

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



Diptych with Twelve Apostles & St. Paul

by The Workshop of Wäldä Maryam (c.1700)

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

7 September 2025

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H

7 SEPTEMBER 2025

TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

PRELUDE | *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist*, BuxWV 208

Dieterich Buxtehude
(1637-1707)

ENTRANCE PROCESSION | *God is Here! As We His People*

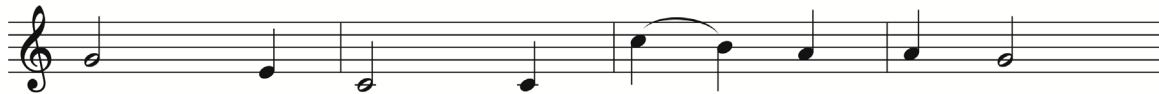
ABBOTT'S LEIGH



1. God is here! As we his peo - ple
2. Here are sym - bols to re - mind us
3. Here our chil - dren find a wel - come
4. Lord of all, of Church and king - dom,



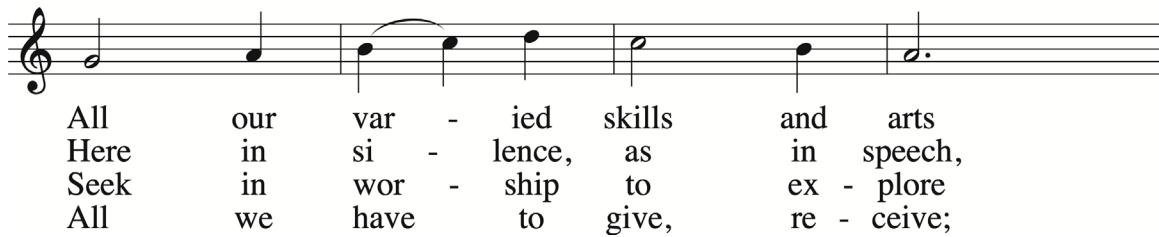
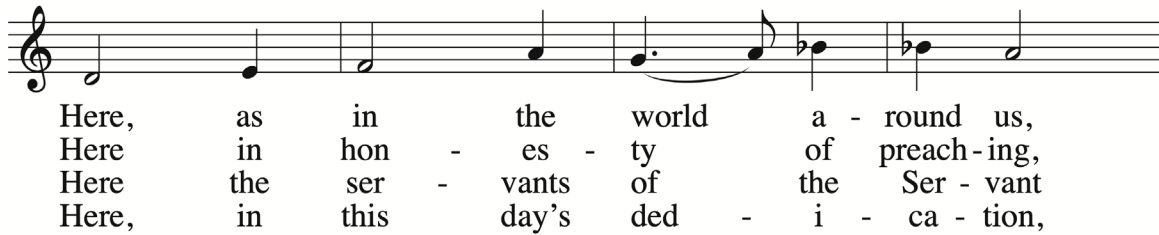
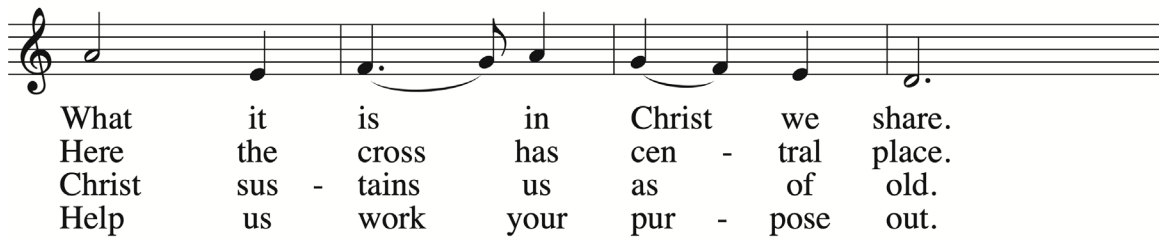
Meet to of - fer praise and prayer,
Of our life - long need of grace;
In the Shep - herd's flock and fold;
In an age of change and doubt,



May we find in ful - ler meas - ure
Here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;
Here, as bread and wine are tak - en,
Keep us faith - ful to the Gos - pel;



What it is in Christ we share.
Here the cross has cen - tral place.
Christ sus - tains us as of old.
Help us work your pur - pose out.



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.

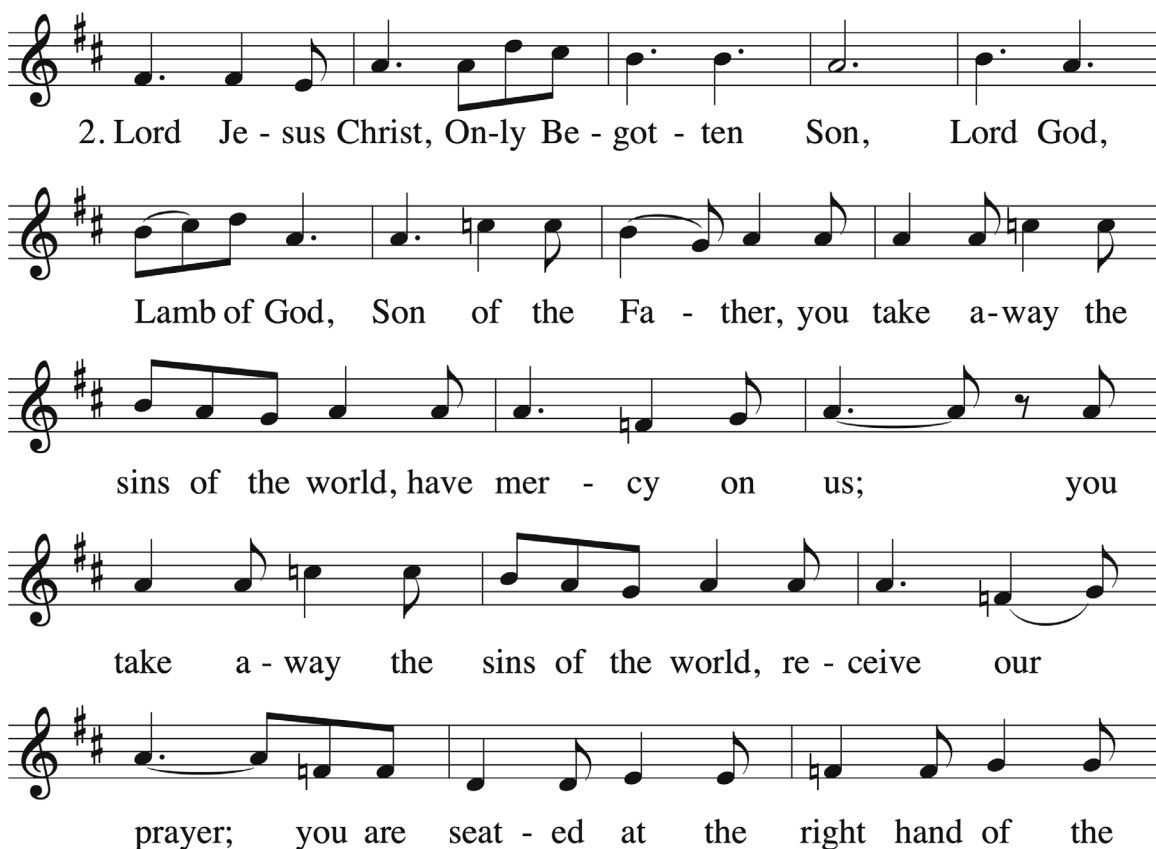
All: And with your spirit.



