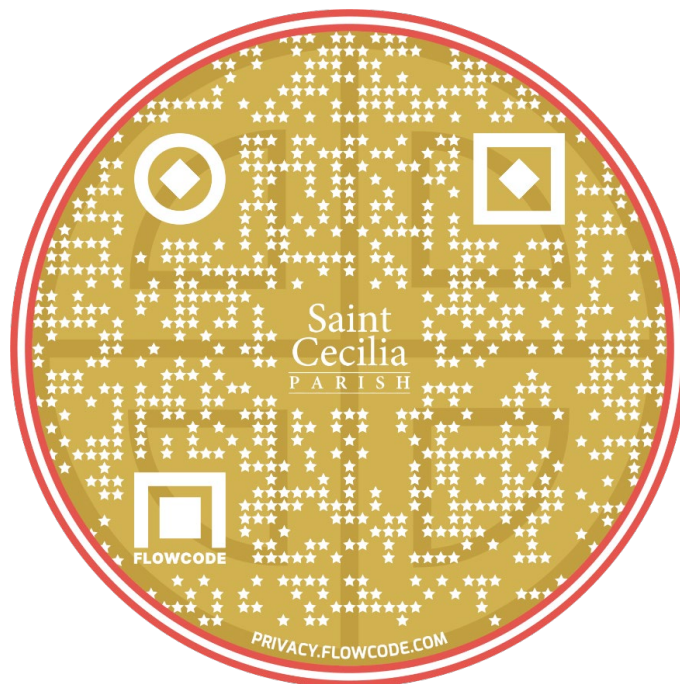
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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 | Healer of Our Every Ill

Marty Haugen

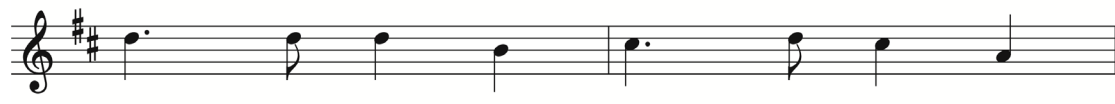


Heal - er of our ev - 'ry ill, Light of each to - mor - row,



Give us peace be - yond our fear And hope be - yond our sor - row.

Verses



1. You who know our fears and sad - ness,
2. In the pain and joy, be - hold - ing
3. Give us strength to love each oth - er,
4. You who know each thought and feel - ing,



Grace us with your peace and glad - ness.
How your grace is still un - fold - ing,
Ev - 'ry sis - ter, ev - 'ry broth - er.
Teach us all your way of heal - ing.



Spir - it of all com - fort, fill our hearts.
Give us all your vi - sion, God of love.
Spir - it of all kind - ness, be our guide.
Spir - it of com - pas - sion, fill each heart.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

✠ The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

✠ Lift up your hearts.

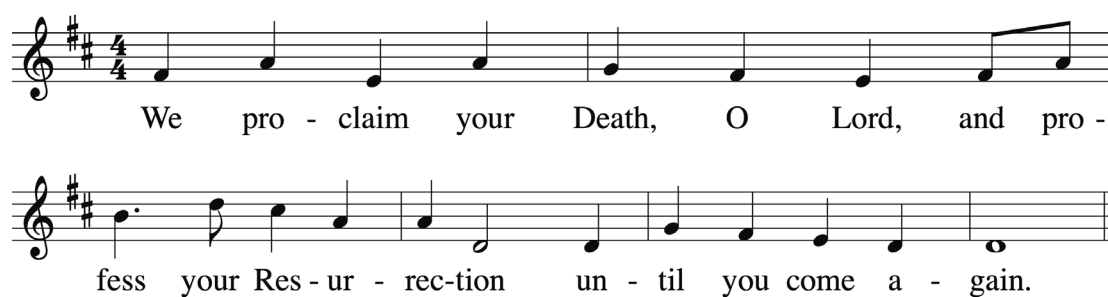
All: We lift them up to the Lord.

✠ 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 of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.



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

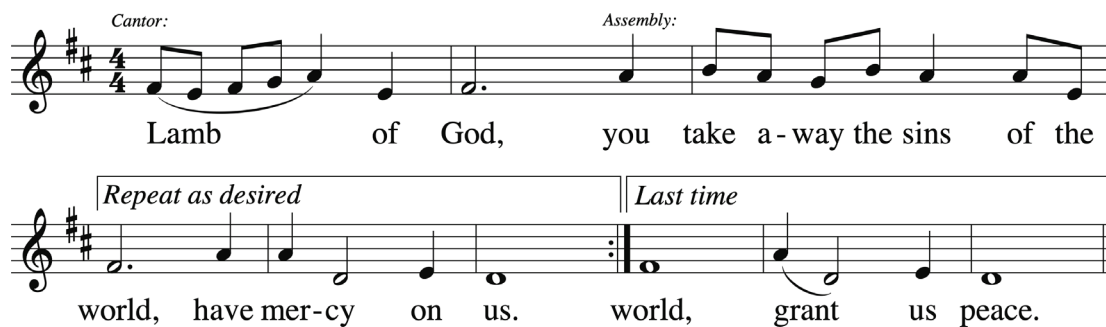


THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.



SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

It is a long-held Catholic belief that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an "Act of Spiritual Communion." When we are unable to be physically present at the celebration of the Eucharist, Pope Francis invites Catholics to say this prayer as a source of grace. We can be assured that when we express our desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, God will be with us spiritually in a special way. Here is an Act of Spiritual Communion that we encourage you to pray as you participate in our live-streamed liturgies:

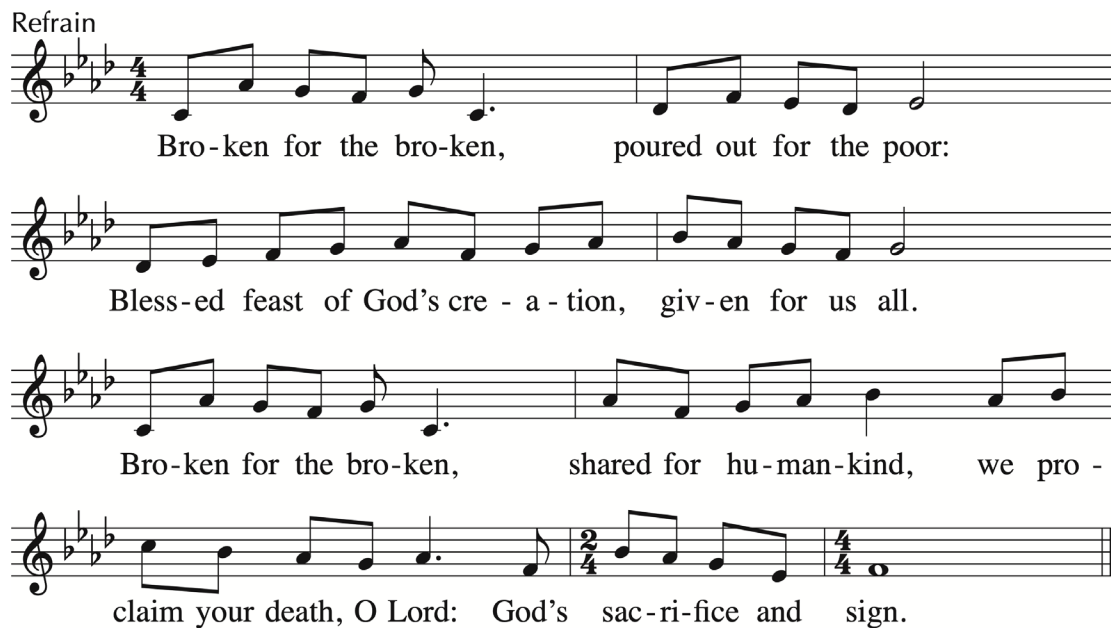
ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

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

COMMUNION | Broken for the Broken

Chris de Silva

Refrain



Bro-ken for the bro-ken, poured out for the poor:
Bless-ed feast of God's cre - a - tion, giv-en for us all.
Bro-ken for the bro-ken, shared for hu-man-kind, we pro -
claim your death, O Lord: God's sac-ri-fice and sign.

Verses



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



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



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

D.C.

CONCLUDING RITE

✠ 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.



1. Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth. Go
 2. Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place. Go
 3. Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless and pray. The
 4. Go to the world! Go as the ones I send, For

preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth, Bap -
 live the Word of God's re - deem - ing grace. Go
 nights of tears give way to joy - ous day. As
 I am with you till the age shall end, When

tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth. Al -
 seek God's pres - ence in each time and space. Al -
 ser - vant Church you fol - low Christ's own way. Al -
 all the hosts of glo - ry cry "A - men!"

le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

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, August 15 | 5:00 p.m.

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

Sunday, August 16 | 8:00 a.m.

Rev. John Predmore, SJ, celebrant
Jim Dougherty, lector

Sunday, August 16 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Natasha Bolton-Pierre, Jerry McElroy,
Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM, lectors

Sunday, August 16 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. Christopher Brolly, SJ, celebrant
Theresa Chaklos, Clare Gillis, lectors

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Saturday, August 15 | 5:00 p.m.

Michael Gavin, *Memorial*

Sunday, August 16 | 9:30 a.m.

Eleanor Roland, *1st Anniversary*

Paula Jesse, *1st Anniversary*

Michael Scanlon, Sr, *4th Anniversary*

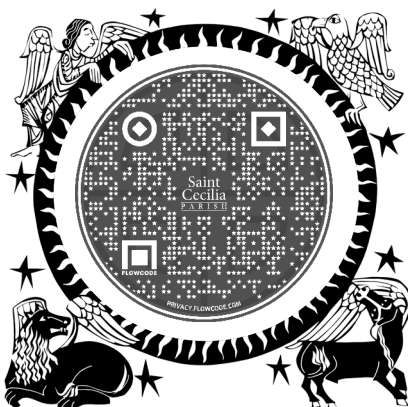
Dr. Gabriel Kazuo Tsuboyama, *Memorial*

Jo Ann Costello Devaney, *Memorial*

Raffaele Santoro, *Memorial*

Jill Hurley, *Memorial*

Scan this code for
offertory giving:



Thank you for your generous
support of Saint Cecilia Parish!



TODAY'S READINGS

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

Matthew 15:21-28

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Isaiah 22:19-23

Romans 11:33-36

Matthew 16:13-20

PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Welcome to Saint Cecilia Parish!

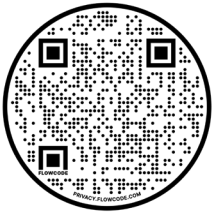
We are pleased to welcome the following new members of our community: **Karen Mallon, Sarah Ghninou and Andrew Miceli, Natasha and Chris Rocheleau, Mairead Hoyer and Victor Zurowski, Jean and Michael Lynch, Aaryan Morrison, Carla Dibbs, Olivia Lanagan, Tess Gauthier, and Farrell Patterson.** If you have not previously registered, you can do so online at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Save the Dates: Two Parish Retreats This Fall

This fall, we will once again offer two opportunities to step away from the routines of daily life, deepen our relationship with God, and share in the prayer and fellowship of our parish community. Whether you are looking for a single day of reflection or a quiet weekend of prayer, we hope you will consider joining us.

