

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

20 August 2023

Christ and the Canaanite Woman by Jean Germain Drouais (1784)

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20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

PRELUDE | *Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* from *Clavierübung* III
Brett Maguire, *parish organist*

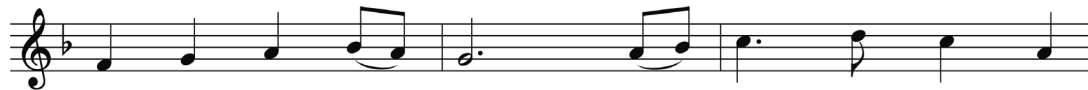
Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

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



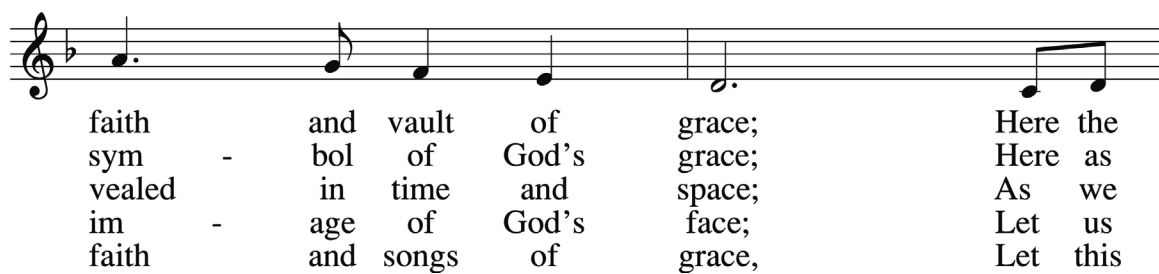
all can safe - ly live, A place where saints and
words are strong and true, Where all God's chil - dren
wa - ter, wine and wheat: A ban - quet hall on
yond the wood and stone To heal and strength - en,
songs and vi - sions heard And loved and treas - ured,



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



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and on earth peace to peo-ple
of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we a -
dore you, we glo-ri-fy you, we give you
thanks for your great glo - ry, Lord God, heav-en - ly
King, O God, al-might-y Fa - ther.
Lord Je - sus Christ, On-ly Be - got-ten Son, Lord God,
Lamb of God, Son of the Fa - ther, you take a -
way the sins of the world, have mer - cy on us; you take a -
way the sins of the world, re - ceive our prayer; you are seat - ed
at the right hand of the Fa - ther, have mer -
cy, have mer - cy on us. For you a-lone are the



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 Alonso



Verses

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,
you guide 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 Remembrance

Marty Haugen



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 PRAYERS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE PARISH!

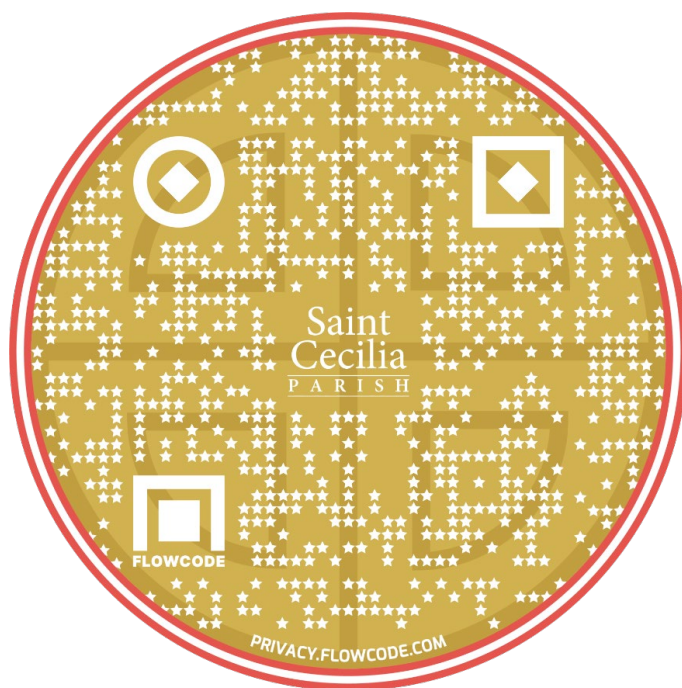
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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 | All That is Hidden

Bernadette Farrell



1. If you would fol-low me, fol-low where life will lead:
2. If you would hon-or me, hon-or the least of these:
3. If you would speak of me, live all your life in me:
4. If you would rise with me, rise through your des-ti-ny:



do not look for me a-mong the dead, for I am
you will not find me dressed in fin-er-y. My Word cries
my ways are not the ways that you would choose; my thoughts are
do not re-fuse the death which brings you life, for as the



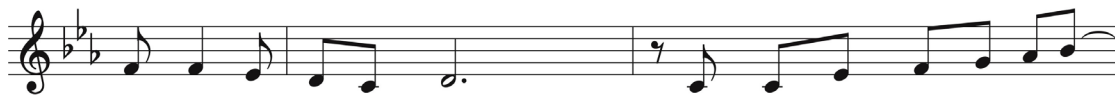
hid-den in pain, ris-en in love;
out to be heard; breaks through the world:
far be-yond yours, as heav-en from earth:
grain in the earth must die for re-birth,



there is no har-vest with-out sow-ing of grain.
my Word is on your lips and lives in your heart.
if you be-lieve in me my voice will be heard.
so I have plant-ed your life deep with-in mine.



