

Saint Cecilia

P A R I S H



Sixth Sunday of Easter

26 May 2019

Mosaic of the Ascension of Christ
Basilica Cattedrale di S. Maria La Nuova
Monreale, Sicily - 12th Century

HAPPY EASTER!

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.

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 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.

THE SAINT CECILIA 2119 LETTERS PROJECT



In the Year 1894

On Sunday, April 22, 1894, the Church of Saint Cecilia was dedicated. One wonders if the inaugural community would imagine that, six generations later, those now sitting in their pews might think of them and of the conversations that took place so long ago. Within the Saint Cecilia Parish of yesteryear - our benefactors, ancestors and fellow parishioners - each one who passed through the doors had a spiritual journey to share, a legacy to leave, and we are left to wonder – who were they?



In the Year 2019

On Monday, April 22, 2019, the Church of Saint Cecilia celebrated 125 years. Light streams through the beautiful stain glass windows, the pews fill, and conversations take place. Our vibrant parish and ministries continue to expand, with a transformative renovation underway – we are the benefactors, ancestors and fellow parishioners – and each one who passes through the doors has a spiritual journey to share, a legacy to leave and, in four generations, others may wonder - who were they?



In the Year 2119

On Saturday, April 22, 2119, the parishioners of the Church of Saint Cecilia gather to celebrate 225 years. The evening unfolds in Fellowship Hall, the space redesigned a century before. Over the decades, many have passed by the plaque near the garden entrance anticipating this day. Kindred spirits - their benefactors, ancestors and fellow parishioners – left behind a gift, encapsulated inside the old walls, to share their conversations and love of an enduring parish. A legacy left, so as not to leave others to wonder – who were they?

*If you had the opportunity to have a conversation with the person(s) who will sit in the pew(s), where you are seated today – one hundred years from now – what would you share with them?
This is the premise behind the creation of the 2119 Letters Project.*

The process to be a part of the 2119 Letters Project is easy! For those wishing to handwrite your letters, [archival paper packets](#) may be picked-up - and dropped back off with photos - at the narthex table following each Mass. For those who wish to submit your letters and digital photos electronically, to be printed on archival paper, simply email them to: 2119lettersproject@gmail.com. Due to space constraints - please - one letter (two-page max) and photo per person.

The 2119 Letters Project is open to all who wish to participate.
The deadline for letters and photos is Sunday, June 9.

The archival stainless steel box will also contain: profiles of the parish clergy, staff, and music directors; a DVD of homilies and CD of the choir, along with a Richard Clark composition; the 2019 Candidate and Elects brochure, and notes and class photo from the 2019 First Communion Class; information on our vibrant ministries, including a CARES 'Communion of the Sick' booklet; a copy of the weekly Bulletin, and a Vespers program; a tiny figurine from 1988 commemorating the Church's 100th anniversary; a sterling silver Saint Cecilia medal blessed in 2019 at the Vatican by Pope Francis; and a 2219 plaque for the next generations within the parish community to leave their legacy.

Details on the date for the encapsulation of the project will be forthcoming.

Please do not hesitate to contact Celia Harris, Project Archivist, with any questions at:
2119lettersproject@gmail.com.

Project Committee Members: Joshua Guerra, Adam Valsahagun and Jacob Venter
Parish Advisory Committee: Leah Bennett, Jeanne Bruno and Scott MacDonald

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS



MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY

Saturday, May 25 | 5:00 p.m.
Rev. Peter Grover, OMV, celebrant
Cynthia Wanner, lectors

Sunday, May 26 | 8:00 a.m.
Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ, celebrant
Jim Dougherty, lector

Sunday, May 26 | 9:30 a.m.
Rev. John J. Unni, celebrant
Charlie Prucher, Nicholas Hayes-Mota,
and Karen McMenemy, lectors

Sunday, May 26 | 11:15 a.m.
Rev. John J. Unni, celebrant
Allie D'Amico, Laura Noël, and
Clarissa Hadge, lectors