Fall Parish Retreat

Saturday, September 12 | 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.



Our annual Fall Parish Retreat will offer a day of prayer, reflection, and conversation. The retreat theme and presenter will be announced soon. We are requesting a \$25 donation, which includes a continental breakfast and boxed lunch. Retreat participants are

also invited to a reception on Friday evening, September 11, to welcome members of the Far-Flung Flock who will be joining us. Following the retreat on Saturday, those who wish may participate in a brief parish service project in the Parish Hall before gathering for dinner at 5:00 p.m. To register, scan the Flowcode or visit: www.stceciliaboston.org/fall-retreat-2026/.

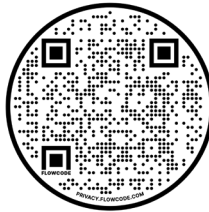
IN THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN

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Retreat at Eastern Point Retreat House, Gloucester

Friday, October 30 – Sunday, November 1



Our annual weekend retreat at Eastern Point Retreat House offers the gift of silence in one of the most beautiful retreat settings in New England. The retreat begins at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, with check-in available after 3:00 p.m., and concludes after lunch on Sunday.

The weekend will include presentations, ample time for personal prayer and reflection, and all meals. In keeping with the custom of Eastern Point, this retreat will be conducted in silence, including during meals, fostering a spirit of prayer, reflection, and attentiveness to God's presence. We are requesting a \$350 donation for the weekend. To register, scan the Flowcode or visit: www.stceciliaboston.org/gloucester-retreat-2026/.

Registration for both retreats opens **Friday, August 14, at 9:00 a.m.** Because space is limited for each retreat, we encourage you to register as soon as possible if you plan to attend. We do not want the cost of the retreat to be a barrier to participation. If the cost presents a challenge, please contact Scott MacDonald confidentially; we would be happy to assist.

Registration for Children's Faith Formation 26/27

Registration for 2026-2027 Children's Faith Formation is now open! To register, head to www.stceciliaboston.org/cff-reg/. If you have any questions, please contact our Director of Family and Youth Faith Formation Kate Burns at her parish email.

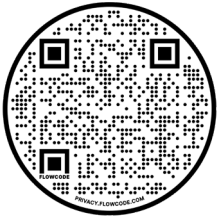
Assumption Day—Mass

The Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday, August 15. Ordinarily, the Assumption is a holy day of obligation in the United States, but because it falls on a Saturday this year, Catholics are not obligated to attend Mass. Mass will not be celebrated at Saint Cecilia, but if you would like to observe this beautiful feast of Our Lady, nearby Masses include:

- **St. Clement Eucharistic Shrine** (1105 Boylston Street): 11:00 a.m.
- **St. Francis Chapel** (Prudential Center): 9:00 a.m. and Noon
- **Cathedral of the Holy Cross** (1400 Washington Street): A Vigil Mass will be celebrated at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, August 14; Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, August 15 at 9:00 a.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

SUMMER CHORAL SESSIONS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 | 2PM - 4PM | CLASSROOM 1



This summer, the parish will offer free Sunday afternoon sessions on singing and choral music from June 14-August 23 taught by Tyler Cesario and Kayleigh Bennett. Open to all parishioners, topics include sight-singing, vocal technique, diction, vocal anatomy, harmony and

balance, choral stylization, and audition/performance preparation. To register, scan the Flowcode below or visit www.tinyurl.com/summer-choral-sessions.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT IN-PERSON

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 | 1PM | COMMUNITY ROOM

The death of a loved one can feel confusing and isolating. No one should suffer alone. The bereavement group at Saint Cecilia supports anyone coping with loss. Feel free to grab some coffee and food and join us for an informal group discussion and prayer. If you'd like to learn more about bereavement at Saint Cecilia, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

OCIA INFORMATION SESSION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19 | 6PM VIA ZOOM

Interested in becoming Catholic? Order of Christian Initiation of Adults The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) the primary process for adults to become full members of the Catholic Church. OCIA welcomes inquirers at all levels of knowledge, faith, and intent. The process culminates in the reception of one or more of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. OCIA could be for you if you are an adult who has never been baptized, if you were baptized in another Christian denomination, or if you are seeking First Holy Communion and Confirmation. To learn more or get the Zoom link, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.



COMING UP AT SAINT CECILIA

AUGUST 16 - 20

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

Wisdom & Mature Spirituality | 8:30am via Zoom
Bereavement In-Person Group | 1pm | Comm. Room
Summer Choral Session | 2pm | Classroom 1

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19

OCIA Info Session | 6pm via Zoom

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

Wisdom & Mature Spirituality | 7:30pm via Zoom

COME FOURTH SUNDAY!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 | AFTER 9:30 & 11:30 MASSES | PARISH HALL



Ministry work is the heartbeat of Saint Cecilia. Whether you're looking to become better connected to others or to provide outreach, we're introducing "Come Fourth Sunday" on the fourth Sunday of the month, a special opportunity to discover the many ministries that bring our parish to life.

In August, we're featuring the CARES, Bereavement, and Mental Health Ministries. Stop by after Mass to meet those who serve, learn about a ministry mission, ask questions, and explore how your unique gifts might find a place in our community. We look forward to seeing you!

If you'd like more information on ministries, please reach out to Mary Wessel at her parish email.

2026 SUMMER CHOIR SUNDAYS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23 | 8:30AM | CLASSROOM 1

Join Robert Duff, Brett Maguire and members of the Saint Cecilia Choir at 8:30am to learn a piece of choral music and sing with the choir at the 9:30am Mass. Open to all singers of all ages and experience! We will meet in Classroom 1 at 8:30am.