All that is hid-den will be made clear. All that is



dark now will be re-vealed. What you have heard in the dark



pro-claim in the light; what you hear in whis-pers



pro-claim from the house - tops.

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.

HOLY, HOLY | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

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

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

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

GREAT AMEN | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

LAMB OF GOD | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte



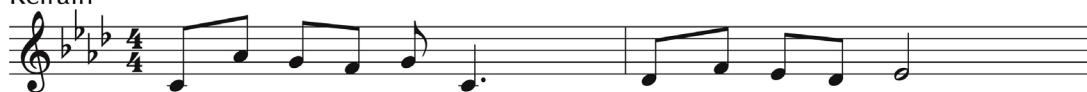
SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

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.

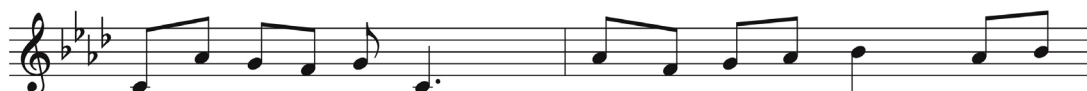
Refrain



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



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



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



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

Verses



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



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



D.C.

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

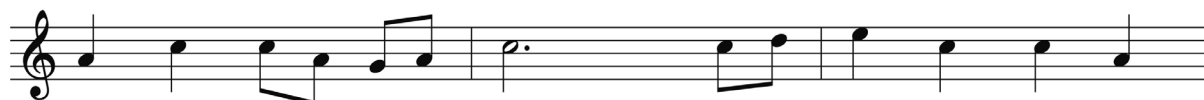
CONCLUDING RITES

RECESSIONAL | In Christ There is no East or West

MCKEE



1. In Christ there is no east or west, In
2. In him shall true hearts ev - 'ry - where Their
3. Join hands, dis - ci - ples in the faith, What -
4. In Christ now meet both east and west, In



him no south or north, But one great fam - 'ly
high com - mun - ion find; His serv - ice is the
e'er your race may be! Who serve each oth - er
him meet south and north; All Christ - ly souls are



bound by love Through-out the whole wide earth.
gold - en cord Close bind - ing hu - man - kind.
in Christ's love Are sure - ly kin to me.
one in him Through-out the whole wide earth.

POSTLUDE | *Récit de Basse de Trompette* from *Verbum Supernum*
Brett Maguire, parish organist

Nicolas de Grigny
(1672-1703)

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

For information on becoming involved or supporting the music program at Saint Cecilia,
please contact Dr. Robert Duff at 617-536-4548 or email: RDuff@stceciliaboston.org.

WELCOME!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS



MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, August 19 | 5:00 p.m.

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

Sunday, August 20 | 8:00 a.m.

Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ, celebrant
Harry Minehart, lector

Sunday, August 20 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Erin Young, Moira Macdonald, and Cathy Anderson, lectors

Sunday, August 20 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
James Paradis, Karen McMenamy, and Kevin Dumas, lectors

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Sunday, August 20 | 9:30 a.m.

Michael Conlon, *Memorial*
Maizie Mullen, *Memorial*
David Colantonio, *Memorial*

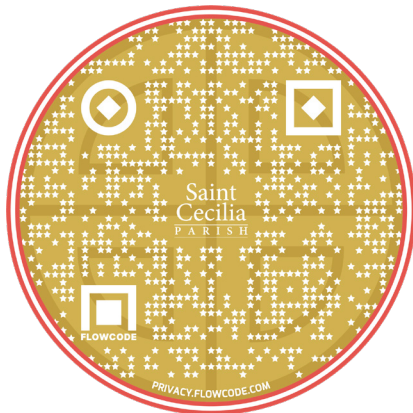
TODAY'S READINGS

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

SCAN THIS CODE
FOR OFFERTORY GIVING.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS
SUPPORT OF SAINT CECILIA PARISH!



PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Deceased

Bill Doran died on August 12. Pray for his eternal repose, as well as for the consolation of his husband, Phil Veysey, his family and his friends. The funeral Mass will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, August 18 at Saint Cecilia. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Our Sick

Please pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially **Fr. Roman Galadza, Elizabeth Kennedy, Jeff Hommes, Sue Ryan, Tim Finn, Glenn Gallo, John Hosang, Mary Walters, Marc Pelletier, Ray Cronin, Rick Gaillardetz, Michele Maniscalco, Nick Hungerford, and Fred Tufts.**

Welcome to Saint Cecilia Parish!

We are pleased to welcome the following newly-registered members of our parish: **Melissa Tran** of Cambridge, **Patricia Hines** of Westwood, the **McDonough Family** of Boston, **Frances Colantonio** and **Renee Sevelitte** of Kennebunk, Maine, **Gail Agostino** of Bradenton, Florida, and **Diana Bronchuk** and **Kevin Duran** of Boston. If you have not previously registered you can do so online at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Good Luck Collegians!

Best wishes and prayers to our students who are preparing to leave for college. We pray that the Lord will guide them during their time away, fill them with wisdom so that they might make wise decisions and choices, and give them the strength they'll need to live out the values they profess.

