

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



Two Doves on an Autumn Branch

by Ohara Koson (1877-1945)

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

6 September 2026

Saint Cecilia

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6 SEPTEMBER 2026

THE TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

PRELUDE | Largo from Guitar Concerto in D Major, RV 93

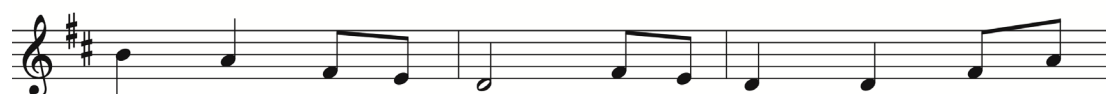
Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

ENTRANCE PROCESSION | As We Gather at Your Table

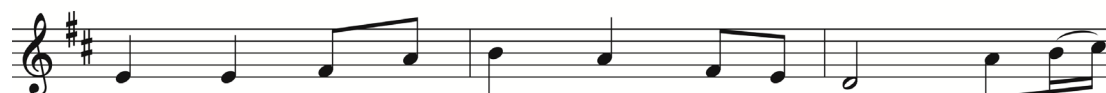
NETTLETON



1. As we gath - er at your Ta - ble, As we
2. Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness In the
3. Gra-cious Spir - it, help us sum - mon Oth - er



lis - ten to your word, Help us know, O God, your
sac - ra - ment of life; Send us forth to love and
guests to share that feast Where tri - um - phant Love will



pres - ence; Let our hearts and minds be stirred. Nour - ish
serve you, Bring - ing peace where there is strife. Give us,
wel - come Those who had been last and least. There no



us with sa - cred sto - ry Till we
Christ, your great com - pas - sion To for -
more will en - vy blind us Nor will

claim it as our own; Teach us through this ho - ly
give as you for - gave; May we still be - hold your
pride our peace de - stroy, As we join with saints and
ban - quet How to make Love's vic - t'ry known.
im - age In the world you died to save.
an - gels To re - peat the sound - ing joy.

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.

GLORIA | Mass from Age to Age

Chris de Silva

Refrain

Glo - ry, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high - est,
glo - ry, glo-ry to God, and on earth peace to peo - ple,
peo - ple of good will. and on earth
peace to peo - ple, peo - ple of good will.

Verse 1

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.

Verse 2

Cantor:



2. 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



Assembly: sins of the world, have mer - cy on us; *Cantor:* you



Assembly: take a-way the sins of the world, re-ceive our prayer; *Cantor:* you are



Assembly: seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther, have mer-cy on us. **D.C.**

Verse 3

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.

COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Ezekiel 33: 7-9

RESPONSORIAL PSALM | Ps. 95: If Today You Hear His Voice

Marty Haugen



Come, let us ring out our joy to the LORD;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come into his presence, giving
thanks;
let us hail him with a song of praise. *R.*

O come; let us bow and bend low.
Let us kneel before the LORD who
made us,
for he is our God, and we the people,
the people of his pasture, the flock

of his hand. *R.*

O that today you would listen to his
voice!
“Harden not your hearts as at
Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the
desert
when your forebears put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they
saw my work.” *R.*

SECOND READING | Romans 13: 8-10

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte



GOSPEL | Matthew 18: 15-20

HOMILY

NICENE CREED

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

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE PARISH!

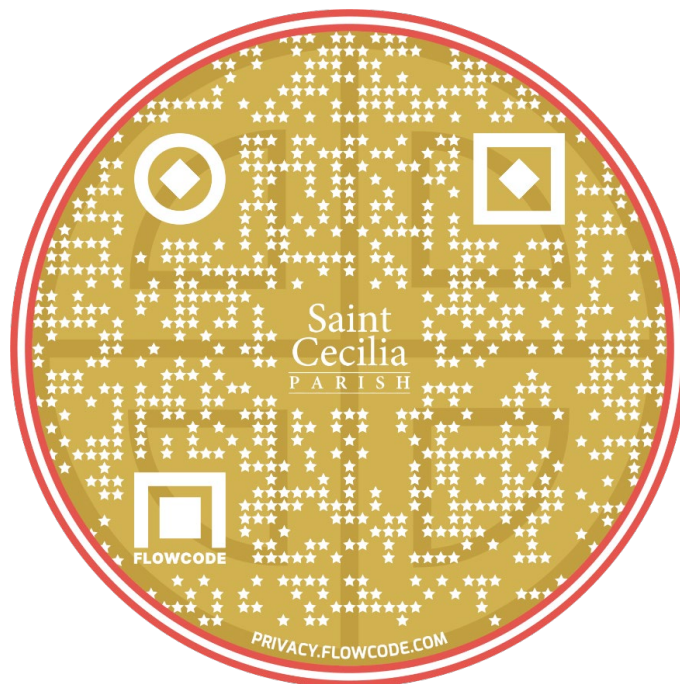
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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

If the Flowcode doesn't work for you, please visit www.flowcode.com/page/stceciliaboston.