A SYSTEMATIC READING OF THE ENCYCLICAL "MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS"

TUESDAYS | 8:00AM - 9:00AM VIA ZOOM

Join Fr. John Predmore, SJ, for a chapter-by-chapter reading of Pope Leo XIV's new encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* ("Magnificent Humanity"). Over the course of eight weeks, the group will read and discuss the encyclical together via Zoom on Tuesdays from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. A brief study guide with chapter notes will be emailed to participants before each session. If you would like to join the group, please send an email to Fr. Predmore, SJ.

JOIN THE COFFEE HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

Curious how our team creates a warm & welcoming environment in the parish hall every Sunday? Bring your gifts to the table and join the coffee hospitality ministry! Please contact Lisa Pickering at her parish email to learn more.

TEACH ENGLISH THIS FALL

HELP IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORS BUILD A FUTURE

Every fall, adults across Greater Boston sit down in an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classroom because English stands between them and a job, a doctor's appointment, or a parent-teacher conference. A Faith That Does Justice is seeking volunteers to help bridge that gap. AFTDJ's ESOL program offers free English classes for adult immigrant learners, taught entirely by volunteers. No professional teaching experience or bilingual skills are required. Volunteers receive curriculum, training, and support. Members of all faiths and backgrounds are welcome as both students and teachers.

There are two ways to serve:

- **Teacher:** Lead a class of adult learners through the semester, teaching two 2-hour sessions each week.
- **Teacher Assistant:** Support teachers by working with individuals and small groups.

The Fall 2026 session runs September 21, 2026 through February 3, 2027. Classes are offered Monday and Wednesday evenings (6:30–8:30 p.m.) or Tuesday and Thursday mornings (9:30–11:30 a.m.), either online via Zoom or in person at Emmanuel Church in Back Bay. To learn more and apply by August 31, visit faith-justice.org/esol/.

HELP US SEND A KID TO CAMP

As you may know, Saint Cecilia Parish has a long-standing relationship with the Huntington YMCA and many of the social service programs offered in that facility. Through our combined donations, we would like to see if we can collect enough (\$2,500) to send one inner-city kid, ages 8 to 16, to Y camp this summer. The YMCA overnight camp in New Hampshire is a life-changing experience for those fortunate enough to attend.

To make a donation by check -- in any amount -- please make it payable to "YMCA of Greater Boston" and indicate in the memo line: "Summer Camp." Checks should be mailed to:

Hunger & Homelessness Ministry
Saint Cecilia Parish
18 Belvidere Street
Boston, MA 02115

LEARN ENGLISH THIS FALL/WINTER

CLASSES START SEPTEMBER 21

A Faith That Does Justice is now accepting applications for the Fall and Winter 2026 cycle of free adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Classes meet two days per week for 15 weeks. The next session begins the week of September 21. Class sessions are virtual using Zoom, or in person at Emmanuel Church at 15 Newbury Street in Boston's Back Bay. If you would like to be considered for a class, please complete the online application. Once the application has been received, AFTDJ will follow up with next steps and additional details about the schedule. Follow the link to submit an application: www.faitth-justice.org/esol/#boxzilla-24204.

BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 | 6PM VIA ZOOM

When a loved one dies, everything changes. At Saint Cecilia, we believe no one should walk alone in grief and loneliness. Wherever you are in your grief, you're welcome here. No pressure. No timeline. Just an open, steady invitation to join a supportive community. Please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email for the Zoom link.



CELEBRATING SAINT PHOEBE: A PRAYER SERVICE FOR WOMEN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 | 6PM | PARISH HALL

Join us as we celebrate the Feast Day of Saint Phoebe, one of the earliest women leaders in the Church and a trusted minister to Saint Paul. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul commends Phoebe for her service to the Church and asks the community to welcome and support her. Together, we will gather in prayer to honor Phoebe's courage, faith, generosity, and leadership—and to celebrate the many ways women continue to share their gifts and build up the Church today.

Come for a time of prayer, reflection, and wine & cheese and fellowship as we give thanks for the women who have shaped our faith and ask Saint Phoebe to inspire us to recognize and embrace our own call to serve.

TEEN PROGRAMMING SURVEY

If you are a caregiver of a high school student, please take a few minutes to fill out the brief survey listed below about teen programming and ask them to do the same. Thank you!

- **Caregiver Survey:** <https://forms.gle/moh7LXCiRKR8sGDX8>
- **High School Student Survey:** <https://forms.gle/3ewrLwYLUFnNqYt28>



BACK-TO-SCHOOL
Drive

Saint Cecilia is once again collecting backpacks and school supplies for the children of the families helped by the Mary Ann Brett Food Pantry.

In addition to the backpacks, we are requesting items that will be used to fill the backpacks: spiral notebooks, 3-ring binders, folders, dry erase markers, pens, pencils, pencil cases and copy paper.

There will be bins in the narthex if you would like to provide any of the items above.

To make it easier to participate in the Back-To-School Drive, you can scan the Flowcode on the right below.

Thank you so much for your dedication to improving the lives of the kids in Greater Boston.

To access the Amazon Wishlist, scan the Flowcode above or use the following link: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/?ls/11Q1I35W4EGYE?ref=wl_share

Rectory Tower Restoration and Repair Update



Over the past fifteen years, exposure to New England's harsh weather has taken a toll on the rectory tower. Moisture, freezing and thawing cycles, and years of exposure to the elements have caused deterioration of the masonry, including spalling (where brick or masonry begins to flake or break apart) and efflorescence (the white mineral deposits often seen on masonry surfaces). As a result, portions of the interior brickwork now require repair to preserve the tower's structural integrity and ensure its continued safety.