NIGHT OF WORSHIP

Tuesday, August 22 | 7:00—8:00 p.m.
In-person at Saint Cecilia Church
Open to: Everyone

Join the Saint Cecilia Young Adults for an in-person evening of adoration and worship in Saint Cecilia Church. Please enter through the side entrance on St. Cecilia Street, and ring the bell to be let in. All are welcome so please join us!

FAREWELL FOR NOW, OLIVIA HASTIE!



Hi everyone! I'm writing to let you know that I will be transitioning out of my current role as Faith Formation Coordinator at Saint Cecilia to embark on a new journey with the non-profit organization Future Church. There,

I'll be working to create a more equitable, welcoming, and loving Church as a Program Associate. As I step into this new chapter, I want to express my deep gratitude for the lessons and memories I've made with each of you throughout the past year. My time here as a staff member has left an indelible mark on my heart and this experience has been a source of immense inspiration for my life and scholarship. You haven't seen the last of me though! This fall, I look forward to seeing many of you in the pews on Sundays as a parishioner! Love, Olivia Hastie



JOIN SAINT CECILIA CARES!

"...I was sick and you visited me..."

Does your heart stir at the idea of visiting the sick or elderly, but you feel nervous about what to say or how to pray? Would you like to bring the compassion and communion of Saint Cecilia Parish to those who can no longer physically attend Mass? Do you feel called to bring Christ's presence to others through the Eucharist?

Saint Cecilia's CARES Ministry serves the sick and homebound of our Parish through friendly visits, prayer, and the Eucharist. To learn more, please contact Tanya Rybarczyk, Pastoral Associate and head of our CARES Ministry. You can email her at her parish email or call her at 617-536-4548 X117.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVE: BACKPACKS

While the beginning of the school year is an exciting time for kids and parents, it can also be stressful. For the families helped by the Mary Ann Brett Pantry in Dorchester, the beginning of the year can be especially intense. In hopes of alleviating stress and making the start of the school year sunnier for these families, Saint Cecilia is collecting new backpacks.

**The Brett Pantry has asked that we provide
141 backpacks as shown below:**

Grade K-4 (Ages 5-10)

Girls—38 Backpacks

Boys—44 Backpacks

Grade 5-8 (Ages 11-13)

Girls—12 Backpacks

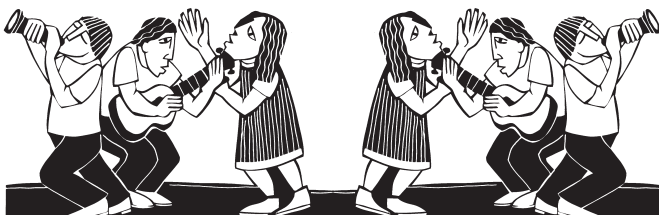
Boys—13 Backpacks

Grade 9-12 (Ages 14-18)

Girls—9 Backpacks

Boys—25 Backpacks

And to round out the backpacks, the Brett Pantry would also appreciate donations of: pens, colored pencils, glue sticks, index cards, and colored file folders. You can leave these donations in the baskets in the narthex or mail them to us via Amazon or another online retailer. You can send donations to *Saint Cecilia Parish, 18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA 02115, c/o Mark Lippolt*. Thank you so much for your dedication to improving the lives of the kids in Greater Boston!



LGBT ASYLUM TASK FORCE GALA

One of our Rainbow Ministry's non-profit partner agencies is the LGBT Asylum Task Force, located in Worcester. The LGBT Asylum Task Force welcomes LGBTQ people of all faith traditions from throughout the world. They provide housing, food, and connection to legal, medical, and mental resources at other local agencies. Legal asylum seekers aren't allowed to work for up to two years after arriving in the United States and this vital ministry provides comprehensive support for this two-year period.

LGBT Asylum Task Force's annual gala takes place on Saturday, September 30 from 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA. Each ticket is \$125 and there will be tables of eight. Buy tickets: <https://one.bidpal.net/taskforcegala2023/ticketing> If you plan to attend and would like to sit at the Saint Cecilia table, please email the parish office, which will put you in touch with Mark Lippolt. It is also possible to purchase a ticket so that an asylum seeker can attend the event.

WISDOM & MATURE SPIRITUALITY

The Wisdom and Mature Spirituality Group invites you to join us in reading Richard Rohr's 2019 title, *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For, and Believe*. Drawing on scripture, history, and spiritual practice, Rohr articulates a transformative view of Jesus Christ as a portrait of God's constant, unfolding work in the world. "God loves things by becoming them," he writes, and Jesus's life was meant to declare that humanity has never been separate from God—except by its own negative choice. When we recover this fundamental truth, faith becomes less about proving Jesus was God, and more about learning to recognize the Creator's presence all around us, and in everyone we meet. We are always happy to welcome new members who are in the second half of life. We meet every Sunday morning at 8:30 via Zoom. On the first Sunday of the month, we also meet in person at 1:00 in the Community Room. Though our time together we deepen our spiritual lives, encounter the God who loves us deeply, create friendships, and, when moved by the Spirit, discuss social justice issues. Feel free to drop in at any time. For more information, please email the parish office and we'll put you in touch with this group!



JOIN OUR MUSIC MINISTRY

As we look toward the fall, we're looking for folks to join our music ministry! In particular, we are looking for additional singers and instrumentalists to participate in music ministry at both the 9:30 and 11:30 liturgies. Choir rehearsals take place weekly on Thursdays from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the church. If you are interested, please see our Director of Music, Rob Duff, after Mass or email him at his parish email.



