

# St. Cecilia

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

### Flowers Ministry Creates a Beautiful Environment for Our Lord

Here at St. Cecilia, we are blessed with a beautiful church building. Year-round, volunteers from the Flowers Ministry take the time to enhance this beauty, both during Ordinary Time and on major church celebrations. Through their care and attention to detail, we have the opportunity to worship in a space that truly reminds us of the glory of God's creation.

The Flowers Ministry has been a longtime parish establishment – in fact, lifelong parishioner Happy Kramer remembers her own mother participating in the ministry during her childhood. This inspired her to get involved in the ministry as an adult.

“One day when I was walking through, some of the ladies were doing the flowers,” she says. “I told them my mother used to do it, and that I'd love to help. They said, ‘Come back next week,’ and now I've been doing it for about 20 years! I love it.”

Today, ministry duties are done by Happy and parishioner Remy Retuta. Happy picks up the flowers at Wholesale Florist on Friday mornings. Then, after attending Mass that same morning, she and Remy arrange them in the church.

“We try to include flowers that go with whatever season we are in,”



Happy says. “We usually keep it simple during Ordinary Time, and then try to make it very special for holy days such as Christmas, Palm Sunday and Easter. We place flowers near the altar, in front of the ambo, and then in the alcove with the picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.”

For full liturgical seasons, the ministry uses longer-lasting plants – such as poinsettias for Christmas and lilies for Easter – so that the decorations can stay up throughout the duration of the season. They also try to have unique colors and arrangements each year.

“At Easter, we sometimes have all white with some green, and sometimes yellow and white,” Happy says. “This

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## Flowers Ministry Creates a Beautiful Environment for Our Lord *continued from front cover*

year, we did a multi-color arrangement, with yellows and lavenders and blues and pinks. We wanted to make it very springy and colorful.

"At Christmas, we have Christmas trees, and we also put wreaths around the church and make bows to color coordinate," she adds. "Monsignor is wonderful, and he gets our eighth-graders to come and help us. The trees are about 20 feet tall, so they come and put the lights on the trees. We also have other parish volunteers come and help us out for major feast days."

The ministry also provides flowers for weddings at the parish, and makes a wreath each year for the May Crowning procession. For Happy, providing flowers for the church and for these events is a way to create a positive, welcoming environment for all – and to give glory to Our Lord.

"Christ is there, so we really want to make this place beautiful for Him," Happy says. "I think it shows our respect. God created the flowers, and we are using them to honor Him. I also think that flowers are warm and welcoming, and it's often the first thing you see when you come into the church. First impressions are very important!"

Remy and Happy have both been able to grow closer to God through this ministry.

"It is one of the best ministries we have, because

it is close to Jesus!" Remy says. "I really like it. When you are up there on the altar, you see the crucifix and you pass by the tabernacle, and He is right there."

"I think you grow closer to God just by being there, and knowing that you are contributing to something that makes the church welcoming and beautiful," Happy adds. "I do this for a lot of reasons, but the main reason is that I do this for God."

Through the Flowers Ministry, Happy has also been able to give back to a parish that has given her so much throughout her own life.

"I was born and raised in this parish, and I really like being a part of it," she says. "This is something that I can do, and that I hope I'm good at!"



*The Flowers Ministry always welcomes new volunteers. For more information, or to get involved, please contact Happy Kramer at 415-694-8349.*



### Archbishop Appoints Seventh Pastor of St. Cecilia's Parish!

Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone has appointed Fr. Mark Taheny as the seventh Pastor of St. Cecilia Church.

Fr. Taheny will begin as our shepherd on July 1. Fr. Taheny, 60, graduated from St. Brendan School in 1970 and St. Ignatius in 1974. He has been the pastor of St. Sebastian's Church in Greenbrae for the past nine years.

## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

### *We Cannot Be Part-Time Christians*

Dear Parishioners,

**M**ay is traditionally celebrated in the Church as the month of Mary, our Blessed Mother. As the Mother of the Church, she provides us with an example of what it means to be a servant of God and our fellow humans, as well as how to obediently fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, we are called to model the life of Jesus. That can be difficult, and there are certainly challenges to living as a disciple of Christ. But living stewardship and discipleship brings intense contentment and joy to those who take that risk. As we hear in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, "All things work for good for those who love God."

After Jesus Himself, we look to our Blessed Mother as an ideal steward and an example of what stewardship means. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her life and her ministry in a total spirit of faithfulness and service. One of the most beautiful titles for Our Lady is "The First Disciple." She always said "yes" to God. For us to be disciples, we also need to be good stewards of the gifts we have received. Our Church and our parish are gifts to us from God.

At no point in Holy Scripture does Jesus tell us that following Him is easy. We know it is not always simple and effortless. It requires dedication and commitment. Pope Francis has said on more than one occasion, "We cannot be part-time Christians and Catholics! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day."

I suspect that is how Mary lived her life from that



moment she turned it over to God and His Will. So, let us vow together during this month of Mary to follow her example, and seek to be the kinds of good stewards that will make our faith community even stronger and more effective.

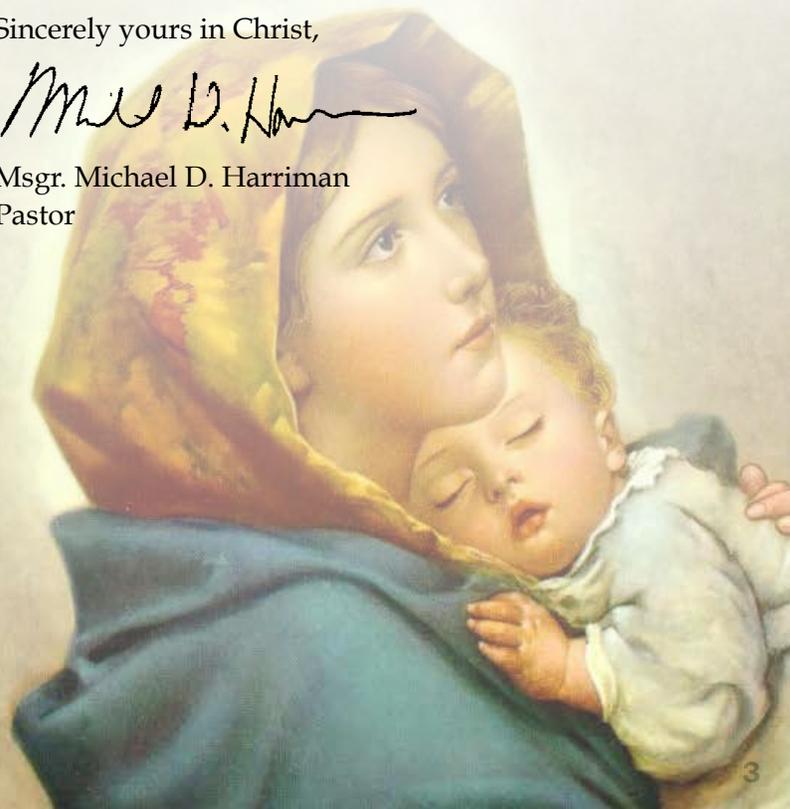
I pray that we all can find the strength to live and practice our faith as we should. This means being faithful to Mass, the sacraments and looking for ways to help and serve one another. We have a great parish – let us make it even greater.