SPECIAL INTENTIONS

Saturday, May 25 | 5:00 p.m.
Angelo Valente, Sr., *Memorial*

Sunday, May 26 | 9:30 a.m.
Virginia Watkin, *Memorial*

Sunday, May 26 | 9:30 a.m.
Geoffrey Douglas, *Memorial*

Sunday, May 26 | 11:15 a.m.
John McLaughlin, *11th Anniversary*

Sunday, May 26 | 11:15 a.m.
Amparo Ferro, *1st Anniversary*

Sunday, May 26 | 11:15 a.m.
Maggie Ryan, *Memorial*

TODAY'S READINGS

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Revelations 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

Acts 7:55-60

Revelations 22:12-14, 16-17, 20

John 17:20-26



IF YOU LOVE ME,
KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS,
SAYS THE LORD, AND I WILL ASK
THE FATHER AND HE WILL SEND
YOU ANOTHER PARACLETE,
TO ABIDE WITH YOU FOR EVER,
ALLELUIA.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON FOR THE
SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

PRAYERS & OCCASIONS

Our Deceased

Sr. Ann Marie Cook's brother died on May 18. Pray for the eternal repose of **Charlie Cook** as well as for the consolation of Ann Marie and her family. Pray also for the repose of the soul of **Eleanor DeMartino** who died on May 19, and for the consolation of Jackie O'Neill and her family. **Donald Margotta** died on May 20. Pray for his eternal repose as well as for the consolation of his wife Gisela and their family. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Our Sick

Please pray for all our sick and for those who are in need of our prayer, especially **Mary Pickering, Caeden Boyce, Stephanie Brown, Quinn Waters, Sean Sullivan, Kim Villanueva, JoAnn Fitzpatrick, Francisco and Valentin Castro Goudovitch, Bill Croke, Helene Schabes, Mary Jane Kinne, Ann Marie Starzyk, Steven Clark, Patricia Finn, Mary Sue Cappelletti, and Marc Pelletier.**

Welcome to Saint Cecilia Parish

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our parish who have recently registered: **Kendall Mueller** of Boston, **Lauren Ostman** of Marshfield, and **Angela and Patrick Townsend** of Boston. If you have not previously registered with the parish, there are forms in the narthex or you can register online at www.stceciliaboston.org.

Weddings at Saint Cecilia

Congratulations to **Lizzie Resker and Andrew Habermehl** and **Jaqueline Gertner and Andrew Belfield** who were married here on May 18. May God bless the happy couples as they start this next phase of their lives together.

Happy Anniversary!

This week we celebrate the baptismal anniversary of **George Winchester, SJ** baptized on May 27 and **Judy Castaldi** baptized on May 28. May the Lord continue to bless them with the grace to live out their baptismal call. Happy Feast Day, George and Judy!

Congratulations, Kristen!

Kristen Bor-Zale graduated from Northeastern University School of Law last Thursday, May 23. Well done, Kristen!

Side Entrance Closed Until Further Notice

The entrance on Saint Cecilia Street is now closed due to the renovation. If you visit the office during the week, please come to the rectory door located on Saint Cecilia Street.

Attention Graduates

We want to acknowledge and celebrate all our graduates this spring. Please email the names of the parishioners who are graduating from high school or college to Leah Bennett at lbennett@stceciliaboston.org. Please use the word 'graduate' in the subject line. Feel free to include the name of the school and the degree awarded. We are also happy to announce recitals.



Ascension Thursday

The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is observed on Thursday of this week. Ascension Thursday is a holy day of obligation and we will celebrate the liturgy at 8:00 in the morning and at 6:30 in the evening (with music).

Welcome to our Newly Elected Parish Pastoral Council Members

Let us welcome the newest members of our Parish Pastoral Council. Elected to a three-year term are **Mark Lippolt, Lena Denis, and Anna DeMare**. We thank those who ran and pray that our council members serve the parish with open minds and hearts. We also offer thanks to **Josh Fairchild** and **David Waters**, who will conclude their term of service this year.

Upcoming Evening Prayer

In commemoration of the Solemnity of Pentecost we will celebrate Evening Prayer Sunday, June 9 at 6:00 p.m. All are welcome!