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. What you may not know is that the Huntington Avenue Y is the oldest in the United States and the cornerstone for the building was laid by President William Howard Taft in 1912.

Through our combined donations, we would like to see if we can collect enough (\$2,500) to send one inner-city kid (aged 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: Mark Lippolt, Saint Cecilia Parish, 18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA, 02115. *Thank you for your accustomed generosity!*

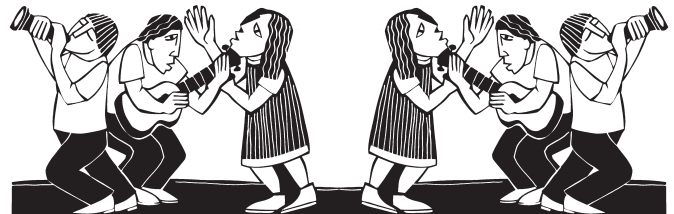


RCIA BEGINS NEXT MONTH!

Tuesday, September 12 | 6:30 p.m.



Are you interested in exploring the process for becoming Catholic, but not sure you want to commit? Were you raised Catholic, but never received Eucharist or Confirmation and now would like to learn more? Join the staff and some parishioners who have gone through the RCIA process in the past to learn more! A welcome gathering and information session will be held on September 12th from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Join us to see if it's the right time to begin your journey! Please email or call Tanya Rybarczyk with questions (617-536-4548 X117).



DONATIONS FOR DORCHESTER FOOD PANTRIES



During the summer, many of the families that have been faithful donors to our collection of food items for the Catholic Charities and Mary Ann Brett pantries are away until September. We hope you'll consider participating in this important ministry during the summer so

that the volume of our donated food remains strong. The local economy might have improved for some of us, but the working poor and unemployed continue to face enormous economic challenges—especially in light of rising food prices. Saint Cecilia is committed to providing these items to the food pantries: Cheerios or cornflakes, peanut butter, white flour pasta and spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, canned tuna fish, canned chicken breast, cooking oil, and tomato sauce. While any canned or shelf-stable items are appreciated, it is particularly helpful when parishioners can help with the staples listed above. Unfortunately, we cannot accept donations of baked items or produce in the narthex.



'DOES GOD EXIST?' AND OTHER FAQs ABOUT FAITH AND RELIGION

BY JAMES MARTIN, SJ

When I asked a Jesuit friend who has worked for decades with high school students what are the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) asked by young people about faith, he said, "Who cares?" And I said, "What?" He laughed and said, "Oh, sorry, I'm not saying that to you! I'm saying that for many young people faith and religion are irrelevant. So the main question is not about some issue about Catholicism, but the whole idea."

Many young people don't think about God and don't pay attention to religion. And when they do pay attention it's to say how terrible religious people are: narrow-minded, misogynistic, homophobic, and so on. So for this essay, I spoke with friends who work with young people, and young people themselves, to get the hardest questions. I have come up with seven, some asked by people who aren't sure about faith, some by those not sure about religion, and others who are believers but struggling with how to believe and how to belong to a church. Here they are.

1. Who cares? Why care about faith? Why care about God?

The other day I was on vacation with some Jesuit friends and I was walking on the beach. There I was, in a beautiful setting, and feeling really happy. Suddenly I started to wonder: Is that all there is? From time to time, we all feel a persistent longing, a need for something more. Part of that we might chalk up to greed, as in, "I want to have even more than I have now." But it's also deeper. It's a longing to know what the point of it all is.

That longing is something that even your disbelieving, agnostic, or atheist friends may admit to feeling. They wonder from time to time, to quote an old 1960s song: "Is that all there is?" Or, "What's the meaning of life?"

Why do even atheists and agnostics feel this? Where does that longing come from?

The best answer is from St. Augustine, who said, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O Lord." That longing, that desire for more, that quest for completion, is our desire for God. And this, crucially, is also one way that God calls us. That's one thing that I find helpful to ask people: Did you ever think that the desire to know more, to understand

more, to be more, to live more fully, is a longing for God? How else would God call to us other than to place that longing within us? A few years ago on the wall of a retreat house, I saw a plaque that said, "That which you seek is seeking you." So one answer to the first question: Who cares?" is "You do, if you're honest with yourself." And God cares too, because the desire you feel for completion, for satisfaction, for fulfillment, is your desire for God, and your desire for God is, again, God's desire for you.

2. Does God exist?

If we're going to talk about FAQs we have to talk about the F-est of the Qs: Does God exist? Of course, there is no completely satisfactory answer, no airtight proof for the existence of God. Saints, theologians, and other thinkers have wrestled with this question for years. If there were an airtight proof, everyone would believe.

Let me share how I answer that question when I'm asked. If a person is open to philosophizing or theologizing, I often pose the question that stopped me in my tracks during my philosophy studies: Why is there something rather than nothing at all? That usually makes people think. Then you can ask, à la Aristotle: Didn't something have to start all this? Even if you believe in the Big Bang,, when unimaginably dense matter exploded into the universe, you have to ask: Where did that unimaginably dense matter come from? The human mind, which naturally understands cause and effect, is often teased into active thought by that question. There has to be, to paraphrase Aristotle, an "uncaused cause."