Verse 1

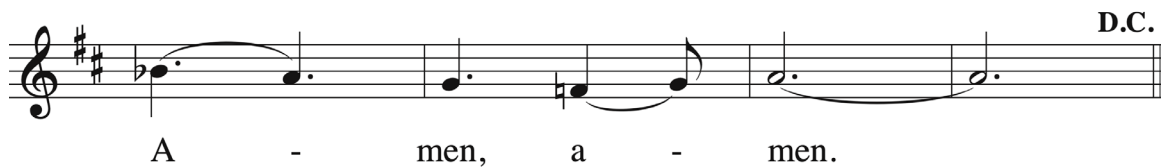


Verse 2





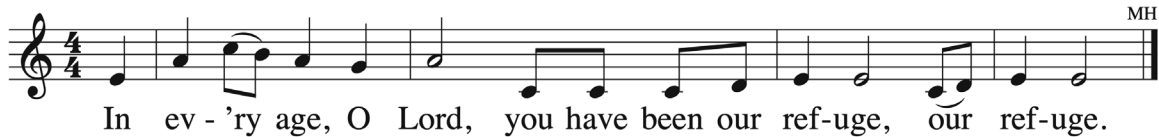
Verse 3



COLLECT

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING | Wisdom 9: 13-18b



You turn man back to dust,
and say, "Return, O children of
Adam."
To your eyes a thousand years
are like yesterday, come and gone,
or like a watch in the night. *R.*

You sweep them away like a dream,
like grass which is fresh in the
morning.
In the morning it sprouts and is fresh;
by evening it withers and fades. *R.*

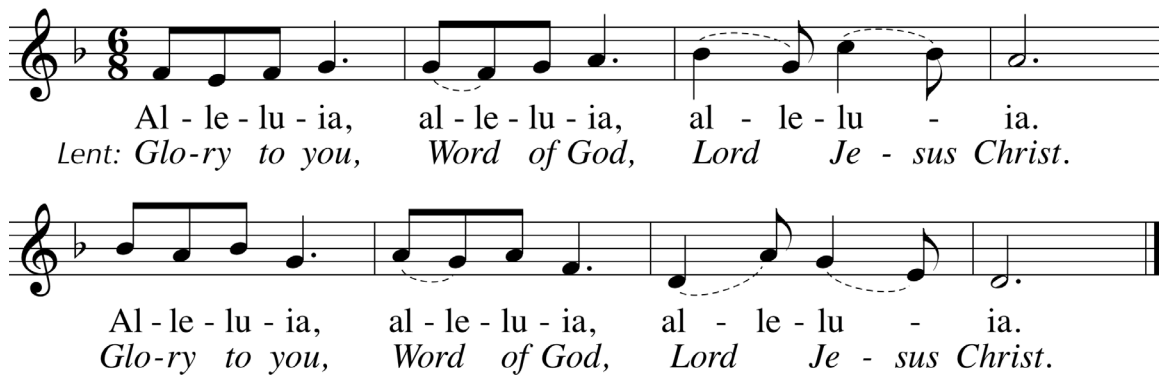
Then teach us to number our days,
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Turn back, O LORD! How long?
Show pity to your servants. *R.*

At dawn, fill us with your merciful love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Let the favor of the LORD our God be
upon us;
give success to the work of our
hands.
O give success to the work of our
hands. *R.*

SECOND READING | Philemon 9-10, 12-17

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION | Mass of Christ, Light of the Nations

Tony E. Alonso



GOSPEL | Luke 14: 25-33

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!

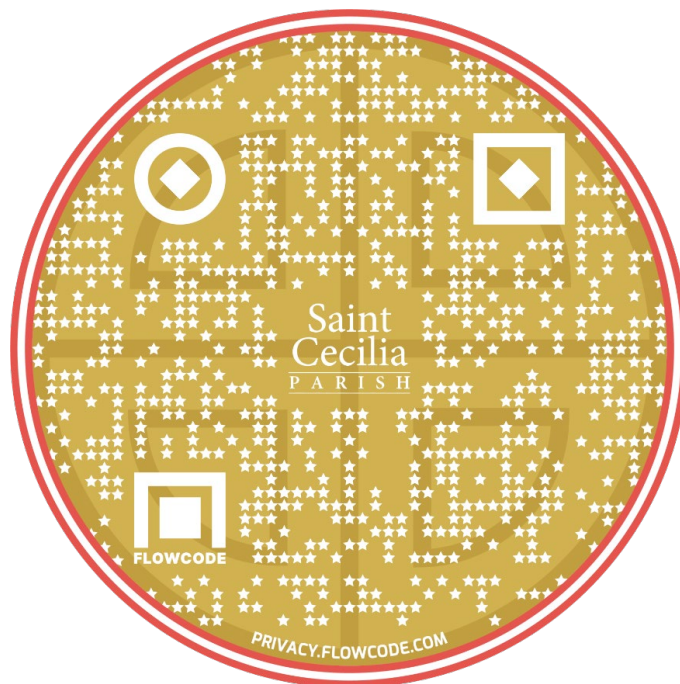
We are grateful for your ongoing support of Saint Cecilia. The easiest way to make a financial contribution to our parish is to use the parish Flowcode below.