The project will repair and reinforce the interior masonry and reinstall protective louvers in the tower openings. These louvers will maintain proper ventilation while shielding the interior from rain, snow, wind, and other weather. Scaffolding will be installed along St. Cecilia Street around the rectory for the next few months. During this time, access to the parish offices will remain open, and all liturgies, meetings, and parish operations will **continue as usual**.

These repairs and improvements are needed to repair, preserve, and protect the tower's structural safety and integrity, extend its lifespan, and help ensure that this landmark remains a lasting symbol of our parish for years to come.

As this repair and restoration take shape, we will share project updates. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lisa Pickering at her parish email.

MARY OF NAZARETH: FRIEND OF GOD AND PROPHET

BY ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON, CSJ



Credit: Art Institute of Chicago | America Media

Triptych Icon, Late 17th century, Central Ethiopia Eastern and Southern Africa

What would be a theologically sound, spiritually empowering and ethically challenging theology of Mary, mother of Jesus the Christ, for the 21st century? This question has no simple answer, for the first-century Jewish woman Miriam of Nazareth, also held in faith to be Theotokos, the God-bearer, is arguably the most celebrated woman in the Christian tradition. One could almost drown surveying the ways different eras have honored her in painting, sculpture, icons, architecture, music and poetry; venerated her with titles, liturgies, prayers and feasts; and taught about her in spiritual writings, theology and official doctrine. The title of a fine book by George Tavard gets it exactly right: *The Thousand Faces of the Virgin Mary*.

Our answer becomes even more complex in the light of recent scholarship that highlights the social-political implications of this adaptable Marian image. Studies underscore, for example, the correlation between Our Lady of Fatima and cold war opposition to the Soviet

Union; or the connection between the Madonna of 125th Street and the struggle of newly arrived Italian immigrants for survival in New York City; or the alliance between Our Lady of Guadalupe and Cesar Chavez's struggle for justice for migrant workers in the California vineyards. While a historical woman obviously dwells at the root of this whole phenomenon, her image has been plastic, allowing the Christian imagination to create widely different Marian symbols and theologies in relation to spiritual and social needs.

Now it is our turn. How do we, this multicultural church at this millennial time, interpret and honor her? Let me emphasize that the answer explored here is but one among several good options. In a word, I propose that we approach Mary of Nazareth along the avenue of historical memory and envision her, dangerously, as a friend of God and prophet within the communion of saints. This coheres with the pattern of Scripture, which inscribes her story among that of others in the company of Jesus. It also

accords with the deliberate decision of the Second Vatican Council to place Marian teaching within its teaching on the church rather than in a separate document, a move followed by documents of the magisterium ever since.

A theology of Mary as friend of God and prophet in the communion of saints endeavors to carry forward this trajectory. Working out this view entails, metaphorically, that we invite Mary down from the pedestal where she has been honored in the past to rejoin us on the ground of the community of grace in history. The ladder enabling her to reach the ground has at least four steps. Walking down these steps will form the structure of this lecture.

A Member of the Communion of Saints

Bringing Mary into the community of the saints may seem strange at first hearing, even though the name Saint Mary graces many churches and schools. But think what we mean by this. Down through the centuries, as the Holy Spirit graces person after person in land after land, they form together a grand company of “friends of God and prophets” (Wis. 7:27); a community of holy people endeavoring to live their lives praising God, loving each other and struggling for justice and peace. This is a company that not only encircles the globe in space but stretches backward and forward in time. It also includes those who have died and now live in the embrace of God. Since Mary was a first-century Jewish woman of faith, and since she has obviously also died, she belongs in this company of grace.

Once we admit Mary into our company, the question of how to relate to her arises. In my research I have discovered that two possibilities lie open. In one, the patronage model that has dominated the tradition, Mary and the saints are approached primarily as intercessors before the throne of God. Here we imagine that God exists like a king ruling in splendor, with courtiers ranked in descending order of importance. Being far from the distant throne, we little people need more important people to plead our cause and obtain spiritual and material blessings. We need friends in high places, so to speak. Because she is the Mother of the Lord, Mary is the most powerful intercessor of all, obtaining gifts that might otherwise be denied.

This patron-client relationship is found neither in the New Testament nor in the early Christian centuries. It developed in the late Roman empire under the influence of the civil patronage system once the church had been officially established. The earlier way for the living to relate to the dead saw them all as companions to one another in the one Spirit-filled community. This companionship model situates the saints in heaven not *between* God and those on earth but *alongside* their sisters and brothers in Christ. The Letter to the Hebrews envisions them as a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us and cheering us on to victory with the encouragement of their lives (Heb. 12:1). As Augustine preached, “When we pay honor to the martyrs, we are honoring the friends of Christ” (*Sermon* 332.1),

who are also our friends following after the same love.

In the companionship model, rather than the main action being prayers of petition from client to patron, the chief practice is attending to the memory of the dead in a way that energizes hope. Johannes Baptist Metz’s theology of the dangerous memory reveals the power of this practice, for such remembering disrupts the tyranny of the present status quo, summons up a future worth struggling for and sets our feet on the path of their unfinished business. Commemorations of the martyrs of El Salvador that inspire us to action on behalf of justice for the poor and celebrations of Mary Magdalene, first witness of the resurrection, that encourage us to promote women’s participation in ministry are good contemporary examples. This is not to say that we no longer call upon saints to pray for us; but this prayer occurs in a context of mutual sharing in the project of the reign of God. Remembering their dangerous witness, we become partners in hope.

Within this vast cloud of witnesses, particular persons emerge who live out God’s promise in special ways. When these persons are recognized by the spiritual intuition of the community as a whole, they become publicly significant for the lives of others. Such a person is Miriam of Nazareth, a poor woman of faith who partnered God throughout her life, especially in the redemptive work of mothering the Messiah. Two obstacles, however, block the full retrieval of her dangerous memory.