Then I might try some St. Thomas Aquinas, who is borrowing from Aristotle, with his "argument from design." If you were walking on the beach and found a wristwatch, you would assume that someone made it. Just so, if you look at the complexity of the universe, you assume a maker. Now you could say that the world and the universe are all the result of random probabilities, but if you see a seagull soaring over the ocean, as I did the other day, to me, it points to some sort of creative intent. But most people aren't convinced by philosophical arguments. So I try to start somewhere else: their experience. I start by asking if they've ever had an experience that seemed to come from outside of themselves. Something that surprised them with a deep

emotion or wonder or awe. And most people, if the question is asked in an inviting way, say yes. One young man, an actor, told me that he had an experience of feeling that he was in the right place, the right life, and the right profession, as the sun shone down on him one day in London. He said, again as people often do, that it was coming from outside himself. So I said, "You've wondered about God. Did you ever stop to think that this was God's way of reaching out to you?" That began his journey to faith. For me, then, one helpful way to answer this question is to help the person see where God has already encountered them. Evangelization, then, is often less about bringing God to other people, which is certainly necessary at times, but more about helping people see where God already is in their lives.

3. Why do I need religion at all?

At this point, someone might say, "Well, O.K., so maybe I believe in God. But can't I be happy without religion? I mean, what's the point? Who needs all those rules? I can get support from all sorts of places outside of religion. So who needs it?" The answer is yes, you can be happy without religion. I'm sure you know many people who might believe in God, but have zero interest in going to any sort of church service, much less be baptized.

So why do you need religion? Here I would like to distinguish between faith and religion. Faith is belief in God. Religion is believing in God as part of a community, with other people—believing together, worshiping together, and journeying together. Now a lot of people prefer that it just be "God and me." And there is a certain appeal to that. It's important to have a personal relationship with God and to explore that in depth. That's what a lot of Jesuit spirituality is about: how to experience a one-on-one relationship with God.

But there's a problem: As social animals, we naturally want to be with other people, even if it's difficult. That's one reason that Jesus called a group of disciples together: not only for his own friendship but because he knew that the disciples would need one other. Even if you look at something as simple as concerts or sporting events, you can see that we're drawn to be together. It's great to listen to music on your own, but isn't it different when you're at a concert with friends? It's nice to celebrate your birthday by yourself, but isn't it nicer with friends and family? We're social animals. I mean here you are at World Youth Day! You could have stayed home, right, and just watched it streaming, right? So "God and me" denies the reality of community.

To paraphrase the American priest Isaac Hecker, the founder of the Paulist Fathers, religion helps you to connect but also to "correct." Or rather be corrected. Because if it's just you

and God then there is no one to challenge you. Let's say, for example, you've decided that it's O.K. just to ignore poor people. You figure, as one character says in E. M. Forster's novel *Howards End*, "The poor are the poor. One is sorry for them, but there it is." And that's the end of that.

Religion will help correct you in that. You have a whole tradition that pushes up against that. Not only of Jesus explicitly telling us to help the poor in the Gospels (Matthew 25 most bluntly) but also the tradition of Catholic social teaching and, more broadly, the Christian legacy of social justice. Or, before that, the Jewish tradition of caring for the widow and the orphan. Put more positively, religion helps you to understand more about God. Because God isn't just at work in you: God is at work in the community, as we Catholics say, the people of God.

Here's another way to look at the need for community. I have led several pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and we visit all the sites where Jesus was born, lived, preached, healed, died, and rose from the dead. It's amazing—life-changing really—to see places that Jesus himself saw. And at the end of each day, we have what we call "faith sharing," where I ask people to describe something meaningful, interesting, or significant that has happened to them in the day. And the amazing thing is that people's reactions vary widely. One person will find sunrise on the Sea of Galilee a deeply moving experience; another might say, "Meh." And here you see how the Spirit is at work in different ways.

The Holy Spirit meets people where they are, and different things touch different people. But if it's just you and God and you're not in a community, then you miss out on all those different ways! You miss out on connecting with the faith lives of others and you miss out on seeing God in unfamiliar ways, and, therefore, you miss out on connecting with God in new ways.

So the community, also known as religion, helps to correct us and connect us. More basically, without religion you're missing something fundamental about God himself, or Godself, who is, you could say, a community. The Trinity is a community of love, each relating to one another. So without community, you're not really encountering God.

4. Aren't all religions the same?

So maybe you say: "O.K., I guess it makes sense to join a community, but why would I want to join yours? Aren't they all the same? Does it matter what I believe?" Here, as much as I am all in favor of interfaith relations and ecumenism, I would say that it does matter. Let's start with Christianity. What's the difference? Well, to begin with, unlike other

world religions, Christians have a specific idea of God. We see God as a personal God. It is a God who takes an interest in what we call “salvation history.” In St. Ignatius Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises*, a four-week retreat where we meditate on the life of Christ, Ignatius invites us to start at the beginning of Jesus’ life. The very beginning: he asks us to imagine the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—looking down on the earth and seeing everyone’s needs. Ignatius asks us to imagine the Trinity looking at some people being born, others dying, others being sick, others well, people laughing and crying, but people, overall, in need of help. And the Trinity decides to send the Second Person, Jesus Christ, to join us.