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 | Unless a Grain of Wheat

Bernadette Farrell

Refrain

Un - less a grain of wheat shall fall up -
on the ground and die, it re - mains but a
sin - gle grain with no life.

Verses

1. ♪ If we have died with him, then we shall
2. If an - y - one serves me, then they must
3. ♪ Make your home in me as I make
4. ♪ If you re - main in me and my word
5. ♪ Those who love me are loved by my
6. ♪ Peace I leave with you, my peace I

live with him; if we hold firm, we shall
fol - low me; wher - ev - er I am, my
mine in you; those who re - main in me
lives in you, then you will be my dis -
Fa - ther; we shall be with them and
give to you; peace which the world can - not

reign with him.
ser - vants will be.
bear much fruit.
ci - ples.
dwell in them.
give is my gift.

D.C.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

✕ The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

✕ Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

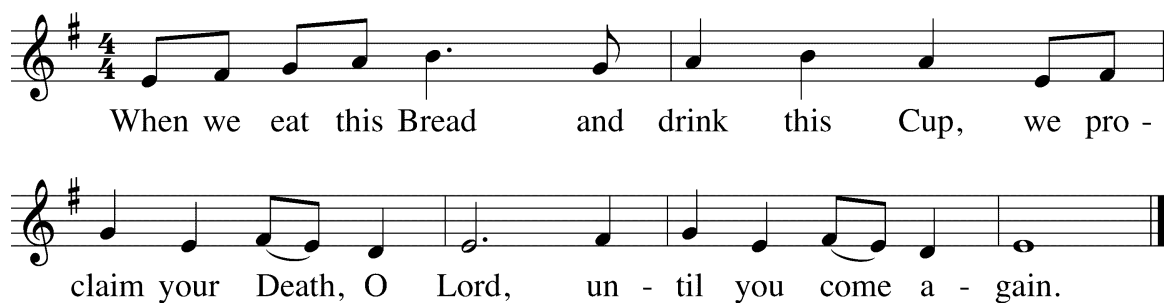
✕ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right and just.

SANCTUS | *Missa Pacem*

Randolph Babin

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

AMEN | *Missa Pacem*

Randolph Babin



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.

Cantor or choir: *All:*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the
 Prince of Peace,
 God of Love,
 Bread of Life,

Repeat as needed

world, have mer - cy on us.

Last time *Cantor or choir:*

us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the

All:

world, have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sins of the world, grant us peace.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

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

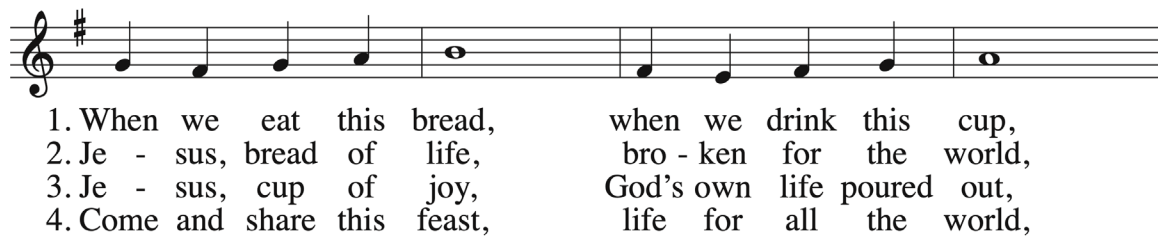
ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

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



We re - mem - ber how you loved us to your death,
and still we cel - e - brate, for you are with us here;
and we be - lieve that we will see you when you come
in your glo - ry, Lord. We re - mem - ber, we
cel - e - brate, we be - lieve.

Verses-Set A



1. When we eat this bread,	when we drink this cup,
2. Je - sus, bread of life,	bro - ken for the world,
3. Je - sus, cup of joy,	God's own life poured out,
4. Come and share this feast,	life for all the world,



D.C.

we pro - claim your death un - til you come in glo - ry.
praise to you who comes to feed your hun - gry peo - ple.
in this meal you give your - self for our re - demp - tion.
here we join to cel - e - brate God's new cre - a - tion.

Verses-Set B



5. Here,	a	mil - lion	wound - ed	souls	are
6. Now	we	re - cre - ate	your	love,	we
7. Christ,	the	Fa - ther's	great	"A - men"	to
8. See	the	face	of	Christ	re - vealed
					in

yearn - ing just to touch you and be healed;
 bring the bread and wine to share a meal:
 all the hopes and dreams of ev - 'ry heart,
 ev - 'ry per - son stand - ing by your side:

gath - er all your peo-ple, and hold them to your heart.
 sign of grace and mer-cy, the pres-ence of the Lord.
 peace be-yond all tell-ing, and free-dom from all fear.
 gifts to one an - oth - er, and tem - ples of your love.

D.C.

COMMUNION MEDITATION | How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place

Daniel Kallman

CONCLUDING RITES

✠ The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

✠ May almighty God bless you, the Father, (+) and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

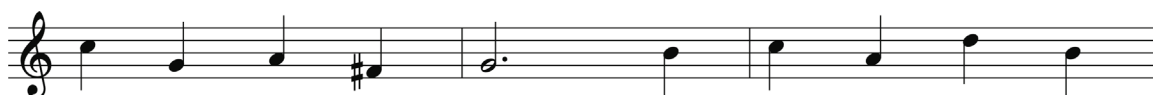
All: Amen.