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

The board of directors of Saint Cecilia House and the Robert McBride House, located in the Fenway neighborhood, is currently seeking additional members who would consider taking on a new volunteer commitment to provide oversight and direction for these properties, while also striving to serve the ongoing needs of the residents and strategizing for future development in this rapidly changing area. The board of directors is made up of eleven voting members, including a member from the pastoral staff and a member of the Pastoral Council who directly connect the ongoing work of the board with the mission of the parish. The board meets bi-monthly and members are requested to regularly be present for these meetings. New members are asked to commit to a three-year term that may be renewed. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone who may have an interest in developing their knowledge or continuing to utilize their skills by participating in neighborhood or other types of community development opportunities. While current individuals have mainly been drawn from our parish community, other individuals with interest in these areas are also welcome to consider becoming board members. If you have an interest in exploring this volunteer opportunity, please contact Jeanne Bruno (jbruno@stceciaboston.org) at Saint Cecilia for further information. A time will then be arranged for you to meet with other members of the current board. Saint Cecilia House and McBride House are 501 (c) (3) non-profit organizations and both residences were developed to provide safe and dignified housing for some of Boston's seniors and persons with disabilities from all races, colors, and creeds.



ARE YOU FREE ON MONDAY EVENINGS?

Prison and After is looking for one or two parishioners to join the group of parishioners who support men returning to the community after prison or jail. The group hosts a time to gather and talk followed by a meal. For the next few months (during construction) the group will be using space at Old South church a short walk away on Boylston St. For more information please email Peg at sc.prisonandafter@gmail.com.



JOIN THE OPEN DOORS MINISTRY

The Open Doors ministry began several years ago in the hopes that we could offer a peaceful sanctuary to the passer-by to enjoy quiet time with the Lord. We have found that while many enter with prayer in mind, others come to take in the beauty of Saint Cecilia, find out more about our history, or to learn about our vibrant community. As Open Door ministers, we have a unique opportunity to meet and interact with neighbors, visitors, and fellow parishioners. We are responsive to the needs of those that walk through our doors, whether it be answering questions or providing a silent, welcoming nod as they enter in to pray. Starting in mid-June, we would like to open the front doors every weekday 12p.m.—3p.m. We ask that ministers commit to 45 minute timeslots, as schedules allow. If this opportunity is of interest to you, please contact Rachelle Reinhart at sc.opendoors18@gmail.com. Thank you for helping to keep the beauty and peace of Saint Cecilia open!

HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS MINISTRY: DRIVERS NEEDED

Each weekend parishioners have the opportunity to pick up donated meat, dairy products, and produce from four local supermarkets and deliver it to either Catholic Charities' Haitian Multi-Service Center in Dorchester or the Pine Street Inn in the South End. This vital ministry takes place at 7:30 a.m. every Saturday and Sunday morning and on Sundays can be completed in time to attend the 9:30 parish Mass. We need drivers for all the Saturdays and Sundays in May and June. Please email Mark.Lippolt@gmail.com if you can help out.

BIKERS NEEDED HELP WOMEN'S LUNCH PLACE

On October 6, you can help Women's Lunch Place provide some of the 106,000 meals served to their guests experiencing homelessness and poverty. Once again this year, Women's Lunch Place will be participating in Ride for Food, which supports local hunger relief agencies. The Ride begins in Dedham and each rider is expected to raise \$1,000. Corporate and group teams welcome! For more information, please email LizH@WomensLunchPlace.org.

HELP CARE FOR THOSE IN NEED

Occasionally we give gift cards to our sisters and brothers in need. We need to replenish our supply of gift cards to Shaw's, Stop & Shop, and Star Market. If you would like to help out in this way, simply purchase a gift card and place it in the collection basket at Mass, give it to a member of the staff, or mail it to the Parish Office. We are very appreciative of your help as we attempt to offer some assistance to those who struggle.



SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY UPCOMING EVENTS

Interfaith Prayer Vigil

Sunday, May 26 | 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. | ICE Detention Center - South Bay Correctional Facility, 20 Bradston Street

Join as we stand together and raise our voices for the monthly vigil organized by the Massachusetts Communities Action Network, whose purpose is to accompany and show support for detained immigrants held in the House of Corrections awaiting immigration hearings. If you would like to participate along with members of the Social and Racial Justice Ministry, please meet us in the narthex after the 11:15 Mass so that we can carpool together.