You can also mail a check to:

Saint Cecilia Parish
18 Belvidere Street
Boston, MA 02115



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

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

ST. COLUMBA



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



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



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

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

✠ The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

✠ Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

✠ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right and just.

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

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

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

AMEN | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
All: And with your spirit.

AGNUS DEI | Mass of Christ the Savior

Dan Schutte



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



To this meal and sac-ri-fice, Lord, you draw us near:



Taste of God's a - bun-dant grace for all gath-ered here.



In your love you sum-mon us; bro-ken now we come. By your



bod-y and your blood, heal us, make us one.

Verse 1



1. May this meal be med-i-cine for the weak,



that we may love as you have loved. At this har - vest of



good-ness, may we feast in u - ni - ty. **D.C.**

Verse 2



2. May this feast bring heal - ing for the poor,



that we may serve as you have served. At this



ta - ble of jus-tice, may we serve in u - ni - ty. **D.C.**

Verses 3-6



3. May our hearts be o - pen to your pres - ence,
4. May this food be wel - come for the "oth - er,"
5. May our hands bring com - fort to the sick,
6. May this bread trans - form our hearts for peace,



that we may share as you have shared. At this
em - brac - ing all hu - man - i - ty. At this
em - pow'r - ing all who gath - er here. At this
re - viv - ing hope for all our days. At this



gath - 'ring of na - tions, may we live in u - ni - ty.
ban - quet of glad - ness, may we work for u - ni - ty.
al - tar of heal - ing, may we sing for u - ni - ty.
tem - ple of mer - cy, may we pray for u - ni - ty.

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



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



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



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



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



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

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.



REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

Twenty-five years later, we remember.

On September 11, we mark the 25th anniversary of the attacks on our nation and remember with prayer all who lost their lives at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

We remember, too, the first responders, rescue workers, and all who ran toward danger to help others. We remember all those who have continued to suffer the effects of that day, including those who have died from illnesses related to the rescue and recovery. And we remember the families, friends, and communities whose lives were changed forever.

As people of faith, we remember not only with sorrow, but with prayer. May we never forget the lives that were lost, the courage that was shown, or the compassion that bound people together in the days that followed. May God grant eternal rest to those who died, comfort to those who mourn, and peace to our world.

Twenty-five years later, we remember—
and we pray that we may never cease to care for one another.

September 11, 2001 – September 11, 2026

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS



MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, September 5 | 5:00 p.m.

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV, celebrant
Uma Staehler, lector

Sunday, September 6 | 8:00 a.m.

Rev. Christopher Brolly, SJ, celebrant
Dede Simon, lector

Sunday, September 6 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Karen McGillicuddy, Tim McGillicuddy, Rosaria Salerno,
lectors

Sunday, September 6 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. John Predmore, SJ, celebrant
Catherine Horsley, Zachary Boutin, lectors

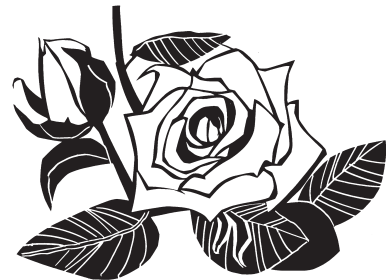
SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Saturday, September 5 | 5:00 p.m.

Betty Botosh, *Memorial*

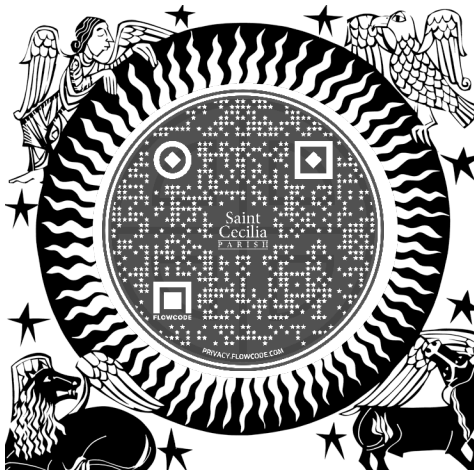
Sunday, September 6 | 9:30 a.m.