RECESSIONAL | O God, Our Help in Ages Past

ST. ANNE



1. O God, our help in a - ges past, Our
2. Un - der the shad - ow of your throne Your
3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, Or
4. A thou - sand a - ges in your sight Are
5. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream, Bears
6. O God, our help in a - ges past, Our



hope for years to come, Our shel - ter from the
saints have dwelt se - cure; Suf - fi - cient is your
earth re - ceived its frame, From ev - er - last - ing
like an eve - ning gone, Short as the watch that
all our years a - way; They fly for - got - ten,
hope for years to come, Still be our guard while



storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home.
arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
you are God, To end - less years the same.
ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.
as a dream Dies at the o - p'ning day.
trou - bles last, And our e - ter - nal home.

POSTLUDE | Fugue in G, BWV 541
Brett Maguire, organ

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

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, September 6 | 5:00 p.m.

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

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

Rev. John Predmore, SJ, celebrant
Peter Haley, lector

Sunday, September 7 | 9:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Cole Young, Bobbi Moran, Karen Vachon, lectors

Sunday, September 7 | 11:30 a.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Jerry McElroy, Mark Richburg, Kelly McClintock, lectors

Sunday, September 7 | 6:00 p.m.

Rev. John Unni, celebrant
Maggie Giles, lector

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Saturday, September 6 | 5:00 p.m.

Betty Botosh, *Memorial*

Sunday, September 7 | 8:00 a.m.

John and Angelina Machado, *Memorial*

Sunday, September 7 | 9:30 a.m.

David Feeley, *4th Anniversary*
Richard Farquharson, *Memorial*
Edward "Rusty" McElaney, *Memorial*
Joseph Andrade, *Memorial*

Sunday, September 7 | 11:30 a.m.

Larry McMenemy, *1st Anniversary*

Sunday, September 7 | 6:00 p.m.

Paul Vallilo, *Memorial*

Friday, September 12 | 8:00 a.m.

Margaret Cunnane, *Memorial*



TODAY'S READINGS

Wisdom 9:13-18b
Philemon 9-10, 12-17
Luke 14:25-33

FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS'S READINGS

Numbers 21:4b-9
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Sick

Pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially **Glenn Gallo, Marc Pelletier, Fred Tufts, Baby Eloise Josephine Mason, Kevin J. Owens, So Kwai Sim, Andrea Surette, Daria, and Maureen McLaughlin.**

Welcome to Saint Cecilia!

We are pleased to welcome the following new registrants: **Destiny Keeton-Williams** of Hull, and **William** and **Sarah Garrity, Camron Rivera** and **Alissa Dunn, Haley Strickland, Elaina Schreckenberger, and Victoria Pisini**, all of Boston. If you have not previously registered, you can do so online at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Special Collection For Gaza

Given the enormous humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is asking dioceses to consider a special collection for relief efforts. Archbishop Henning supports this effort and is requesting that parishes consider taking up a special collection at our parish.

Given the growing need for food, shelter, and medical supplies, we will hold our collection on **September 7**. You can also donate online visiting: www.osvhub.com/stceciliaboston/giving/funds/special-collection-for-gaza-relief.

100% of the funds collected will go to support the work of the Catholic Near East Association (CNEWA) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The request concerns their humanitarian work for those suffering the effects of war and famine in Gaza. Thank you for supporting our brothers and sisters suffering in Gaza.

Children's Faith Formation Registration: Now Open

We are delighted to share that registration for our Children's Faith Formation classes for the coming year is now open. Space is limited for some classes, and so please register as soon as possible to ensure your child(ren)'s/ teen's place in the class. If your child was baptized at Saint Cecilia, you will not be required to upload a baptismal certificate. To register, please visit www.stceciliaboston.org/cff-reg/. Classes begin on Sunday, September 21. Please note that the fee to register is \$200.

Sunday 6PM Mass Returns This Week

Kick off the new academic year with Pizza Sunday, following the 6 PM Mass. Meet members of the Saint Cecilia Young Adult Ministry and Rainbow Ministry for fellowship and connection.

Gift Card Donations Needed

We are presently in need of having our gift card supply replenished. If you would like to help in this way, simply purchase a gift card (ideally in \$10 increments) and drop it in the collection basket at Mass, give it to one of our receptionists, or mail it to the parish office. We would especially like to receive gift cards from Shaw's, Star Market, Dunkin', or Wendy's. Thank you in advance for helping us care for our sisters and brothers in need.

IN THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN TABLE OF CONTENTS

This Week's Liturgies.....	3
Prayers and Occasions.....	4
Coming Up At Saint Cecilia.....	6
Rekindling My Catholic Faith In The 'Fourth Quarter' Of Life by Maribeth Boelts	9
Pope Leo Embraces Francis' Legacy On LGBTQ+ Catholics, Fr. James Martin Says By Nicole Winfield	12
Parish Resources.....	14



VIRTUS TRAINING: PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 | 2PM | COMMUNITY ROOM

VIRTUS is the umbrella term for a two-part training designed to keep children safe in the parish setting. The Archdiocese requires this two-part training of all volunteers and staff who have the potential for direct contact with children or the vulnerable due to their involvement in the parish. The first part, Protecting God's Children (or PGC), is a training on how to recognize the signs and symptoms that a child is being abused and how to talk with children about these issues. The second part is mandated reporter training.

All parish staff and volunteers are mandated reporters and are required to attend this one-time training. If you intend to volunteer in the future and haven't attended this training before, please join us. Please note that both parts will be covered in Sunday's session and the training will be approximately 3 hours, including videos and group discussion.

Help us by officially registering for this course at www.virtusonline.org/. Doing so will create a permanent record of your participation and completion of the training. If you can't register online, please join us anyway and come a few minutes early so you can be registered in the system. Thank you so much, and we look forward to seeing you!