One Day Trainings with Extinction Rebellion (XR)

Thursday, June 6 | 6:00-10:00 p.m. | Location TBD

Offered by Mass Extinction Rebellion, an international apolitical network using non-violent direct action to persuade governments to act on the Climate and Ecological Emergency, this training session will provide engagement on non-violence and the dynamics of civil disobedience, offer scenarios and practical information for taking collective action, look at movement messages that convey powerful impact, and offer the opportunity to form an affinity group. Sign up at <https://xrmass.org/action/may-nvda-training-sessions> or contact Linda Jenkins (lindajenkins177@yahoo.com) with questions.

How to Talk About Climate Change so People will Engage

Saturday, June 15 | 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. | St. Anne's In-The-Fields Episcopal Church, 147 Concord Rd., Lincoln MA

Join this workshop, created by the National Network for Ocean and Climate Change Interpretation. With tools offered you will learn to shape communication and dialogue to increase the chances for positive and productive engagement and avoid or navigate many common pitfalls that arise when Americans talk about climate change. Co-facilitators will be John Anderson, former Director of Education, New England Aquarium, and Jennifer West, Coastal Training Program Coordinator, Narragansett Bay Research Reserve. Contact lindajenkins177@yahoo.com to register.

You can sign up to receive updates from the SRJM ministry at <http://eepurl.com/dKw-gw>. Follow us on Facebook (search for St. Cecilia's Social and Racial Justice Ministry) to get news about upcoming events. Are you interested in getting more involved with planning actions? Whether you want to join our Steering Committee or have a particular action you want to collaborate with us on, please email sc.socialracialjustice@gmail.com.

SAINT CECILIA PARISH

PARISH OPERATING STATEMENT

We are pleased to present the Parish Operating Statement for the third quarter of the fiscal year, the nine months ending March 31, 2019. Our Net Loss for the nine months year-to-date was \$59,762. This is primarily due to water damage incurred in our building this year as well as our special donations coming in under budget. Special donations include gifts to the parish unrelated to the Sunday offertory income.

The decrease in our special donations income is becoming of increasing concern for the Finance Council. It appears unlikely that we will achieve our budget for this item during this fiscal year which will have a negative effect on our bottom line. We budgeted what we believed to be a conservative loss of \$49,028 for the year, although we anticipated that we would get to breakeven. It now appears that we will end the year close to our budgeted loss rather than the surplus we have

achieved in recent years. As a result, we expect to fund this loss from our savings account that we have built up over the last few years. We do plan to operate the parish on an annual breakeven basis over the long term. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and make appropriate recommendations to Fr. John and the staff.

As always, we thank you for your support as we strive to further the mission of our parish. It is only through sustained and predictable giving that we can plan for the future of Saint Cecilia, so we continue to request that all parishioners first make sure they are formally registered in the parish and then consider joining our Offertory Commitment Program (OCP), which will assist us in this planning. Please contact Colleen Melaugh in the parish office for more information.

<u>INCOME</u>	Quarter Ending	Quarter Ending
	Mar 31,2019	Mar 31,2019
	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Sunday Offertory Income	\$ 718,902	\$ 739,012
Special Donations Income	\$ 241,515	\$ 383,415
Operating Income	\$ 206,455	\$ 196,172
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 233,118	\$ 138,864
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 1,399,990	\$ 1,457,463
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Personnel Expenses	\$ 652,375	\$ 706,580
Office Expenses	\$ 102,665	\$ 112,500
Liturgy Expenses	\$ 39,524	\$ 46,589
Building Expenses	\$ 425,464	\$ 319,299
Other Expenses	\$ 239,724	\$ 316,501
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,459,752	\$ 1,501,469
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENSES	\$ (59,762)	\$ (44,006)

Saint Cecilia Finance Council:

Father John Unni, Pastor; Matt Maguire, Chair; David Castaldi; Alicia Cooney; Mark Duggan; Mary Kaye;
Jason Kelly; Mark Lippolt; Colleen Melaugh; Cole Young