David Feeley, *5th Anniversary*
Tania Lam, *5th Anniversary*
Joseph "Dodo" Nee, *10th Anniversary*
Tamam Fakoory, *Memorial*
Joseph Garcia, *Memorial*
Leah Shea, *Memorial*



*The flowers in front of the altar are given
to the Glory of God and in loving memory
of **Betty Botosh** by her son,
Charlie Botosh.*

Scan this code for
offertory giving:



Thank you for your generous
support of Saint Cecilia Parish!

TODAY'S READINGS

Ezekiel 33:7-9
Romans 13:8-10
Matthew 18:15-20

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Sirach 27:30—28:7
Romans 14:7-9
Matthew 18:21-35

PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Labor Day Weekend Schedule

There will be no coffee hospitality in the parish hall this Sunday, September 6, as we give our hardworking Hospitality Team a well-deserved opportunity to enjoy the holiday weekend. In observance of Labor Day, the parish offices will be closed on Monday, September 7.

Sunday at Five Kicks Off Next Week

On September 13, our Sunday evening Mass returns at 5:00 p.m., followed each week by a Sunday Night Supper. We're making this change not simply to adjust the time of Mass, but to create a new opportunity for our parish community to gather in worship, share a meal, and enjoy one another's company. This Mass is for everyone—students from the many schools around us, young adults, families, longtime parishioners, and anyone who would like to make Sunday evening a time of prayer and community.

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.



IN THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN

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About This Week's Cover

As we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of September 11, we chose an image that does not attempt to portray the horror of that terrible day. Instead, this week's cover features *Two Doves on an Autumn Branch*, a quiet and beautiful woodblock print by the Japanese artist Ohara Koson (1877-1945).

The image invites us to pause and reflect. Its autumn leaves remind us of the passage of time, while the white and blue doves evoke peace, companionship, and the hope that beauty and goodness can endure even in a world marked by violence and loss.

Twenty-five years after the attacks of September 11, we remember those who died, the families and communities forever changed by that day, and the countless acts of courage and compassion that followed. We also continue to pray and work for a world in which peace is more than a distant hope.



SUNDAY AT FIVE



Mass at 5:00.
Supper afterward.
Everyone is welcome.

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?

SCHEDULE YOUR AUDITION TODAY!

The Saint Cecilia Choir is looking for new members beginning this fall. The choir leads congregational singing at the 9:30, 11:30 and 5:00pm liturgies weekly. Weekly rehearsals are on Thursdays from 7-9pm in the sanctuary. In addition to singing during the liturgy, the choir will be preparing two choral-orchestral works for Saint Cecilia Day: Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Francesco Durante's *Magnificat* as well as music for our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols that takes place in Advent.

If you're interested, please contact our director of music Robert Duff at his parish email to arrange for a vocal hearing.

MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY DROP IN

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 | 1PM | CLASSROOM 3

The Mental Health Ministry at Saint Cecilia exists to provide compassionate support, understanding, and spiritual accompaniment to individuals and families whose lives are touched by mental health challenges. While not a therapy group, we seek to create a safe, welcoming, and judgment-free community where people can share their experiences, find hope, and discover that they are not alone. For more information, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | 1 PM | CLASSROOM 3

The Saint Cecilia Mental Health Ministry offers a safe and supportive space for healthcare professionals to share the burdens, challenges, and emotional realities of their work. Rooted in prayer, compassion, and the teachings of our Catholic faith, we come together to listen, encourage, and support one another while nurturing our spiritual well-being. Together, we seek to find strength, hope, and meaning in our calling to care for others. For more information, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

JOIN THE COFFEE HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

Curious how our team creates a warm & welcoming environment in the Parish Hall every Sunday? Join the coffee hospitality ministry! Contact Lisa Pickering at her parish email to learn more.

COMING UP AT SAINT CECILIA

SEPTEMBER 6 - 12

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Wisdom & Mature Spirituality | 8:30am via Zoom
No Coffee Hospitality

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Labor Day | Parish Offices Closed

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Wisdom & Mature Spirituality | 7:30pm via Zoom

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

25th Anniversary of 9/11

Welcome Reception | 5:00pm | Parish Hall

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Fall Parish Retreat | 9am - 3pm | Parish Hall

PUMPKIN PALOOZA RETURNS!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

AFTER 9:30 & 11:30 LITURGIES | PARISH HALL

Next Sunday, September 13, our Knitting and Crochet Ministry will hold its annual Pumpkin Palooza! Stop by the Parish Hall to see—and perhaps take home—one of the ministry's delightful hand-knit and crocheted pumpkins. The pumpkins will be available for a cash donation, with all proceeds supporting the purchase of yarn for the ministry's many projects. Throughout the year, our talented knitters and crocheters create hats, mittens, blankets, toys, cowls, prayer shawls, and much more, which are shared with organizations and individuals served by the parish. Come celebrate the season, support this wonderful ministry, and bring home a little handmade pumpkin!