Not the Maternal Face of God

It has become commonplace for scholars of Marian history to argue that Mary embodies aspects of God best symbolized in the female form of the mother. Historically, ample evidence for this transfer of divine imagery can be found in early Christian times, when the Mother of God took over the titles, shrines, iconography and power of the great mother goddess of the Mediterranean world. This “baptizing” of pagan imagery was a successful missionary strategy that allowed Christianity to attract peoples accustomed to female deities while still maintaining faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ever since, a tendency to transfer divine qualities to Mary has dogged the Marian tradition. Especially in periods when theology was deficient, she conveyed the power of God to work miracles for favored ones, the mercy of Christ to save sinners and the presence of the Holy Spirit bestowing divine intimacy. Her gender as a woman and her historical role as a mother played no small part in these developments, for what compassionate mother would let one of her children suffer or be lost? Mary functioned to reveal divine love as compassionately close, interested, trustworthy and attractive something that gets lost from view when the prevailing notion of God is that of an authority figure on the model of a heartless just judge or a somewhat testy heavenly father.

This analysis is helpful for understanding some of the exaggerations of Marian theology and devotion. It makes clear that the Marian symbol developed divine qualities



Mary Magnificat by Laura James (c.2015)

to compensate for an overly patriarchal theology of God. But a problem arises when theologians want to maintain this state of affairs in perpetuity. The Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff's treatise on Mary as *The Maternal Face of God*, for example, proposes that just as the Son of God became incarnate in Jesus, so too the Holy Spirit, the female person of the Trinity, became embodied in Mary, thus somewhat balancing the gender of the Christian God. The trouble with this hypothesis is that Mary is not and never will be divine, but is always and everywhere thoroughly human.

As we have received it, the Marian tradition is a fruitful source of female imagery for God, such as maternity with its nurturing warmth and fierce protection; love with unbounded compassion; power that sustains, heals and liberates; and all-pervading immanence. These divine qualities migrated to Mary because of deficiencies in the theology of God, in Christology and in pneumatology. It makes no lasting sense to retain this as a permanent status quo, using Mary as a cover-up for defective notions of the divine. Rather, this female imagery should be allowed to travel back to its source and fertilize our imaginations and piety in relation to the mystery of God, who is beyond gender but is creator of both women and men in the divine image. The Australian theologian Patricia Fox, S.M., demonstrates this strategy in her address, "Mother of Mercy: A Title Reclaimed for God," as do Julian of Norwich, John Paul I and myriad other Christians today

who dare to name God in female form. Let God have her own maternal face.

While critically deconstructing the Marian symbol as the maternal face of God, there is one insight we can carry forward from this distorted pattern. The fact that divine mercy and power have indeed been successfully carried in the image of Mary reveals the capacity of women to represent God. Not just Mary's face but the face of every woman is created as an *imago Dei*. Not just Mary's vocation but that of every woman and man is to partner Holy Wisdom in bringing about the reign of mercy and peaceful justice. Relieved of her historic burden as complement to the patriarchal divine and positively signaling the depth of women's dignity vis-à-vis God, Mary becomes free to rejoin us in the communion of saints.

Not the Ideal Feminine

A second difficulty that has distanced Mary from the communion of saints, especially as women experience this today, is the strategy that casts her as the feminine ideal and thus sets her up as the model for all other women. Those who take this approach invariably use a dualistic anthropology that divides male and female into watertight compartments, elevating sex to an ontological principle that results in virtually two types of human nature. On the one hand, masculine nature equips men for leadership in the public realm because it is marked by intelligence, assertiveness, independence and the ability to make decisions. On the other hand, feminine nature is fit for the private domain of childbearing, homemaking and care for the vulnerable, since it is characterized by relationality, gentleness, nurturing, a non-assertive attitude and the giving of service and reassurance.

The Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar takes this approach, arguing that in the church there is a Marian principle of holy obedience complementary to the Petrine principle of orderly hierarchical rule. This Marian principle indicates that women ought to divest themselves of self-will in order to be obedient to the word of God as articulated by male spokesmen. A prime example is Mary at Cana. She noticed the lack of wine and, rather than deal with the lack on her own initiative, performed an act of self-emptying by turning to Jesus for help. Balthasar comments, "As a woman she has her heart where it ought to be and not in her brain" (*Mary for Today*, p. 74).

Perhaps the most widely heard proponent of this view is Pope John Paul II. In his letters *Mother of Redemption* and *The Dignity of Women*, he proposes that, like Mary, all women are oriented toward giving love without measure once they have received it. Like Mary, all women are called to be mothers, either physically or spiritually (virgins). Indeed, "women, by looking to Mary, find in her the secret of living their femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement." This entails that in Mary women see mirrored the highest virtues to which they are called, namely, "the self-offering totality of

love; the strength that is capable of bearing the greatest sorrows; limitless fidelity and tireless devotion to work; the ability to combine penetrating intuition with words of support and encouragement" (*RM*, No. 46).

Many women's negative reaction to the Marian symbol stems from the realization that this feminine ideal functions as an obstacle to personal growth, preventing the development of a critical intellect, the capacity for righteous anger and other characteristics of a mature personality. The rigid definition of the feminine, when applied to social roles, also blocks women from functioning in the public order, for by nature they are designed for domestic, auxiliary roles. Living "femininely" can even be dangerous to one's health and life, inculcating passivity in abusive and violent situations. African-American and Hispanic/Latina theologians raise the further criticism that this concept of the feminine is shaped by the privilege of race and class. It is white, middle-class women who can enjoy the qualities of being "feminine," for they have not known the struggle for survival engaged in by generations of slaves or poor immigrants. The 19th-century freed slave Sojourner Truth put her finger on this racist and classist underbelly of the notion of the feminine when she argued:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches.... Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles, or give me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arms! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it and bear the lash as well. And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Indeed, what is a woman? And who gets to decide?