When you visit the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, you have to enter through a rather strange opening. Originally, the entrance was huge, so large that people could ride horses into it. Then because of subsequent invasions, in order to make it more difficult to enter, the doorway was blocked off, and today it’s only about four feet high, and you have to crouch or kneel to enter. So the name of the entrance is the Door of Humility. Now that door is usually seen as relating to our humility, but I also think of God’s humility, choosing to become human, choosing to become one of us, so much did God love us. This then, is not some apathetic, distant God.

So now we finally come to Jesus, because in the end, the Christian religion is not a series of rules and regulations, or philosophical or theological propositions, and certainly not about an argument with another religion about which one is better. No, it’s about a person: Jesus. It’s important to have rules and regulations—any human organization needs them to exist. Have any of you ever lived in a house off campus without rules? Even World Youth Day has some rules. More importantly, we need a moral code to live by. But, in the end, our faith is not about a series of laws, it’s about an encounter with a person: Jesus Christ. We are invited to come to know him, to let him know us, and to follow him. Not just worship him, by the way, which he never says. More basically, to follow him.

5. Who is Jesus?

What most people say is: “Well, okay, I admire Jesus as a human being. Being so charitable and all that. But I have a hard time with him being the Son of God and all that. In other words, what does it mean for him to be fully human and fully divine? How does that work?”

The first time I was in the Holy Land, to research for a book, one of my goals was to see one special place. When I was a Jesuit novice I had read about a place called the Bay of

Parables, where Jesus got into a boat on the shoreline, pushed out into the Sea of Galilee, and preached to the crowd. Then he compares the reception of the good news to different kinds of soil. Some people are like rocky soil, where things can’t take root, others like soil with thorns, where the lure of wealth chokes things off, and some are like fertile soil, where things take root.

Something about that passage used to confuse me: Why does he get into a boat? Why does he actually go farther away from the crowd? A few years after the novitiate, I was on vacation with some Jesuits, and we were at a house that was near a little harbor, and I could hear all the people talking from the boats, about a mile away from where we were staying. I remarked on this and one of my companions said, “Oh yes, well sound travels over water easily. That’s why Jesus preached those parables from the boat.” I thought that was fascinating. It reminded me that sometimes the things you don’t “get” about the Gospels often have a real-life explanation.

On our pilgrimage, after some mishaps and misadventures, we found the Bay of Parables. It was just outside Capernaum, where Jesus is described as preaching the parables. As I stood there, here’s what I saw all around me: huge rocks, thorn bushes, and fertile ground. Just like in the parable. And it dawned on me that when Jesus was preaching this parable, he wasn’t speaking about rocks in general, or thorn bushes in general, but about these things right here, right in front of the people. We sometimes think of the Son of God as being divinely inspired by the Father, and he was. But he also drew on his human experience. Standing by the Bay of Parables helped me to understand him as fully human and fully divine.

Outside of Nazareth, about a 90-minute walk, is a town called Sepphoris. Now, Nazareth was tiny: 200 to 400 people. Sepphoris, by contrast, was a huge town of about 30,000 people, which at the time of Jesus’s boyhood and young adulthood was being rebuilt by King Herod. It had an amphitheater that seated 4,000 people, a royal court, banks, and stores that sold mosaics. You can visit the ruins and see all those things, and you can tell it was a wealthy town. And if you think of Jesus walking from wealthy Sepphoris to poor Nazareth, returning to Mary and Joseph, living very simply, it’s easy to imagine him wondering about income disparities, and why the poor have it so hard. And who knows if the things he saw in Sepphoris about the wealthy didn’t make it into one of his parables? Or if the woman looking for her lost coin isn’t his mother? We tend to think of Jesus as fully divine, which he is, but we forget how his fully human experiences contributed to who he was.

Who is Jesus? So many answers: He is a carpenter from Nazareth. He is the Son of God. He is a man who got tired, ate and drank, and wept. He healed the sick. He raised people from the dead. He got frustrated and angry. He is the Second Person of the Trinity, our Savior and Messiah, the Risen One, but he is also our brother, friend, and companion. Pedro Arrupe, the former superior general of the Society of Jesus, was once asked, "Who is Jesus for you?" And he said, "For me, Jesus is everything!" Until people start to understand his humanity, it's hard to understand his divinity. So usually I start with the human nature of Jesus, and as people come to know him they, in a sense, trust him. And trust in what he does and in whom he says he is, which is the Son of God. In the end though, fully human and fully divine is a mystery, an F.A.Q. if there ever was one, but one well worth pondering, for a lifetime.

6. Why Be a Catholic?

So maybe you say: "Okay, I can accept that Jesus was divine and I believe in the idea that the Christian religion has a lot to offer. Why the Catholic Church? How can I want to be a part of the church with all those sex abuse scandals? And the fact that women can't be ordained, what about that? Other Christian churches do that. Worst of all, the way you treat L.G.B.T.Q. people. Aren't they supposed to be 'disordered'?"

These objections—not philosophical or theological questions—are the main reasons that most people shy away from the Catholic church. And let's be blunt: the visceral reactions to sex abuse scandals, homophobia, and misogyny aren't about being anti-Catholic; they are about being a thinking and feeling person. Who wouldn't be offended by those things? As Pope Benedict XVI said in 2010, the greatest threat to the church, or what he called its greatest persecution, was from "sin inside the church." Ten years earlier, in 2000, during the Jubilee Year, St. John Paul II asked for forgiveness from God for a whole host of sins: antisemitism, as well as sins committed against Christians of other faiths, women, the poor, and so on.