ANNA & SIMEON SENIORS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 | 10AM | PARISH HALL

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

THE GAZA CHILDREN'S SHROUD

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 | 12PM
CHURCH CENTER FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

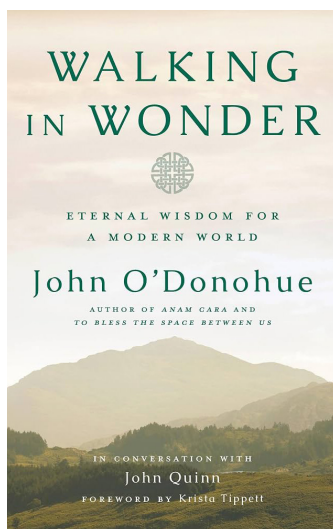
Four weeks ago, Saint Cecilia participated in The Gaza Children's Shroud by inscribing the names of 500 children who have lost their lives in Gaza. The shroud now continues its journey as part of a year-round global movement of witness, prayer, and action. On Wednesday, September 16, the Children's Shroud will be at the Church Center for the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY.

- 12:00 p.m. — Interfaith Prayer Service
First Floor Chapel
- 12:30–4:00 p.m. — Children's Shroud: Inscribing the Names, Witness, Prayer, and Reflection
Second Floor

The event is organized by Doctors Against Genocide, Priests Against Genocide USA, Justice for All, and partner organizations. For more information, please contact Martha Miller.

JOIN THE WISDOM & MATURE SPIRITUALITY MINISTRY

WEEKLY ZOOM MEETINGS ON THURSDAYS AT 7:30PM
AND SUNDAYS AT 8:30AM



The Wisdom and Mature Spirituality group is happy to invite you to read our next book selection, *Walking in Wonder: Eternal Wisdom for a Modern World* by mystical theologian John O'Donohue which we'll start at the end of September or so after we finish Pope Francis' book, *Hope: The Autobiography* by Pope Francis. We read a chapter or two at a time. We are loving Pope Francis' book, and it's never too late to join the conversation. We'll be discussing chapter 19:

"Walking Through the Valley of the Shadows of Death" and chapter 20: "Your Rod and Your Staff, They Comfort Me." Both titles are available in audiobook.

Feel free to join us anytime at our weekly meetings on Thursday from 7:30 to 8:30pm or Sunday from 8:30 to 9:30am. For more information, please send an email to the ministry.

CONFIRMATION GRADE CHANGE



This year, in accordance with a decree from the Archdiocese, the two-year Saint Cecilia parish Confirmation preparation program is shifting from 9th and 10th grade to 7th and 8th grade.

What does this mean for your child?

Students currently in 7th grade who plan to receive Confirmation should register for Faith Formation this fall. They will begin their two-year preparation and are expected to receive the sacrament in spring 2028.

Students currently in 8th grade and older who have not yet received Confirmation and hope to receive the sacrament in spring 2027 should also register for Faith Formation this fall.

We look forward to accompanying our young people and their families as they prepare to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and enter more fully into the life of the Church.

Register for Faith Formation: www.stceciliaboston.org/cff-reg/

For information about why the Archdiocese made this change, as well as answers to frequently asked questions, please visit www.evangelizeboston.com/confirmation/parent-faq/.

If you have questions, please reach out to Kate Burns at her parish email.

CAPUCHIN MOBILE MINISTRIES BENEFIT: HOLY PRACTICE, HOLY WHEELS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 | 6:30PM - 8:30PM
OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH CENTER
39 BROOKSIDE AVENUE, JAMAICA PLAIN

For six years, Capuchin Mobile Ministries has traveled the streets of Boston and Cambridge, offering spiritual accompaniment to people who too often walk alone. Join us to celebrate this milestone and honor the many wheels that keep this ministry moving, including you, your friends, and our partner communities who make this holy work possible.

During the evening, we will be honored to welcome Dr. Claire Wolfteich of Boston University, who will reflect on the spirituality of accompaniment and the transformative power of presence. We will also present our Volunteer of the Year Award. Your ticket includes dinner, drinks, and an evening of celebration, storytelling, and gratitude.