ADULT FAITH FORMATION EVENTS

FAITH FORMATION EVENTS AT SAINT CECILIA
OFTEN APPEAR ON PAGES 4—7

PAULIST CENTER – BOSTON

For further details on this event, please check their website: <http://www.paulistcenter.org/upcoming-events/>

Prayer of Heart & Body Series: Yoga & Meditation in Christian Context with Fr. Tom Ryan, CSP

Easter Season thru Pentecost - 6 Session Series (5 Tuesdays, 1 Wed: April 23, May 8 (Wed), 14, 21 June 4, 11) 5:45 – 7:25 p.m. | Auditorium | Registration forms at the back of Chapel, or at reception office (617-742-4460). Cost for 6 week series: \$72 Students: \$36

Planning a Funeral for You or a Loved One

Saturday, June 15, 2019 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. | Please pre-register with Sal at 617-742-4460 | Suggested donation is \$10

Plan a funeral to reflect what you would like it to be by joining Mr. Peter Ghiloni, Director of Liturgy and Music at the Paulist Center and Mr. Joseph Reardon of Keohane Funeral Home. They will go through the funeral liturgy and present ideas about what makes for a good celebration. An overview of pre-planning for a funeral and a guide will be provided for future use. Fr. Michael McGarry CSP, will join in the discussion and question and answer period.



A REQUEST FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Celebrating its 100th anniversary, Sunset Point Camp has provided a dream vacation at the seashore to over 40,000 low-income, at-risk children aged 6 to 13 from Greater Boston without regard for their race, nationality, or religious affiliation. Nearly 450 city-based boys and girls travel to Hull each summer for a one or two-week overnight camp experience letting them enjoy the fresh air, learn new talents, receive academic summer support and simply have fun.

Sunset Point Camp is operated by our friends at Catholic Charities. They have mentioned to us that they always need donations of sunscreen for the kids at the camp. So the next time you're at CVS or Walgreen's or your local supermarket, please consider picking up an extra tube of sunscreen and dropping it in the plastic bin identified for this purpose in the narthex. We have been told the higher the SPF number, the better. The Camp also needs kids' flipflops for boys and girls age 6 to 12.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

For the past two years, our parish has provided ongoing support to Catholic Charities' Refugee and Immigration Services, heeding Pope Francis' words, "With regard to migrants, displaced persons and refugees, a common commitment is needed, one focused on offering them a dignified welcome." At this point in time, the parish has offered to provide refugee families with supermarket gift cards so that they will have food while their applications for political asylum are processed. If you would like to purchase gift cards to Market Basket specifically—and no more than \$25 per card—please feel free to drop them in the offertory basket. You can also contribute by check, noting "Refugee Families" in the memo line of your check made payable to "Saint Cecilia Parish."

Our Bodies, Not Just our Souls, are Holy

By JAMES MARTIN, SJ

What does it mean that Jesus ascended into heaven? Like so much in the Christian life it is a mystery, and its meaning is inexhaustible. But today's account from the Gospel of John shows us several things.

First, it shows us Jesus as "Lord," seated at the right hand of God the Father, a sign of his divine authority. Jesus is not simply a wisdom figure, a compassionate preacher, or even an astounding healer, he is the Son of God.

Second, the Ascension shows us that Jesus's time on earth after the Resurrection was limited. Most of the disciples probably hoped that Jesus would stay with them indefinitely, much as at the Transfiguration Peter, James and John wanted simply to "be" with Jesus on the mountain. It is understandable. But at the Transfiguration, even though Peter suggests building three "booths" for worship and adoration, Jesus comes down off the mountain with his friends, and afterwards they go about their ministry. We often want to prolong such intense spiritual moments, which is both natural and good. God wants us to savor these grace-filled times. But, at some point after these spiritual experiences, we are called to return to our daily lives, to put into action what God asks us to do. Likewise, immediately before the Ascension, Jesus asks his disciples to "Go out to all the world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature." Nourished by these spiritual moments, we are to do work.