As we hear in Holy Scripture, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). Pray for me, as I pray for you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Michael D. Harriman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Msgr. Michael D. Harriman  
Pastor



## *“A Simple Call”* Irene Quan Reflects on Stewardship

*“I think urging people to do the right thing when no one is watching is the foremost, because God will see it. He will acknowledge whatever we are doing right for others and reward us. I try to set a good example, and I think all good Catholics should try to follow in Jesus’ footsteps.” – Irene Quan*

If you ask parishioner Irene Quan, who helps train our lectors and Eucharistic Ministers, what first made her want to get actively involved in the parish, she will tell you that her desire to participate in church life traces all the way back to her childhood in Hong Kong. As a young girl, Irene attended a Catholic school high up on a mountain. While the wealthier children traveled to the school by car, Irene’s mother brought her on the bus, which arrived at the school well before lessons began each day.

As it turned out, that early bus schedule would lead Irene to a life of stewardship at a very young age.

“The bus would arrive early, before the school was open, so I would go to the chapel and pray when I arrived,” Irene recalls.

“That Catholic school really touched me, and I saw the British nuns there as angels. One day, one of the nuns noticed I was always there early and asked me if I wanted to start helping get things ready in the chapel, and I began getting the candles and books and things ready every day.

“So when someone asked me if I wanted to be a lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Cecilia, I thought, ‘Why not?’” she continues. “I’ve been helping in the church since second grade and it is a good way to give back. I have never really thought about why, but I think it’s probably a simple calling from God that I’ve had since I was 7 years old.”

When Irene was 13, her family immigrated to San Francisco and

became parishioners at Star of the Sea Catholic Church. Here in the States, she continued to actively live out her faith, and was happy to continue to find in the Mass the familiar “three Rs” with which she was raised – rules, ritual and respect. Now, Irene has been a part of the St. Cecilia family for over 10 years, and in addition to serving as a lector and Eucharistic Minister and training others in these roles, she is also a coordinator of the monthly Chinese Bible-sharing group led by Fr. Peter Zhai from St. Anne of the Sunset.

Throughout the years, Irene has always found that for all of the ways she serves the Church, she receives tenfold blessings in return.

“I’ve been blessed by answered prayers,” she says. “Not through

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# *Calling From God"* *Reflections on the Role of* *Stewardship in Her Life*

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*Irene Quan serving as a lector during a Mass at St. Cecilia*

houses, cars or vacations, but through my prayers and through God's answers to my prayers in different situations. He always keeps my mind focused on what's important. Then God calms your heart and you are just satisfied with what you've got. That's how I see my prayers being answered - He calms my head and heart so I can handle everyday life. God has given me a smooth life which I don't take for granted. I think some people with a good life think they don't need God, but I have faith in God."

It is Irene's hope that, by participating fully in parish life, active parishioners are able to inspire others to get involved and stay engaged with the Church. She has been excited by how many new programs are being offered by the parish in honor of St. Cecilia's centennial year, and hopes that many parishioners will be encouraged to deepen their faith by taking part in some of these many activities and ministries.

As someone who was first invited into a life of stewardship when she was just a child, Irene recognizes the great importance of bringing young people into the faith and helping them find an active role in the Church from early on.

"Stewardship is communication, education and evangelization," Irene says. "This will lead Catholics to a deeper faith and keep them at the Church. I hope Catholics will stay in the Church and bring in their children, nieces and nephews, and next of kin. Stewardship is my way to bring myself closer to God and bring other people closer to God and the Church. First you try to get your own parishioner to do more, and then they evangelize and pass it on. We need to bring the younger generation in the Church for sure."

From her young childhood in Hong Kong to the many years she has lived in San Francisco, Irene has always found a place in the Catholic Church. Participating fully in parish life has been a way for her to deepen her relationship with the Lord and bring others closer to Him, as well. Throughout her life, she has found that many blessings come in return for all acts of service, both big and small.

"I think urging people to do the right thing when no one is watching is the foremost, because God will see it," Irene affirms. "He will acknowledge whatever we are doing right for others and reward us. I try to set a good example, and I think all good Catholics should try to follow in Jesus' footsteps."