To purchase tickets for \$125: <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/cmmgg/event/holywheels/>.

LGBT ASYLUM TASK FORCE GALA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10 | 5:30 - 11:00 PM
MECHANICS HALL, WORCESTER



LGBT ASYLUM
TASK FORCE

One of the 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 are not allowed to work for up to 2 years after arriving in the United States. This vital ministry provides comprehensive support for the entire duration of that two-year period in which it is needed.

Tickets are \$150 each if purchased in August (\$225.00 if purchased in September) and there will be tables of eight. Purchase tickets at: <https://givebutter.com/c/tfgala26>.

If you purchase a ticket and wish to sit with Saint Cecilia folks (or donate a ticket to a parishioner), please email Rainbow Ministry.

SMALL GROUP CONNECTIONS

REFLECT. SHARE. GROW IN FAITH.

Join us this fall! Each week we gather to reflect on the Sunday readings and the three questions Father John poses, exploring how we are called to live out our Catholic faith. Drawing on Scripture, the homily, and our own experiences, we talk honestly about the paths our lives are taking. Come build community and deepen your faith alongside others on the journey. Both in-person and virtual options are available, and everyone is welcome. Drop in as often—or as rarely—as works for you! For more information, to sign up, or to be added to the Small Group Connections mailing list, please email the parish.



2026
**SEASON OF
CREATION**

Immersion in Living Water
Ezekiel 17:9,12

THE SEASON OF CREATION 2026

IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER

The Season of Creation begins each year on September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and concludes on October 4, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. During this month-long observance, Christians around the world come together in an ecumenical celebration of prayer and action for our common home. This year's theme, "Living Water," draws inspiration from the prophet Ezekiel's vision of water flowing from the Temple, bringing life and healing wherever it goes (Ezekiel 47:9, 12). Emerging from a time of exile and loss, this powerful biblical image reminds us of God's desire to bring renewal and healing to all creation—and invites us to reflect on our own responsibility to care for the earth, its waters, and all living things.

HOW AN F.D.N.Y. CHAPLAIN WAS FORMED BY 9/11

BY EDWARD DESCIAK

On Sept. 15, 2001, thousands of people gathered to mourn Mychal Judge, O.F.M., the beloved chaplain to the Fire Department of the City of New York. The Church of St. Francis of Assisi on West 31st Street in Manhattan could not hold the massive crowd. So while the funeral Mass was being celebrated, Chris Keenan, O.F.M.—the man who would become Father Judge’s successor—was standing across the street, arm in arm with his neighbors, the firefighters of Ladder 24.

Days before, Father Keenan had been at the friary of St. Francis of Assisi on 31st Street, where he lived with his friend Father Judge. On Sept. 11, when the planes hit the World Trade Center, Father Judge rushed downtown to pray for those trapped inside the North Tower. When the South Tower collapsed, a blast of debris tore through the lobby and killed him. The number on his death certificate would read 0-0-0-1: the tragic day’s first recorded casualty. The photograph of rescue workers carrying his body through the wreckage would become one of the defining images of the attacks, one many called a modern-day Pietà.

Father Keenan, who retired from the chaplain role in 2022, remembers the hours that followed: watching the medical personnel who filled the streets, waiting with stretchers for people who never came; learning that his friend was dead; sitting with Father Judge’s body back at the firehouse.

And yet, despite being formed by that tragedy—despite the seven months he would spend helping search for remains at Ground Zero, and the dozen-plus medical conditions and cancers the toxins there later caused in him—Father Keenan remains a man of effusive joy.

Being the Bridge

Mychal Judge was an institution. People still carry his words written on paper folded in their wallets, pulling out a short prayer he wrote when Father Keenan mentions his name. Babies, boats and buildings have been named after him. “There’s not a day that goes by that he isn’t remembered,” Father Keenan said.

To follow Judge in his role as F.D.N.Y. chaplain, particularly in the wake of an unprecedented disaster, was no easy task. As Michael Daly, the longtime columnist in New York who chronicled the legendary chaplain’s life in *The Book of Mychal*, put it in an interview with *America*: “Imagine Joe DiMaggio gets killed in a terrorist attack, and I tell you, ‘OK, you’re up next.’”

On paper, Father Keenan may not have been an obvious choice. “I didn’t even know the difference between an



Credit: Octavio Duran / America Magazine

Chris Keenan, O.F.M., with members of the F.D.N.Y. in New York

engine and a ladder,” Father Keenan told *America* in June while seated in the friary on 31st Street where he lived while he was the F.D.N.Y. chaplain. But he was not an obvious pick to join the Franciscans either.