SAINT CECILIA MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 | 1PM | CLASSROOM 1

Saint Cecilia Mental Health Ministry is a monthly drop-in open to parishioners who are struggling with their mental health during challenging times. This is *not* a therapy group, but a place to gather once a month to discuss mental health through the lens of Scripture and faith. To get on the distribution list, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

MONTHLY BEREAVEMENT GROUP

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 | 6PM VIA ZOOM

Grieving the loss of a loved one can be overwhelming, but you are not alone. Join us for our Monthly Catholic Bereavement Support Group, where we gather in faith, compassion, and community to find healing and hope. In a world marked by division and distraction, healthy and meaningful dialogue can be found in small moments of grace. For more information or to receive the Zoom link, please contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

FFF COFFEE HOUR WITH MARJEAN PERHOT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 | 4 PM VIA ZOOM

Please join the FFF Coffee hour on Sunday, September 7th at 4pm EST to welcome Marjean Perhot. Marjean was appointed Division Director for Refugee and Immigration Services of Catholic Charities Boston in 2005 and currently serves as the Vice President of Refugee and Immigration Services. She oversees a social enterprise, Community Interpreter Services, immigration legal, and refugee resettlement programs. Marjean has worked with immigrants and refugees in Boston and Cleveland for more than 25 years. A sought-after expert, Marjean is a nationally recognized voice for refugee and immigration issues, offering insight, education, and outreach throughout Massachusetts and the nation. She serves on the steering committees for Catholic Charities USA Immigrant and Refugee Community of Practice, Center for Migration Studies Catholic Immigrant Integration Initiative, and USCCB Justice for Immigrants. She is also a member of the Massachusetts Governor's Advisory Council on Refugees and Immigrants.

If you wish to receive the Zoom link to the coffee hour, please email the ministry to be added to the mailing list. There is no need to register each month.

BELVIDERE MIDDAY TUESDAY

**Tuesdays | 12pm-1pm
Community Room**

This is a weekly "closed" Alcoholics Anonymous discussion meeting centered on the 3rd Step prayer, and will include a period of meditation.

Belvidere Midday Tuesday meets on Tuesdays at St. Cecilia Parish at 12pm in the Community Room. Please enter at the glass entrance located at 30 St. Cecilia Street.

KNITTING & CROCHET MINISTRY

The next Zoom Meeting will meet on Monday September 8, 2025 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, please email the ministry.

The next Sit & Knit will be held Sunday September 14 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. We will be Welcoming the Far Flung Flock with the Pumpkin Palooza.

SEPTEMBER NIGHT OF WORSHIP

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 | 7PM | SANCTUARY

Join the Saint Cecilia Young Adults for their monthly Night of Worship and Adoration. Come find rest and healing in God's presence in the Blessed Sacrament, with praise and worship music led by the Young Adult Ministry. Please use the St. Cecilia Street entrance and ring the bell to enter. All are welcome to join us!

17TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD DINNER

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 | 5:30 – 9:00 PM
OMNI BOSTON SEAPORT HOTEL**

This year's dinner will be held on Thursday, September 11 at the Omni Boston Hotel at the Seaport, from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. There will be a celebrity guest speaker as well as a performance by the Greater Boston Firefighters Pipes and Drums. This memorable event celebrates our clergy and raises funds to support the health and well-being of priests in good standing in the Archdiocese of Boston. For more information, visit www.clergytrust.org/celebration.

PUMPKIN PALOOZA

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 | 9:30AM - 1:30PM
PARISH HALL**



The Knitting & Crochet Ministry will have their yearly Pumpkin Palooza on Sunday, September 14 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m..

Knitted pumpkins in all shapes and sizes will be available for purchase by either cash or check. Donations received will go towards the purchasing of yarns for projects that help support various local charities

in partnership with Saint Cecilia.

COMING UP AT SAINT CECILIA

SEPTEMBER 4 - 11

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Wisdom Group | 7:30pm via Zoom

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Wisdom Group | 8:30am via Zoom

Mental Health Ministry | 1pm | Classroom 1

VIRTUS Training | 2pm

FFF Coffee Hour | 4pm via Zoom

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Knitting Ministry Meeting | 3:30pm via Zoom

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Belvidere Midday Tuesday | 12pm | Community Room

Night of Worship | 7pm | Sanctuary

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Bereavement Group | 6pm via Zoom

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Simeon & Anna Seniors | 10am | Parish Hall

17th Annual Celebration of the Priesthood Dinner

5:30pm | Omni Boston Seaport Hotel

SIMEON AND ANNA SENIORS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 | 10AM | PARISH HALL

The next Simeon and Anna Seniors Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 11th. 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 invited to participate.



THE SEASON OF CREATION



Garden of Peace
Isaiah 32:14-18

PEACE WITH CREATION SEASON OF CREATION 2025

The Season of Creation begins on September 1, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations. Throughout the month-long celebration, we come together in an annual ecumenical celebration of prayer and action for our common home.

Events during the Season of Creation include:

9/21: Sun Way Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation from St. Clement's to Boston Common, part of an interfaith celebration of Sun Day. More information and register at <https://bit.ly/BostonJubileePilgrimageForCreation>.



10/4: Season of Creation Pilgrimage and Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians in Newton. More information and register at <https://tinyurl.com/Soc-Pilgrim-Mass>.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING CATHOLIC?

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 | INFO SESSION FOLLOWING THE 11:30 AM MASS

Do you feel a calling to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church? This is your invitation!

Join us for OCIA - Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (formerly known as RCIA), where you will have the opportunity to explore the teachings of the Church, engage in meaningful discussions, and grow spiritually in a supportive community. The program includes weekly sessions covering a variety of topics related to faith and practice, as well as opportunities for prayer and reflection.

This program is open to:

- Those who are not baptized
- Those who are baptized in another Christian tradition and wish to become Catholic

- Catholics who were baptized but did not receive further formation or sacraments

Our OCIA program (Order of Christian Initiation for Adults) begins Sunday, September 14th. Join us for the 11:30 Mass followed by an informational gathering. For more information, contact Mary Wessel at her parish email.

LGBT ASYLUM TASK FORCE GALA

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 | 5:30 - 10:30 PM
THE DCU CENTER, WORCESTER**

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.

Their annual gala will be held at the DCU Center in Worcester on Saturday, September 27 from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$150 each if purchased in August (\$200 if purchased in September) and there will be tables of eight. Purchase tickets at: <https://www.lgbtasylum.org/gala>.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVE FOR THE MARY ANN BRETT PANTRY

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 once again collecting backpacks and school supplies for the kids.

And we are requesting items that will be used to fill the backpacks: spiral notebooks, 3-ring binders, folders, dry-erase markers, and copy paper. There will be bins in the narthex if you want to provide any of the items above.