An adequate theology of Mary must be clear on this point: There is no eternal feminine; there is no essential feminine nature; there is no ideal woman. In contrast to a dualistic anthropology that so separates head and heart, a liberating view of Mary grows out of an egalitarian anthropology of partnership that respects male-female difference while refusing to stereotype gifts that are freely given. It affirms that sex combines with race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, historical, geographical and social location and cultural makeup to define each person as unique. The human race exists in irreducibly pluralistic ways.

Relieved of the burden of being the ideal feminine woman, Mary can be simply herself. A poor woman singing her Magnificat about the downfall of tyrants and full bellies for the hungry, she takes another step toward rejoining us in the communion of saints. How do we remember her?

A Jewish Village Woman of Faith, a Friend of God and Prophet

The primary source for remembering Mary is the New Testament. Its witness is quite diverse since each Evangelist portrays her in accord with the theological framework of his Gospel. Mark's negative view of Jesus' mother and brothers as outside his circle of followers corresponds to the anti-familial ethic of the rest of the Gospel. Matthew's genealogy of the Messiah locates Mary in a line of four other women who take initiative in dubious circumstances outside the patriarchal marriage structure, thereby becoming unexpectedly God's partners in a theology of promise-fulfillment. Luke describes Mary as a woman of faith, overshadowed by the Spirit at Jesus' conception and at the beginning of the church at Pentecost, the first to respond to the glad tidings and to hear the word of God and keep it a pictorial example of his Gospel's theology of discipleship. John's highly stylized portrayal of the mother of Jesus at Cana and at the cross accords with his own vision of the response of discipleship to the Word made flesh, manifest and glorified. As with Gospel portraits of Jesus, these diverse interpretations cannot be harmonized; each is instructive in its own way.

To glimpse the actual woman behind these texts in any kind of full and adequate way is impossible. New studies of the political, economic, social and cultural fabric of first-century Palestine, however, enable us to fill in aspects of her life in broad strokes. Much of this knowledge has resulted from the quest for the historical Jesus, but it serves equally well in a quest for the historical Miriam of Nazareth. Our religious imagination, pondering the Gospel texts, can shape the Marian symbol with concrete historical awareness.

Let us remember our foremother Miriam as a Jewish



Credit: New Liturgical Movement

Madonna and Child mural in the Osaka Cathedral
by Insho Domoto (c.1963)

village woman of faith.

Jewish. As a member of the people of Israel, Mary inherited the faith in one living God stemming from Abraham and Sarah onward, a God who hears the cries of the poor and frees the enslaved into covenanted relationship. Given Jesus' clear knowledge and practice of the Jewish faith, it is reasonable to assume that Mary, with her husband Joseph, practiced this Jewish religion in their home, following Torah, observing Sabbath and the festivals, reciting prayers, lighting candles and going to synagogue according to custom in Galilee.

Luke depicts Mary in her older years as a member of the early Jerusalem community, praying with 120 women and men disciples before the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:13-15). One can only imagine the conversations held with Mary Magdalene, first witness of the resurrection, Joanna, Susanna and the other women disciples, as well as others such as Peter, fresh from his betrayal. In light of the death and resurrection of Jesus, this gathering believed that the Messiah had come. In no way did they think this was a cause to leave their religion. Rather, they continued to worship in the Temple and preached the good news to their fellow Jews before finally being persuaded that the Gospel was meant for Gentiles too. To use a term coined in scholarship, Mary was a Jewish Christian who lived before the split between synagogue and church. She was never a Roman-type Christian, not a Gentile at all. It does no honor to bleach her of her Jewishness not only ethnically, by turning her swarthy complexion into blond hair and blue eyes, but religiously, by turning her deeply rooted Jewish piety into that of a latter-day Catholic.

Village woman. This Jewish woman lived in a rural village whose population consisted largely of peasants working the land and craftsmen who served their basic needs. Most women in this setting were unlettered. Married to the local tekton (carpenter and stone-worker), her days were taken up with the life-giving, hard, unrecompensed work of women of all ages to feed, clothe and nurture her household. If the brothers and sisters mentioned when the adult Jesus preaches in Nazareth were around in his youth, then this household included her first-born son Jesus, his brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon, and his sisters (whom Mark leaves unnamed, as typically happens with women); apocryphal gospels explain that these are Joseph's children by a previous marriage. The economic status of this family is a matter of some dispute, with scholars like John Meier placing them in the blue-collar working class, while others, such as John Dominic Crossan, assign them to the peasant class that desperately struggled under the triple taxation of Temple, Herod and Rome. But make no mistake the times were tough. This village was part of an occupied state under the heel of imperial Rome; revolutionary resistance made the atmosphere tense; violence and poverty prevailed.

We owe a debt to third world women theologians who



Credit: Tate Gallery

Mary Nazarene by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (c.1857)

have noticed the similarities between Mary's life and the lives of so many poor women even today. Giving birth in a homeless situation; fleeing as a refugee with your baby to a strange land to escape being killed by military action; losing a child to unjust execution by the state our newspapers yield up these icons of suffering even today. Mary is sister to the marginalized women who live unchronicled lives in oppressive situations. It does her no honor to rip her out of her conflictual, dangerous historical circumstances and transmute her into an icon of a peaceful, middle-class life robed in royal blue.