While he grew up in a Franciscan-run parish in the borough of Wood-Ridge, N.J., the future friar now says he “never intended to be a Franciscan.” He was working a teamster job in his early 20s when his vocation was first suggested to him by none other than Father Judge. “I said, ‘Well, I think you’re kind of crazy because, number one, I don’t go to church,’” Father Keenan recounted. “Number two, I cheated my way through high school, so I could never do the studies. And number three, how do you spell *chastity*?”

“And he said to me: ‘If I could do it, you could do it.’”

Judge turned out to be right. And Judge’s instincts would be right again almost a half century later. Months after Father

Keenan became chaplain, a firefighter told him that Judge, when asked who might replace him, had named Father Keenan without hesitation.

The two men had a good deal in common. Both were Franciscans; both inherited the sort of natural charisma that came from being the sons of blue-collar Irish immigrants in New York; both had gotten sober after struggling with alcoholism, and both accompanied patients dying of AIDS when others would not go near them.

But succeeding Judge was never a matter of replacement. "Nobody was ever going to be Mychal Judge," said the Rev. Ann Kansfield, an F.D.N.Y. chaplain and the director of the department's counseling services unit. "But Chris does ministry in a style that's very reminiscent of Mychal.... A sort of Elijah-Elisha mantle passed between [them]. It was a miraculous blessing for the fire department: [Chris's] ability to just be present with people, to love people."

Mr. Daly resists the framing of Judge as a "towering" figure: "Mychal Judge did not think that the impressive or sacred distance was up or high. He thought it was across. What he loved more than anything was walking across the Brooklyn Bridge. His whole idea was that a great figure is not a towering figure—a great figure is a bridging figure."

Father Keenan, Mr. Daly said, embodied that philosophy but in his own way. He never tried to be "Mychal Judge 2.0." Instead, "he served the same function that Mychal Judge did, which is the bridge from himself to other people.... And to Chris's eternal credit, I've never seen him try to be anybody but himself. He never tried to be anybody but who God wanted him to be."

His versatility would serve him in his role as chaplain. "Give me your most wild and wacky situation," Rev. Kansfield said, "like if some guy was an atheist or Wiccan or died naked in a hooker's bed...we could call Chris. Nothing is gonna surprise him."

Digging in the Pit

"[Judge] was all about moments," Mr. Daly said. "There were these things that happened that you would always remember. After 9/11, there was so much. It wasn't about the moments, it was about the enormity of all the moments."

By Father Keenan's count, there were over 500 funerals and memorial services over the course of his first two years on the job. As remains from 9/11 victims were recovered, grief would come to the surface again and again. Most of those remains would be miniscule. "Everyone was essentially vaporized, pulverized and cremated in the collapse of the two buildings," Father Keenan said. He participated in the recovery efforts, digging side-by-side with firefighters in the pit at Ground Zero for seven months after the attacks. They would search through dirt and debris in sections roughly the size of a basketball court and rake back and forth three times over, searching for remains. "You could hardly find a piece of glass," he said.

Even there, while he was carrying the remains of fallen firefighters to ambulances, Father Keenan was able to find God. "I was wondering, what sense do I bring to this? What's the meaning of this?" he said. But one night, "I had an inspiration from the spirit." He described a dream where he was driving down into the pit to dig, "and I came to understand that I was descending into hell, but I'm seeing the face of God on all the people that are down here [to offer help]."

That community of first responders sustained him through tragedy. He recalled a conversation he had with firefighters soon after he became chaplain: "They said, 'We know that you've given your life for us as our chaplain, but what you need to know is that all 11,000 of us are yours.... Don't you ever forget that all 11,000 of us are yours.'"

"That's beautiful," Father Keenan said, smiling widely. "Who is ever told that? People ask me, 'How did you move through all of this?' That was how."

In the Firehouse

Now in his retirement, those relationships continue to provide consolation, and not just for Father Keenan. Ted Trestik was a probationary firefighter on Ladder 24, across the street from the friary, when he first met the chaplain in the station kitchen about 12 years ago.

"He's been a great source of counsel for me before I even knew that's what it was," Mr. Trestik said. Father Keenan's demeanor was so approachable that he didn't realize at the time that he was getting advice. What made it possible, he said, was that "you can't offend the guy. He's heard it all, and he's seen it all. It's a nice feeling to know that you're never going to be scolded or shamed."