Beyond these scandals are other things that drive people away: hypocritical bishops and priests who live what they perceive as lavish lifestyles, out-of-touch statements on sex, women, L.G.B.T. people, and so on. And then something else we have to admit: priests, sisters, brothers, lay leaders, bishops, Catholic leaders of every type who are, to use an underused word, mean. A lot of young people want nothing to do with the Catholic Church, even if they believe in God, love Jesus and see the need for religion.

So why belong? Well, let's start with why you would stay if you're already Catholic. For me, baptism is a really important part of this. And at your baptism, God called you into the

church by name. Even in the face of these scandals, you're called to stay. It's something like your family. Your family isn't perfect, maybe dysfunctional, maybe really messed up. But it's still your family and you love it. Or maybe it's like your country. If you don't like whomever the president or prime minister or even king is, that doesn't mean you pack up and leave. Plus, the church needs you right now, to help it change and grow. How can you leave if God has called you into the church? Finally, if you're Catholic and believe in religion, to paraphrase Peter, "Where else would we go?" The search for a religious community without sin is a search without end. So one reason to stay: God asks you to.

Why join if you're not baptized? Well, you can just ask the tens of thousands of people who do join every year, and who know that it's a sinful place, but also know it's the place where you still encounter Jesus Christ in the Mass, still experience the Holy Spirit through the sacraments and still come to know who God is through the community. But people join for many reasons: for the unbroken line of tradition back to the apostles, for the great theological treasures of the church, for the spiritualities of the religious orders, for Catholic social teaching, for its work with the poor and many other personal reasons. For in the midst of sinners you meet saints, both living and dead, and encounter their stories.

The Rev. Andrew Greeley, a Catholic priest and sociologist once said, "We've done our best to push people out, and they keep staying. Why?" His answer: the stories. To begin with the stories of the saints and the blessed, who, as one of the Mass prefaces says, "by their way of life offer us an example, by communion with them, give us companionship, by their intercession sure support." As the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner said, the saints show us what it means to be Christian in this particular way. But we join not only for the stories of the saints, but those of our fellow Catholics, one another, in whom we encounter God and who lead us to God. In coming to know other people, in their totality, as part of what Pope Francis calls the "culture of encounter," seeing them face to face and hearing their stories, which you're doing here at World Youth Day, we come to know God better. That's part of what our church is.

And you can see that best from the inside. One of the most beautiful homilies I've ever heard was from Pope Benedict during his visit to the United States in 2008. During his homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, he used the image of stained glass to help us understand that: "From the outside, those windows are dark, heavy, even dreary. But once one enters the church, they suddenly come alive; reflecting the light passing through them, they reveal all their splendor. Many writers—here in America we can think

of Nathaniel Hawthorne—have used the image of stained glass to illustrate the mystery of the Church herself. It is only from the inside, from the experience of faith and ecclesial life, that we see the Church as she truly is: flooded with grace, resplendent in beauty, adorned by the manifold gifts of the Spirit. It follows that we, who live the life of grace within the Church's communion, are called to draw all people into this mystery of light."

7. How do I pray?

Most of us are familiar with the Jesuit ideal of "finding God in all things." And I think most of us are pretty comfortable with the idea of encountering God in the Eucharist and through the sacraments of course, but also relationships, family, school, work, nature, music, art and so on. But here I'm talking about quiet one-on-one time with God. For some people encountering God, or letting God encounter them in prayer is much harder.

The first thing to know is that everyone can pray. How can I know that? Because we all have within us the desire for prayer, placed in us, once again, by God. You have a desire for union with God. How do I know that? Well, unless you're doing this for extra credit for some theology class, you all wanted to be at World Youth Day, and you probably want to be here out of a desire for some sort of union, or relationship with God, or Jesus, which is also the goal of prayer. So the main reason for prayer is that God is calling you to it.

One of the key insights about prayer is that there is no one right way to do it. Whatever gets you closer to God is the "right" prayer for you. Some people like Ignatian contemplation, where you imagine yourself in a Gospel scene or speaking with God or with Jesus. Some like *lectio divina*, where you ask certain questions of a Bible text and meditate on it. Some like the examination of conscience, where you review the day to see where God is. But those are sometimes too "content heavy" for some people. So some people like more abstract prayer, like centering prayer. Some like eucharistic adoration. Some like rote prayers like the Rosary. The best way to pray is whatever brings you closer to God. And that varies from person to person. But let's get to a FAQ within this FAQ. One of the hardest things for people to understand about prayer is: What is supposed to happen?"

When I was a Jesuit novice, other Jesuits would say things like, "Oh, God felt so close in prayer." Or "I felt God inviting me to look at this." Or, "God said this to me in prayer." And I said: "What are you talking about? Am I supposed to hear voices? See visions?" When people talk about having a relationship with God, what are they talking about? Briefly let me go over a few things that can happen when you pray.

First, nothing. A lot of times it feels like nothing is happening in prayer. You're distracted or you fall asleep or your mind wanders or there's just...nothing. At least on the surface. Now, any time spent in the presence of the divine is transformative. But sometimes things seem dry. And that's natural.