Woman of faith. This concreteness of her life in a Mediterranean Jewish peasant society provides compelling background for interpreting Miriam of

Nazareth as a woman of faith. As depicted in Scripture, she walked by faith, not by sight, asking questions, pondering things in her heart and plunging into the dark night of faith when grief stabbed her to the heart. In those days, the expectation of a messianic king was part of a larger hope for liberation of those suffering from oppressive rule. Luke's infancy narrative gives a particular twist to our memory of Mary's faith by placing her in a key position of partnership with God to bring about this historic promise. The Annunciation scene is nothing less than a prophetic vocation story on the model of the call to Moses at the burning bush. After questioning, she gives her free assent, launching her life on an adventure whose outcome is unknown. Sign of her solidarity with God's project, her very pregnancy takes place through the overshadowing of the Spirit. Despite the misuse of the virginal conception to disparage women's active use of their sexuality, this event actually subverts patriarchy by replacing the usual male participation with *ruah*, the creative Spirit of God. As Sojourner Truth scolded clerics who opposed her speaking in public: "Where your Christ come from, honey? Where your Christ come from? He come from God and a woman. Man ain't had nothin' to do with it!" The unconventional woman and her child conceived outside the patriarchal family structure begin fulfillment of the divine promise. Nothing is impossible for God.

Mary's faith-filled partnership with God in the work of liberation is underscored in her prayer the Magnificat, the longest set of words placed on the lips of any woman in the whole New Testament, but a prayer oddly omitted from traditional Mariology. She is in the embrace of her cousin Elizabeth; Zechariah has been struck dumb; the house is now women's space, and they fill it with a prophetic language of faith. The old pregnant woman calls the young one "blessed among women," repeating praise given in Jewish scriptures to Jael and to Judith after their heroic action to liberate God's people. Then, in the line of the great biblical singers Miriam, Moses, Deborah and Hannah, Mary launches into divine praise. Her spirit rejoices in God her Savior, for poor and common woman though she may be, the powerful, living, holy God is doing great things to her. Not to her only but to all the poor bringing the mighty down from their thrones, exalting the lowly, filling the hungry with good things, sending the unrepentant rich away empty of this in fulfillment of the ancient promise. In her very being this is happening, for she embodies the nonentities on whom God is lavishing rescue. This great prayer, a revolutionary song of salvation, places Mary in solidarity with the project of the coming reign of God whose intent is to heal, redeem and liberate. It does her no honor to reduce her faith to a privatized piety or a simple mother-son relationship focused exclusively on Jesus.

Space does not permit further development here of the memory of Mary as a Jewish village woman of faith, but we can begin to see the potential latent in other Gospel scenes. As is true of every person, she has her own

individual history. She stands forth in the memory of the community for "the way in which in her own particular life she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God, because she heard the word of God and acted upon it, and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions" (Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, No. 35). It is precisely as a poor woman, one of those on the underside of history, that she had faith. The later doctrines of the church that gift her with extraordinary blessings receive subversive meaning when linked with this memory, the status as "non-person" of the one to whom God has done great things.

We began by asking what would be a theologically sound, spiritually empowering and ethically challenging view of Mary, mother of Jesus the Christ, for the 21st century. Our answer leads along the path of remembrance in the communion of saints. To relate to Miriam of Nazareth as a partner in hope in the company of all the graced women and men who have gone before us; to be encouraged by her mothering of God to bring God to birth in our own world; to reclaim the power of her dangerous memory for the flourishing of suffering people; and to draw on the energy of her memory for a deeper relationship with the living God and stronger care for the world this theological approach fits at least one pattern of contemporary spirituality. When the Christian community remembers like this, Mary the friend of God and prophet inspires the lives of women and men alike.



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Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ, is a distinguished professor of theology emerita at Fordham University and the author of Consider Jesus, She Who Is, Quest for the Living God and Ask the Beasts.



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
Kate Burns, Director of Family and Youth Faith Formation
Mark Donohoe, Pastoral Associate
Robert Duff, Director of Music
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 Operations & 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

Audiovisual Support

Maureen Deery, Parish Photographer & Creator of Weekly Slide Show
Geoffrey Edwards, Livestream Videographer
Christian Chanderdatt, Audio Engineer

Schedule for Liturgy

Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday | 8:00 a.m.
Lord's Day | Sat 5:00 p.m.; Sun 8:00, 9:30*, and 11:30 a.m.
Holy Days | 8:00 a.m.
* Please note that the 9:30 Mass is both in person and livestreamed.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Father Jim Shaughnessy, SJ is available by appointment for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To schedule an appointment, please call the Parish Office.

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.

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.

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.

Faith Formation for Children

To register your child for Faith Formation, contact our Director of Family and Youth Faith Formation, Kate Burns.

Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team

The CAP Team is responsible for training all parish staff and volunteers in mandated reporting laws and the Protecting God's Children program (VIR-TUS). They provide consultation and support to anyone who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Maria Roche, Letitia Howland, or Erin Young if you have any questions. The Archdiocese of Boston has in place a vigorous program to protect children from harm and to educate its ministers and faithful about the nature of abuse, with a goal of increasing knowledge, creating a safe environment for children, and recognizing and reporting potentially dangerous situations. The full policy is available in the narthex, Parish Office, and on our website.

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 parish offers a warm, spiritual home for a diverse group of Catholics from many neighborhoods in and around Boston; we also have friends from around the country and the world. We invite local individuals and families to fill out a new parishioner form on our website. No matter your present status in the Catholic Church, current family or marital situation, gender or gender expression, sexual orientation, personal history, age, race, or self-image, you are invited and will be welcomed, accepted, loved, and respected here at Saint Cecilia. We are here to accompany and serve you.

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.