Mr. Trestik recalls Father Keenan telling him about feeling inadequate when he took on the role of chaplain after Father Judge. But despite his not feeling ready, "God, or whatever higher power you believe in, said, 'Nope, it's your time, whether you're ready or not,'" Mr. Trestik said. "[Father Keenan] showed a lot of guys that if you just try to do the next right thing, you'll be OK, even if you're not ready or are unsure. He showed guys that it is OK to be a little broken." Father Keenan's vulnerability, Mr. Trestik explained, made him a trusted voice in the fraternity of the fire department.

"I'd do anything for Father Chris," Mr. Trestik added.

Michael Zofchak, a now-retired F.D.N.Y. lieutenant, got to know Father Keenan when he and his wife, who is Jewish, were having trouble finding a priest to preside at their wedding in 2003. "I said, 'You know what? We have a fire department calendar with all the chaplains on the back of the calendar. Let's pick the Jewish one and the Catholic one.'"

Since then, Father Keenan became a fixture in their family, coming to everything from funerals to Jewish baby naming ceremonies. "He really gets in the weeds with you and your

family,” Mr. Zofchak said. The “source of comfort” that Father Keenan provided was all the more important in a department where, as Mr. Zofchak said, “the way we do therapy is we push [feelings] down and pour booze on top of it.”

“He’s a special person,” Mr. Zofchak said of Father Keenan. “It started on that day in September of 2001, but it has never ended—and it never will.”

Finding God in the Aftermath

A total of 343 firefighters died on Sept. 11, 2001. Since then, over 400 more have died for reasons that can be attributed to the fallout of that day. After the towers fell, fires raged underground for weeks, sending plumes of toxic smoke laced with over 30 known carcinogens into the air. “We eventually got proper masks,” Father Keenan said, recounting his time in the pit at Ground Zero, “but we’d drop the masks” while digging or talking because they were uncomfortable.

Now 85 years of age, Father Keenan has dealt with 14 different conditions traced to his time in the pit, including cancers, post traumatic stress disorder and a sleep disorder. At the time of our interview, he was undergoing treatment for a recently diagnosed cancer in both of his kidneys.

Still, Father Keenan approaches life with a good sense of humor. “Look at me, don’t I look great?” he said. He said his doctors are currently monitoring seven conditions. Father Keenan believes he will eventually succumb to them, but even with that in mind, his outlook remains bright. When that day comes, he says, he will just “kiss my butt goodbye and I’ll say, ‘Jesus, I’m on my way.’”

Father Keenan has not gone through his medical issues alone. “Every guy who was there is just kind of waiting for the other shoe to drop,” Mr. Zofchak, who was among the firefighters at Ground Zero, said. “We don’t talk about if we’re going to get sick. We talk about when.” Having a chaplain who is navigating the same dread helps him feel “like it’s going to be OK.”

“Listen, it’s probably going to be bad, but in the end, it’s going to be OK because you have your faith. Chris is gonna walk with you. Jesus will walk with you. It’s gonna be all right in the end.”

Mr. Daly said that the firefighters, a significant portion of whom are Catholic, have a special connection to their chaplain—and to God. “They’re a bunch of seemingly ordinary guys sitting around the firehouse,” he continued, “and then an alarm comes in...and all of a sudden, a kind of grace descends on them at that moment. They have no idea what awaits them, but they’re completely willing to risk their lives for people they don’t even know.”

“Just as the devil is to be found in evil, God is to be found in good,” he said, crediting the idea to Judge. “By that

theology, they just have more God in them.”

25 Years Later

Most of the firefighters in the F.D.N.Y. today were not on the job in 2001. “The young guys look at us with respect, but they can’t really understand what happened,” Mr. Zofchak said, reflecting on the quarter-century that has passed since the terrorist attacks. Though Father Keenan is retired from his official role as chaplain, the guys at Ladder 24 are still happy to see him when he shows up.

On a June afternoon, as he gave a tour of the firehouse’s memorabilia from Sept. 11, and mementos of the Franciscan chaplains that came before him, younger firefighters listened intently to the gregarious man in a religious habit that, one firefighter’s daughter had decided, made him look like a Jedi. In retirement, as on the job, Father Keenan still has a knack for making people feel like they have known him for a lifetime after just a few minutes.

Those firefighters, like many today, might not remember what Father Keenan described as the “incredible unity” that briefly followed the terrorist attacks. But he believes that the country and the church need to find their way back to it, and it is not too late. “Us coming together as one is not an impossible dream,” he said. “Not only was it possible, it was real.”