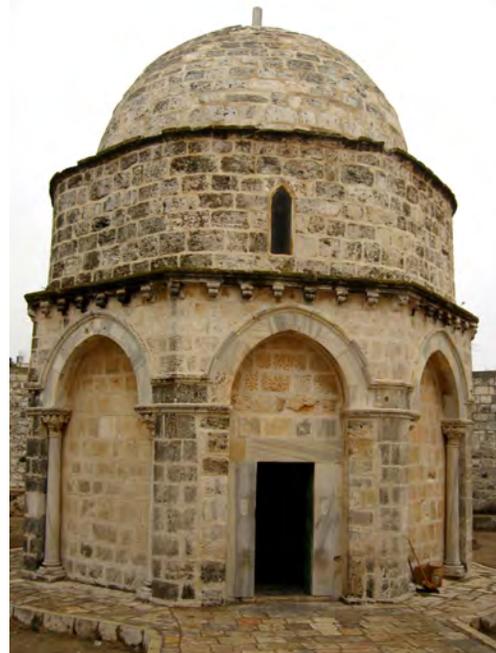
But there is another aspect of the Ascension that often goes overlooked: Jesus ascends bodily to heaven. Not as a ghost. Not as a disembodied spirit. Not by leaving his body behind on earth, as if it were unimportant, superfluous or even repulsive. Think about it: At the Resurrection the Risen Christ could have left behind his body in the tomb and appeared to the disciples as pure spirit, and said to them, "Here I am. I have left behind the flesh, and am appearing to you in a more perfect form, as pure spirit." But he does not. In fact, in one appearance Jesus invites the disciples to pay close attention to his body, and says, "Look at my hands and my feet. Touch me and see: it is I myself. For a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And he invites St. Thomas to touch the physical wounds in his hands and side. The Risen Christ returns in a glorified body, but a body nonetheless.

Our bodies are holy. Yes, they sometimes give us trouble, more so when we are sick or when we age. Sometimes they seem to encourage us to sin. And often in Christian history, the body has

been seen as "less than" the spirit. St. Paul set up a distinction between the "flesh" and "spirit." St. Francis of Assisi talked about his body as "Brother Ass." And many saints, like St. Ignatius Loyola, "mortified" themselves by undergoing extreme penances. As these saints understood, our bodies should not rule us. But God created us not as a soul that just happens to occupy a body as a kind of annoyance—but as an embodied soul, or an ensouled body.

The Ascension, as well as the Resurrection appearances, remind us that the God who created our bodies loves our bodies. We should too; by caring for our physical selves, by never intentionally harming our bodies, and by reverencing the bodies of others, too.

The one who understands this best of all is Jesus, who lives and reigns with God the Father, and does so as our brother with a body like ours.



*Chapel of the Ascension
Mount of Olives, Jerusalem*

FIVE LESSONS FROM THE ASCENSION

By JAMES MARTIN, SJ

The Ascension has always been a challenging feast for me. I believe in the doctrine, of course, but every time I think of Jesus floating into the skies it feels hard to imagine. For some reason, the traditional imagery has always put me off. I'm not sure why: Jesus did many other things that were equally as dramatic and equally as surprising: stilling storms, walking on water, and so on. Perhaps I've just seen too many bad movies of people levitating, floating and flying. Visualizing Jesus in that way is hard. At least for me.

The Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel readings, however, make it clear: he was lifted up in front of the disciples, at a place I visited recently: near Bethany, outside of Jerusalem. On our pilgrimage last month, in the Chapel of the Ascension, which commemorates the event there, our group was booted out, as we were praying, by a group of priests asking us to clear the space for a bishop. Funny enough, I was thinking about this very image: Jesus floating into the sky, and wondering if it happened exactly this way.

To my mind the Ascension is probably very similar to the other accounts of the glorified body after the Resurrection. It was hard for the disciples to describe exactly what they saw in the post-Resurrection experiences, and so the accounts seem a little hard to parse. Think about the seemingly confusing ways that the Risen Christ is described: He's recognizable; he's not recognizable. He's bodily; he's spiritual. And so on.

As with Resurrection, the Gospel writer may have had a hard time describing the disciples experience at the Ascension in ways that we can readily grasp.

But experience something they did.

And what did they experience? Jesus, after his Resurrection, and his time with the disciples on earth, entered another kind of existence, with the Father. His time with them had come to an end.