To make it easier to participate in the Back-To-School Drive, you can also access the pantry's Amazon wish list here: www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/11Q1I35W4EGYE?ref_wl_share. You can also scan the QR code on the right.



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



WOMEN'S LUNCH PLACE SPAGHETTI DINNER

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9 | 6 PM
THE FAIRMONT COPLEY PLAZA HOTEL

For decades, Spaghetti Dinner has been at the heart of Women's Lunch Place's fundraising. It brings the community together in a shared commitment to nourish women facing hunger and hardship with dignity, compassion, and connection.

This year, under the theme "At the Table Together," the agency celebrates the deep sense of belonging that comes from a shared meal. Together, on October 9 at the Copley Fairmount Hotel, they will raise funds to support their Healthy Meals Program, which ensures every woman who walks through the shelter's doors receives a warm, made-from-scratch meal in a place that feels like home.

To learn more or purchase tickets, visit:
<https://womenslunchplace.org/all-events>.

SUPPORT CATHOLIC CHARITIES BOSTON AT RIDE FOR FOOD

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5 | 5:30 - 10:30 PM
NOBLES & GREENOUGH SCHOOL, DEDHAM

On Sunday, October 5th Catholic Charities Boston will participate in the RIDE FOR FOOD organized by Three Squares New England. This outstanding event takes place each year and includes a 25, 50 or 62.2 mile bike ride -OR- a 5K walk which all begin at Nobles & Greenough School

in Dedham. Event day also includes entertainment and refreshments.

More than just a walk or bike ride, this event is a meaningful opportunity to take action against hunger in our communities. As rising costs and changes in federal policies continue to strain the social safety net, our food pantries are experiencing unprecedented demand. Your participation can help stock our shelves and provide nutritious meals to families struggling to put food on the table. Every dollar raised by the Catholic Charities' Ride for Food Team will go directly to our pantries in Dorchester, Brockton, Lynn and Lowell which serve these four cities and surrounding communities.

We hope you will consider supporting our team. Whether you ride, walk or donate, you'll be making a very real difference for our neighbors most in need!

To join the team or to donate, please visit: <https://ride.threesquaresne.org/team/684111>

SHELTER MUSIC BOSTON'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15 | 3 PM
THE ALLEN CENTER, NEWTON

Shelter Music Boston is no stranger to Saint Cecilia Parish. During the COVID pandemic they recorded performances in the church to share at homeless shelters and recovery centers. They also hosted a free concert in the church in September 2023.

Each month, Shelter Music Boston performs live chamber music concerts at community partners, including Pine Street Inn and Women's Lunch Place. The transformation in their audiences is immediate and palpable. After a recent concert for women who are unhoused, one listener reported, "Music helps my depression and anxiety. I felt happier and loved the music."

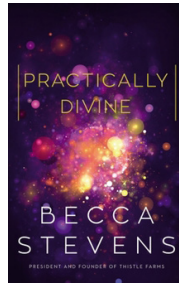
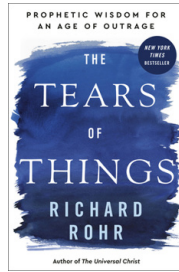
Their 15th Anniversary Concert will be held on Saturday, November 15 at 3:00 p. m. The concert, including dessert reception, will be held at the Allen Center in Newton. Discounted "early bird" tickets can be purchased for \$90 if ordered by September 2. Tickets will be \$100 after that date. Here is the link to purchase tickets: <https://wl.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E343965&id=80>.

For more information or to learn about concert sponsorship opportunities, please reach out to Sarah Leaf-Herrmann at Shelter Music Boston.

JOIN OUR WISDOM AND MATURE SPIRITUALITY GROUP

The Wisdom and Mature Spirituality Group holds two weekly online gatherings via Zoom. We meet Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday mornings from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. to share ways in which faith informs and enriches the second half of life. Our conversations are informed by our shared spiritual reading, but reading the book is optional.

We are presently discussing Richard Rohr's latest book, *The Tears of Things: Prophetic Wisdom in an Age of Outrage*. Our next book will be Becca Stevens' *Practically Divine*. To request information about our meetings or to be added to our mailing list, please send an email to the ministry.



2025 Celebration

Thursday, October 23
Saint Cecilia Parish
Boston, MA
5:30 PM ET

Honoring
Sharon McNally

Tickets and sponsorships
available at
healthequityintl.org

GET READY FOR A SLICE OF FUN!



Join us for Saint Cecilia's Pizza and Trivia Night on Friday, September 12 from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Enjoy some pizza, take part in a trivia showdown with Games with James, and mingle with our FFF friends in town for our Fall Retreat.

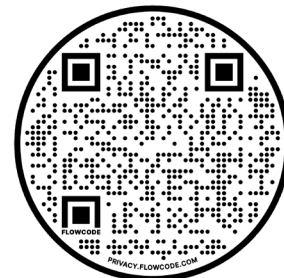
EVENT DETAILS:

WHEN: Friday, September 12th
6:00-7:30 p.m.

WHAT: Pizza, trivia, and community fun!

WHO: All members of our community, both near and far.

SCAN HERE TO REGISTER:



Or visit:
stceciliaboston.org/trivia-night

REKINDLING MY CATHOLIC FAITH IN THE 'FOURTH QUARTER' OF LIFE

BY MARIBETH BOELTS

The carpet was threadbare, the pews worn, in this cavernous Catholic church. Yellow tape blocked off an area of seating where the ceiling plaster had given way. My husband and I were attending a funeral, and it was there that we felt a still, persistent sense of a message from God to us. Let me back up.

My parents were devoted Catholics, raising six rowdy kids and scraping up enough to send us all to Catholic school through 12th grade. As a child, I loved God, but I had swirling questions about him too, questions that were not always welcome. In first grade, I asked Sister Julia, "If Jesus were all-powerful, why didn't he come down off the cross and save himself?" Instead of an answer, I received a shaming directive. She told me to go stand in the coat closet and hold my arms out from my side for as long as I could, so I might experience just a taste of what Jesus did for me.