But other times something does happen. Let's say you're anxious about something in your life and the Gospel passage for that day is Jesus stilling the storm at sea. What can happen when you close your eyes? Well, first you can get an insight. You realize, say, that even though the disciples were worried, Jesus was in the boat with them. And you start to think about how God is with you now, in ways you've overlooked. It's an insight. Now, pay attention: this is one way that God has of communicating with you. When people talk about "hearing God" in prayer, this is one way they experience that.

Or you might experience an emotion: You're sad because you feel God isn't in your boat with you. This may be an invitation from God to be honest with God about those feelings. Maybe you have a desire: to lead a more trusting life or to follow Jesus even in the storms. Or you might have a memory of a time when you were afraid and God was with you. Or you might have a feeling, of calm. Or you might even have a few words or phrases that come to mind—not hearing them audibly but like you were remembering the lyrics to a song. All these things—insights, emotions, desires, memories, feelings, words, and phrases—are ways that any spiritual director might tell you about, ways that God communicates with us in our prayer. It can happen during adoration, saying the Rosary, while doing Ignatian contemplation, or when being quiet after Mass, doing centering prayer or just walking in nature. All these ways are how God "speaks" in prayer.

These are the FAQs I've heard most frequently. I hope they help you and maybe help as you speak with your friends. But remember the most effective invitation to belief, to faith, to religion, to Christianity, to the Catholic Church and even to prayer is not an answer to a question, but a person: Jesus Christ. And one way that works today is by people seeing Jesus Christ in you! Your very life is a tool for evangelization. "Preach the Gospel always," as St. Francis of Assisi said, "Use words when necessary." Be Christ for your friends, your family, and for the world.

~ The Rev. James Martin, S.J., is a Jesuit priest, author, and editor at large at America. This essay is adapted from a talk delivered at World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal on Aug. 2.

PARISH RESOURCES

Parish Office & Mailing Address

18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA 02115
Hours | Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. & By Appointment
Phone | 617 536 4548; Fax | 617 536 1781
Website | www.stceciliaboston.org

Parish Staff

**To email parish staff, please use the following formula:
First Initial + Last Name @stceciliaboston.org*

Rev. John J. Unni, Pastor
Rev. James Shaughnessy, SJ, Pastoral Support
Christine Burns, Digital and Print Media Coordinator
Tyler Cesario, Assistant Director of Music
Mark Donohoe, Pastoral Associate
Robert Duff, Director of Music
Olivia Hastie, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation
Daniel Lamoureux, Vigil Organist
Scott MacDonald, Director of Faith Formation and Parish Visibility
Brett Maguire, Organist
Colleen Melaugh, Director of Finance and Development
Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Pastoral Director of Operations
Lisa Pickering, Director of Facilities and Events
Tanya Rybarczyk, Pastoral Associate

Assisting Clergy

Rev. Terrence Devino, SJ
Rev. Peter Grover, OMF
Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ

Audiovisual Support

Maureen Deery, Parish Photographer & Creator of Weekly Slide Show
Geoffrey Edwards, Livestream Videographer
Vasily Izumchensky, Livestream Sound Engineer

Reception

Keith Brinkley, Eli Geruschat, Joe O'Brien, & Corey Ortiz

Schedule for Liturgy

Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday | 8:00 a.m.
Lord's Day | Sat 5:00 p.m.; Sun 8:00, 9:30*, 11:30 a.m., & 6:00 p.m.
Holy Days | 8:00 a.m.
* Please note that the 9:30 Mass is both in person and livestreamed.

Parking

There is discounted parking at The Hynes Auditorium Garage (located at 50 Dalton Street next to Bukowski's Tavern), for \$13, available on Sundays until 3:00 p.m., and \$13 after 4:00 every day of the week. To get this discount, ask a greeter for a chaser ticket at Mass or ask a staff person during the week. Chaser tickets must be used at the machine at the exit gate. To obtain the discount, place the ticket you received upon entering the garage into the machine, then follow it with the chaser ticket.

Building Accessibility

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

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.

Baptism for Infants

Infant baptism is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. For more information, please contact Mark Donohoe in the Parish Office.

Faith Formation for Children

To register your child for our Faith Formation Program, please contact our Children's Faith Formation Coordinator, Olivia Hastie.

Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team

The CAP Team is responsible for training all parish staff and volunteers in mandated reporting laws and the Protecting God's Children program (VIR-TUS). They provide consultation and support to anyone who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Maria Roche (maria.roche15@gmail.com), Letitia Howland (l_howland@hotmail.com), or Erin Young (erin.t.young@gmail.com) if you have any questions. The Archdiocese of Boston has in place a vigorous program to protect children from harm and to educate its ministers and faithful about the nature of abuse, with a goal of increasing knowledge, creating a safe environment for children, and recognizing and reporting potentially dangerous situations. The full policy is available in the narthex, Parish Office, and on our website.

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.

Marriage

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

Care of the Sick

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

Order of Christian Funerals

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

Joining Our Community

We're happy that you're with us! Our community offers a warm, spiritual home for a diverse group of Catholics. We come from many neighborhoods in and around Boston, but also have long distance parishioners from around the country and around the world. We invite both local and long distance individuals and families to fill out a new parishioner form on our website. No matter what your background or location, please know that you are always welcome at Saint Cecilia.

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 ministry email address, please call our reception desk (617-536-4548) and our receptionists would be happy to pass along the appropriate information. Thank you for helping us maintain our parish security online!