And for me there are five things to note:

First, even in his glorified body after the Resurrection, Jesus still has a body. And that body is taken up into the presence of the Father. It's a reminder that the human body, not only Jesus's but our own, is holy. It's meant to be revered. Bodily existence is an essential part of who Jesus was, and is, and is an essential part

of ourselves. So reverence your body. And everyone else's.

Second, Jesus is now with the Father. It's a reminder of his exalted place in our cosmology. He is not simply someone whom the Father sent for a time, and now that he's finished with his job he can be seen as, say, another prophet. No, Jesus is, in case anyone doubted it, in the presence of the Father and the Spirit, and, as we heard in yesterday's Gospel, speaks through the Spirit. Of course the Trinity is a mystery, but it's important to ponder.

Third, Jesus is no longer with us bodily, but he is present through the Spirit. And sad as it was for the disciples to let go, Jesus encouraged them to look forward to the coming of the Advocate. And this would only happen after he left them. Remember, Jesus tells the disciples, do not let your "hearts be troubled." "I'll be with you always," he says. And to paraphrase his message over the last few days, "What I said to you in the flesh, I say to you through the Spirit.

Fourth, get going. The angels in the Acts of the Apostles, proxies for that Holy Spirit, say, "Men of Galilee, what are you doing standing around looking into the sky?" There's a kind of implicit parallel to the Transfiguration, where Jesus tells Peter, James and John to come off the mountain after they have seen Jesus in his glory. Stop standing around. Go and preach the Good News.

Fifth, Jesus will return. The angels carry that message as well. What the end times, the Parousia, will be like is another mystery, but we believe that Jesus will return in the same way. Perhaps not descending from a cloud, at the exact spot in Bethany. (On the other hand, why not?) But returning in bodily form, recognizably him. But in the meantime, get going!

So did it happen exactly as Acts describes it? Why not? Nothing is impossible with God. Or perhaps this was the best way that the disciples could explain what they experienced at the Ascension. In the end, the visuals matter less than the lessons of the Ascension: Our bodies are holy. Jesus is with the Father. Jesus is present to us through the Spirit. Jesus will return. And get going!



~James J. Martin SJ, is a Jesuit priest, writer, and editor-at-large of the Jesuit magazine America. In 2017, Pope Francis appointed Martin as a consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communications.

THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

"Go and make disciples" — Matthew 28:19

This Easter we were blessed to initiate fifteen adults into the life of the Church. These men and women participated in the parish's RCIA process — a process designed specifically for non-Catholics and uncatechized Catholics who wish to explore a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ in the context of the Catholic Church.

RCIA is offered each year for the following people:

- Individuals who have never been baptized and who wish to be baptized, confirmed, and receive Eucharist.
- Individuals who have been baptized in another Christian tradition and who wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church through the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist.
- Individuals who were baptized in the Catholic Church but never received first Eucharist.

The next season of RCIA will begin in the fall of 2019. The first eleven weeks are an "inquiry period" and anyone is welcome to attend without obligation or commitment. On the Third Sunday of Advent (December 15, 2019), those who feel called to be baptized will be received into the Order of Catechumens and then are counted among those who will receive the Easter sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil in 2020. Others will continue preparing for reception into full communion with the Catholic Church, and, in the case of uncatechized Catholics, to complete their initiation by being confirmed and receiving Eucharist.

RCIA entails participation in 90-minute weekly sessions that take place on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00. There is also an expectation that participants attend the Sunday 11:15 liturgy together. It is at this liturgy that the RCIA community is dismissed following the homily to go downstairs to our Parish Pastoral Center to reflect together on the Sunday scripture readings.

WISDOM FROM THE ANCIENT CHURCH — St. Basil the Great (AD 329–379)

"Love of God does not spring from study. It is not from others, after all, that we learn to enjoy the light, to yearn for life, and to love our parents and those who nourish us. Much less, then, does love of God arise from external teaching. Rather, as soon as people exist they have the germ of reason, and this contains the power and impulse to love.

In the school of divine instruction, therefore, we but cultivate this power and wisely nourish it; thus, with God's help, it is brought to full development. For our part, we shall endeavor here, as far as the Holy Spirit enables us, to fan into flame this spark of love for God that is hidden within you."