My frustration grew throughout my Catholic education and morphed into a teenage chip on my shoulder, particularly when it came to the prescribed experiences of parochial education. The mission trip where the longtime leader yelled at our group because we hadn't responded as emotionally as his prior groups of teens. The T.E.C. weekends, during which I listened with skepticism to classmates pouring out publicly how they were going to change their ways and become better Catholics.

But at 16, I felt my heart soften a bit when I performed in the musical "Godspell." I sang a solo, "By My Side." This song follows a scene in which Marigold, who represents a woman condemned to be stoned, is saved by Jesus, who tells her: "You may go. Do not sin again."

Marigold, taking Jesus's words to heart, pleads to follow him, singing: "Where are you going? Where are you going? Can you take me with you? For my hand is cold, and needs warmth. Where are you going?"

On opening night, I sang these words and felt hot tears spring up, out of a well of longing for a real relationship with Jesus, one where I could follow him, unencumbered by what I, as a teenager, saw as all the rule-based religious rituals being taught.



Image: Courtesy of author.

The author, left, and her husband, center, at their convalidation liturgy.

Sister Liz, a beautiful, softhearted nun, watched the performance and reached out to me after it, with an invitation to talk. She asked what the words meant to me, and why I became teary. Then she listened, and gently affirmed that what I experienced was real, coming from an encounter with the divine. The years have not lessened the impact of her caring or her words to me.

Taking Another Path

When I graduated from high school, I married my Presbyterian boyfriend and shut the door on Catholicism. For three years, we visited churches of every denomination and landed, with a toddler in tow, at a welcoming, friendly Protestant church. We found the teaching accessible, the music outstanding, and the children's education program engaging and fun for our young son. Soon we were volunteering, making friends and becoming fully enmeshed with the mantra we so often heard—a Christian life was about "life together."

For 35 years, we served, led ministries and thoroughly enjoyed

attending this church. As a young mother, I bought a Bible and learned how to study it. I discovered that prayer could be a conversation rather than a recitation, and I marveled at others who could spontaneously pray aloud. I raised my arms in praise during a moving worship song, and I could also laugh in wonder at moments when God's timing and movement were unmistakable. My faith grew like a spring flower; and in a church that was young, expanding and full of energy, we raised our family.

But in 2019, my beloved husband died of brain cancer, and suddenly, the youth and energy, the big smiles and warm hugs, and the overall positivity of this church felt discordant with my grief and new widowhood. It was my gutting sadness that could not find a home within the culture of this church, and a pervasive sense of unease descended when I tried to attend. One of the contemporary worship songs we sang at this time repeated the lyrics: "You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down." I wanted to scream when we sang that song, because of course we will feel let down by God. God is mystery. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways. And things like brain tumors that refuse to respond to treatment or prayers howled in the dark without answer can be experienced as God letting us down.

Our Next Steps

Time passed. Covid-19 took root. Our friendly church began to change. The leadership structure of our church became divided over a refusal to allow full inclusion of L.G.B.T.Q. people. I slipped away quietly and permanently, and turned more fully to a few of my favorite writers, who just happened to be Catholic—James Martin, S.J., Richard Rohr, O.F.M., Joyce Rupp, O.S.M. While their good words kept my soul afloat, I was deeply pained not to be a part of a thriving church community anymore.

Then I met a wonderful man who had been raised in a Catholic home very similar to my own. We fell in love and married, bringing our collective grief to the table but also our hopes and dreams for a happy and meaningful "fourth quarter" together. This would include finding a shared faith.

And that was the message from God at the funeral at that aforementioned cavernous church with the threadbare carpet. It was there that we both felt the entwining roots of our spiritual DNA, the ties to our departed parents, our relatives and our Catholic heritage, going back centuries. We both envisioned our parents attending daily Mass while we were growing up. We pictured them lighting candles, asking saints to intercede, praying the rosary. I watched people receive the Eucharist, and tears

streamed as if I was seeing it for the first time. And as in childhood, the questions bubbled: Could God be doing a new thing, after all these years? Could I see Catholicism with more openheartedness and curiosity than I had in my youth? Could embracing my Catholic faith be the way forward at this stage of life and in a new marriage?

With wonderment, we began to attend Mass regularly, with the attitude that if we were going to explore this, we were going to be all in. I joined a weekly Bible study, asking so many questions of the faith-filled women I now call my dear friends. I learned the rosary, and in the final days of my mother's life, I said it with her repeatedly. It brought us both great comfort. I took part in confession—with my Bible study women graciously showing me the ropes after my 45-year absence. In addition, my husband went through a lengthy annulment process with our brilliant and trusted parish priest, and we had a convalidation ceremony, where we said, "I do," not only to each other but also to the solid ground of a shared, rekindled faith.

Perhaps it is the hard-won wisdom that comes with age, but the very rituals and practices I once scorned and believed were hindering my relationship with Jesus are the same rituals and practices that now usher me into his presence, time and time again. The solemnity, the sacrament, the history and its people—all speak to me now, perhaps in what has been all along my mother tongue, and that of my husband.

The solo that I sang at 16, with its pleading question of Jesus, "Where are you going?" can be assuredly answered with, "He's been here all along." How can we then keep from singing?



Originally published in America Magazine on August 1, 2025.

Maribeth Boelts is the author of 40 books for children, including the award-winning book "Those Shoes," with Candlewick Press. She and her husband, Rob, live in Iowa.



POPE LEO EMBRACES FRANCIS' LEGACY ON LGBTQ+ CATHOLICS, FR. JAMES MARTIN SAYS

BY NICOLE WINFIELD



Image: CNS photo/Vatican Media

Fr. James Martin meets with Pope Leo in the library of the Apostolic Palace on September 1st, 2025.

Pope Leo XIV met on September 1st with one of the most prominent advocates for greater LGBTQ+ inclusion in the Catholic Church and encouraged his ministry, just days before a planned Holy Year pilgrimage of LGBTQ+ Catholics to the Vatican in a sign of continued welcome.

Fr. James Martin, a New York-based Jesuit author and editor, said Leo told him he intended to continue Pope Francis' policy of LGBTQ+ acceptance in the church and encouraged him to keep up his advocacy.