Mr. Daly believes that Father Judge would be proud of what his successor made of the role. “Mychal would recognize Chris as the person we all should be,” he said. If Judge was “Joe DiMaggio,” then Father Keenan is “Mickey Mantle.... They’re both champions. They’re both people you want to admire and want to emulate and want to thank God for.”



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Edward Desciak is an O'Hare Fellow at America Media.



THE PARABLE OF GROUND ZERO

BY JAMES MARTIN, SJ



Credit: America Media / Youtube

James Martin, SJ in a 2002 video describing what he saw on 9/11.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, I was working at my desk at America magazine in midtown Manhattan. Around 9 a.m., my mother called from Philadelphia to say that she had heard about a plane crashing into the World Trade Center. I thought it was odd that she would call; she knew that my office was uptown, not downtown. A few minutes later, I decided to turn on the television set. It was only then that I saw the unfolding tragedy.

That morning I had a doctor's appointment and so, still unsure of what exactly was happening, I walked the few blocks to his office. But as I peered down Sixth Avenue (a few feet away from our office) I was horrified to see the Twin Towers with inky black smoke pouring from their tops. Even then, panicked people were streaming uptown, desperately trying to use their cell phones (many of which had ceased to work since the cell phone towers at the World Trade Center had been rendered useless). Numbly, I made my way to my doctor's appointment.

An hour later, the scene was utterly different. Everyone's eyes faced downtown. People were weeping in the streets, scanning the skies for another plane, racing toward subway entrances and desperately hailing cabs.

When I returned to our offices, our receptionist told me that one of the buildings had collapsed. "That's ridiculous,"

I said, angrily. "What radio station is saying that? That's impossible." Turning on the television confirmed my worst fears.

That evening, I put my collar on and made my way to a local hospital a few blocks away, where victims were to be brought. But the police officers in the lobby suggested that I walk farther downtown. So through the empty streets, I walked to Chelsea Piers, a large sporting arena, to wait for victims who never came.

The next day I spent several hours at a family counseling center downtown, helping family members pore through hospital records of patients who had been admitted. But, in the end, there would be few survivors.

Finally, on Sept. 13, I returned to Chelsea Piers and asked a police officer if they needed any help downtown. He nodded curtly, waved for a police cruiser, and I jumped in and was taken down to "the site."

It was an absolutely appalling sight — the colossal, twisted buildings still on fire, piles of rubble covered with a heavy layer of gray ash, and hundreds of uniformed firefighters and police officers seemingly everywhere. Ten years later I can still remember the terrible acrid smell that pervaded everything. I felt like I was in hell.

After emerging from the police car, stunned, I wondered what to do. I thought: I cannot bear to look at bodies, I cannot bear to be in the morgue, but I can help the rescue workers. So I spent the next few days and weeks, in between my work at the magazine, ministering to the rescue workers — firefighters, police officers, EMTs, nurses, construction workers, military personnel and government workers from every conceivable office. In time I was joined by my Jesuit brothers, many of them still in training.

In this hell I found grace. Working at the World Trade Center was one of the most profound experiences of the Holy Spirit I've ever had, for there I encountered an overwhelming sense of charity, unity and concord. Every person working at Ground Zero was "other-directed." Every person was selfless, utterly unconcerned for himself or herself. Every person seemed kind, considerate, loving.

All of their work, of course, was deeply informed by the sacrifices that had already been made by the firefighters and rescue workers who gave their lives as they raced into the burning buildings on September 11. For me, it was as if God was offering us a parable. In the Gospels, when people asked what God or the Kingdom of God is like, Jesus offered them a parable, a story drawn from nature or everyday life to help them understand things more deeply. Jesus would say: God is like the father welcoming back his son. Or: God is like a woman sweeping her house.

And here was God offering us a parable today. As I looked around at the rescue workers, I thought, what is God like? God is like the firefighter who rushes into a burning building to save someone. That's how much God loves us. And I saw this love expressed in the great charity of all the rescue workers who gathered at the American Golgotha.

So for me, the experience of September 11, 2001, was not simply one of tragedy but also of resurrection. For me it embodied the Christian mystery of the cross: the place of unimaginable tragedy can also be the place of new life that comes in unexpected ways.



Originally published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Peace and Justice in 2013.

James Martin, SJ, is a Jesuit priest, culture editor of America Magazine, and the author of numerous books, including Searching for God at Ground Zero.



Credit: 9/11 Memorial & Museum

*Detail of Stars of the Forest: Elegy for 9/11
by New York City based artist Naoto Nakagawa*

PARISH RESOURCES

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Rev. Peter Grover, OMI

Rev. John Predmore, SJ

Music Ministry

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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, Leticia 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.