This is a wonderful summary of what is at the heart of Christian formation. The RCIA is not a program or a class in Catholicism, but rather a process of discerning and ritualizing stages of gradual conversion that take place within the parish community. The process is about growing in relationship with Jesus and being accompanied and supported by both the RCIA and the wider parish communities.

If this sounds like something you might like to pursue, all that is needed is an open heart and a sincere desire to grow in relationship with Jesus. To learn more or to sign-up for our 2019/20 season, please e-mail Scott MacDonald (smacdonald@stceciliaboston.org). We would be privileged to walk with you and help "fan into flame this spark of love for God that is hidden within you."

RCIA
A JOURNEY IN FAITH

PARISH RESOURCES

Parish Office & Mailing Address

18 Belvidere Street, Boston, MA 02115
Hours | Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Phone | 617 536 4548
Fax | 617 536 1781
E-mail | info@stceciliaboston.org
Website | www.stceciliaboston.org

Parish Staff

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Mark Donohoe, Pastoral Associate,
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Scott J. MacDonald, Director of Faith Formation and Parish Visibility,
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John Glynn, Director of College and Youth Ministry,
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Jeanne Bruno, Chaplain, Pastoral Associate,
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Lisa Pickering, Events and Facilities Manager,
lpickering@stceciliaboston.org
Leah Bennett, Communications and Operations Coordinator,
lbennett@stceciliaboston.org

Assisting Clergy

Rev. Peter Grover, OMV
Rev. Peter Gyves, SJ
Rev. James Shaughnessy, SJ

Schedule for Liturgy

Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday | 8:00 a.m.
Lord's Day | Sat 5:00 p.m.; Sun 8:00, 9:30, and 11:15 a.m.
Holy Days | 8:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Reconciliation

The sacrament of reconciliation is available by appointment. Please call the Parish Office.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

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

Baptism for Infants

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

Faith Formation for Children

To register your child for our Faith Formation Program, please contact Scott MacDonald 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.

Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Team

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

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

For Those with Celiac Disease

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

Hearing Assistance in Church

The church is equipped with an FM listening device. Small receivers are available for anyone who may have trouble hearing the sound system. Simply request a receiver from any one of our greeters before Mass.

Access for the Disabled

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

Parking

There is reduced rate parking for \$11.00 at the Hynes Auditorium Garage located on Dalton Street on Sundays until 3:00 p.m. and every evening after 4:00 p.m. Please be sure to ask one of our greeters for a parking validation ticket before leaving the church. There is also reduced rate parking on Sundays only at the Prudential Center South Garage (enter at Huntington Avenue or Dalton Street); up to 4 hours: \$14.00, up to 5 hours: \$20.00.

Joining Our Community

We're happy that you're with us! Our community offers a warm, spiritual home for a diverse group of Catholics. We come from many neighborhoods in and around Boston but also have parishioners from as far afield as Marlborough, Newburyport, and Stow. Please introduce yourself to a staff member, drop in for coffee on Sunday, or fill out a new parishioner form in the narthex.. No matter what your background, please know that you are always welcome at Saint Cecilia.

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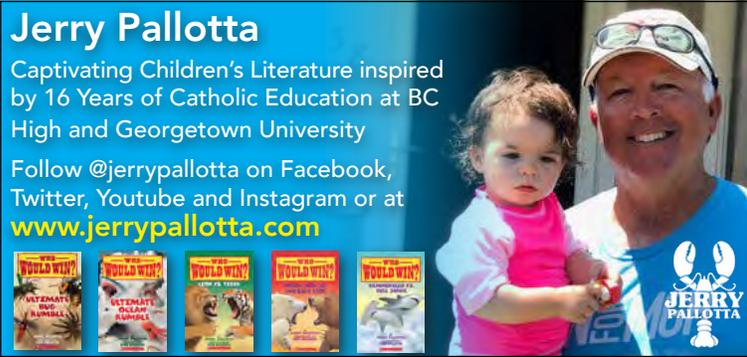


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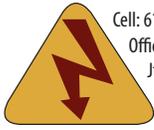
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