"I heard the same message from Pope Leo that I heard from Pope Francis, which is the desire to welcome all people, including LGBTQ people," Martin told The Associated Press after the audience. "It was wonderful. It was very consoling and very encouraging and frankly a lot of fun."

The meeting, which lasted about a half-hour, was officially announced by the Vatican in a sign that Leo wanted it made public.

The audience was significant because it showed a strong sign of continuity with Francis, who more than any of Leo's predecessors worked to make the Catholic Church a more welcoming place for LGBTQ+ Catholics. From his 2013 quip, "Who am I to judge?" about a purportedly gay priest, to his decision to allow priests to bless same-sex couples, Francis distinguished himself with his message of welcome.

In a photo released by the Vatican, Martin is seen meeting Leo in the pope's private library, where the pontiff meets heads of states, cardinals, bishops, major religious leaders, and other distinguished people.

During his 12-year papacy from 2013 to 2025, Francis met on several occasions with Martin and named him an adviser in the Vatican's communications department and a member of his big multi-year meeting on the future of the church. Still, Francis never changed church teaching saying homosexual acts are "intrinsically disordered."

Leo's position on LGBTQ+ Catholics had been something of a question. Soon after he was elected in May, remarks surfaced from 2012 in which the future pope, then known as Fr. Robert Prevost, criticized the "homosexual lifestyle" and the role of mass media in promoting acceptance of same-sex relationships that conflicted with Catholic doctrine.

When he became a cardinal in 2023, Catholic News Service asked Prevost if his views had changed. He acknowledged Francis' call for a more inclusive church, saying Francis "made it very clear that he doesn't want people to be excluded simply on the basis of choices that they make, whether it be lifestyle, work, way to dress, or whatever."

Prevost then underlined that doctrine had not changed.

"But we are looking to be more welcoming and more open and to say all people are welcome in the church," he said.

Martin, who knew Prevost from their time working together in the synod on the church's future, said he wasn't worried about Leo's views given Martin always had found him to be "a very open, welcoming, inclusive person."

"But it's wonderful to hear this continuation," Martin said, adding that Leo told him his priorities are to work for peace and unity, citing in particular the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and Myanmar.

"But he also wanted to remind people that this is a church

for 'todos, todos, todos,'" Martin said, quoting Francis' famous line in Spanish about how the church is open to everyone, todos.

Martin helped found Outreach, a ministry promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance, which will participate in a big Holy Year pilgrimage Sept. 5 and Sept. 6 sponsored by Italian LGBTQ+ Catholic group "Jonathan's Tent." Significantly, the pilgrimage of about 1,200 people includes a Mass at the Jesuit church in Rome celebrated by the second-highest member of the Italian bishop's conference.

The pilgrimage is not officially sponsored by the Vatican, but is listed on the Vatican's calendar of Holy Year events. Vatican officials say such a listing doesn't signify endorsement, but is merely a logistical help to those groups that wish to organize pilgrimages and walk through the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica.

But the pilgrimage and Martin's audience nevertheless send a signal that is consistent with church teaching "that Jesus reaches out to people on the margins," Martin said.

The message he received from Leo was "that if people were happy with Pope Francis' approach to LGBTQ Catholics, they're going to be happy with Pope Leo's approach. And he asked me to continue what I'm doing, which was very encouraging," Martin said.



Originally published in the National Catholic Reporter on September 1st, 2025.

Nicole Winfield is the Vatican correspondent for the Associated Press in Rome. Winfield joined the AP in 1992 and has been covering the Vatican since 2001. During her time in Rome, she has covered three popes: John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. Winfield is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University.



PARISH RESOURCES

Parish Office & Mailing Address

18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA 02115
Hours | Seven days a week, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Phone | 617 536 4548; Fax | 617 536 1781
Website | www.stceciliaboston.org

Parish Staff

Rev. John J. Unni, Pastor
Rev. James Shaughnessy, SJ, Pastoral Support
Mark Donohoe, Pastoral Associate
Robert Duff, Director of Music
Anastassia Kolchanov, Digital and Print Media Coordinator
Scott MacDonald, Director of Faith Formation and Parish Visibility
Colleen Melaugh, Director of Finance and Development
Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien, Pastoral Director of Operations
Lisa Pickering, Director of Facilities and Events
Mary Wessel, Pastoral Associate

Assisting Clergy

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV
Rev. John Predmore, SJ

Music Ministry

Tyler Cesario, Assistant Director of Music
Daniel Lamoureux, Vigil Organist
Brett Maguire, Parish Organist
Pendexter Macdonald, Assistant Organist

Audiovisual Support

Maureen Deery, Parish Photographer & Creator of Weekly Slide Show
Geoffrey Edwards, Livestream Videographer

Schedule for Liturgy

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

Hearing Assistance in Church

The church is equipped with an assistive listening system. If you would like to use one of the small receivers, please ask one of our greeters.

For Those with Celiac Disease

If you have celiac disease, please let us know. We have a supply of low-gluten altar bread available for those who cannot tolerate gluten.

Building Accessibility

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

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 Pastoral Director of Operations, Nicole Pascarelli O'Brien.

Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team

The CAP Team is responsible for training all parish staff and volunteers in mandated reporting laws and the Protecting God's Children program (VIR-TUS). They provide consultation and support to anyone who has concerns about reporting child abuse and neglect. Please contact Maria Roche (maria.roche15@gmail.com), Letitia Howland (L_howland@hotmail.com), Erin Young (erin.t.young@gmail.com), or Kathy Sanders (sanderno2010@gmail.com) if you have any questions. The Archdiocese of Boston has in place a vigorous program to protect children from harm and to educate its ministers and faithful about the nature of abuse, with a goal of increasing knowledge, creating a safe environment for children, and recognizing and reporting potentially dangerous situations. The full policy is available in the narthex, Parish Office, and on our website.

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)

This is the communal process through which non-baptized men and women become members of the Catholic Church. It is also suitable for those baptized in different faith traditions who are interested in becoming Catholic, or, for those who were baptized Catholic, but have yet to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and confirmation. For more information, contact Mary Wessel in the Parish Office.

Marriage

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

Care of the Sick

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

Order of Christian Funerals

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

Joining Our Community

We're happy that you're with us! Our 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.