## The Bible

### The Textbook of Stewardship



Have you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there is such a manual – the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the "textbook of stewardship," the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions

of their harvest to God: "When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for the dwelling place of his name... 'Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.' And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence" (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, "In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about

living a life of Christian stewardship: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefitted from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church – St. Paul – preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.

# *Young Ladies Institute:* *Practicing Stewardship for 130 Years*

The year, 1887. The place, San Francisco. Three friends reached out to another young woman who had fallen ill. With no family nearby to care for her or give her financial assistance, she had come to be in need, and her friends answered the call. They never could have imagined that 130 years later, the organization they founded – the Young Ladies Institute, or YLI – would have expanded to over 80 institutes, spanning the west coast and Hawaii.

The YLI that meets at St. Cecilia Parish is one of the oldest, and will celebrate 130 years this November. For Rosemarie Azinheira, a member of the YLI for the past 28 years, it has been an opportunity to serve the Church and community, as well as to grow in her own faith through friendships with other Catholic women.

“I’ve met some wonderful women who are just exemplary Catholic women and very devoted to the Church,” she says of both current members, as well as those who have passed away. “They loved their faith and they lived it.”

Although the initial mission of sisterhood began with caring for friends in particularly difficult circumstances, the mission of the YLI now consists of not only serving in parishes, but also assisting the (arch)bishop and (arch)diocese, as well as the broader community.

At St. Cecilia’s, the YLI members host Donut Sunday several times each year. From providing the greeters, readers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the 9:30 a.m. Mass, to setting up the school auditorium with donuts and refreshments, the YLI members look forward to these opportunities to be present and giving back to their parish community.

Each year, the YLI also participates in contributing to a seminary burse, which fundraises money to be



*The YLI at St. Cecilia is an opportunity for women to enjoy fellowship while also giving back to their community.*

given to the (arch)bishop, supporting those in their local seminary, studying for the priesthood.

In addition, the YLI serves the broader community through annual donation campaigns, inspired by the mission of the Institute’s Grand President. From supporting women’s religious orders, to guide dogs for the visually impaired, raising funds to purchase textbooks for low income schools, or women in crisis pregnancies, the project changes each year. This year, the various Institutes are participating in a project to serve those who are homeless in their local communities.

The YLI meets on the third Monday of each month in the Green Room. This monthly meeting provides an opportunity for members to socialize, as well as discuss past and upcoming business.

The YLI also provides opportunities for spiritual

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*“You have these sisters there to help you and you can count on them – they’re there for you. It really strengthens your faith and helps you, to be a part of a good Catholic women’s group.”*

*– Kathleen Manning, YLI President, St. Cecilia*

# St. Cecilia Catholic Church

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## Young Ladies Institute *continued from page 7*

enrichment of their members, hosting Days of Recollection and conferences.

“It makes you appreciate your faith and the support of all these different women that you’ve come to know,” says Kathleen Manning, who has been involved for eight years, and currently serves as the President of the YLI at St. Cecilia’s.

But perhaps the most important blessing of the YLI is the friendship – the sisterhood – that is formed among members who journey with each other through the ups and downs of life, providing support and prayer in all of life’s circumstances.

“You have these sisters there to help you and you can count on them – they’re there for you,” Kathleen says. “It really strengthens your faith and helps you, to be a part

of a good Catholic women’s group.”

The women encourage other parishioners to consider becoming members of the YLI.

“It’s one way of living your faith and being there for the pastor and for the bishop,” Rosemarie says. “I’ve enjoyed my membership and it’s been very enriching.”

*If you would like more information, or to join the YLI at St. Cecilia’s, please contact President Kathleen Manning at 415-664-0828. You can also learn more about the history and involvement of the YLI on their website at [www.ylionline.org](http://www.ylionline.org).*

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### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Saturday:** 5:00 p.m. (Vigil Mass) **Sunday:** 7:30, 9:30 (Family Mass), & 11:30 a.m.

**Weekdays:** 7:00, 9:00 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.

**Reconciliation (Confessions):** Saturday, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.