

St. Cecilia

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Honoring our Patroness:

The Music Program at St. Cecilia School

For Mrs. Cecilia Cardenas, her love for music grew out of time spent around the piano with family.

"My mom used to play, and my sisters and I would stand around the piano and we would sing," says Mrs. Cardenas, our Director of Music at St. Cecilia School. "[Music] was just always there. I was not looking for a career in music, but I just couldn't get away from it.

"It was meant to be!" she continues, with a smile

It has been 20 years since Mrs. Cardenas first began inspiring a love of music in our school students. As the Director of Music, Mrs. Cardenas is responsible for the weekly classroom music class, in which all students participate. She has also recently begun to oversee the instrumental music program, a lesson program, in which students can come out of class to participate in music lessons.

Each week, Mrs. Cardenas works with the students, teaching them new music and improving on songs with which they are already familiar. Her primary focus is preparing students to fully and actively participate in song at the monthly school Masses.

"When I first came, 20 years ago, my principal said, 'Okay, you have to get them to sing at Mass,'" Mrs. Cardenas recalls. "They weren't singing and



Mrs. Cecilia Cardenas, our school Director of Music, teaches a weekly music class for our third-graders.

it took a few years, but we got it built up. Now, I say, 'I want you to fill this church with sound, I want your song all the way up to the rafters.' When we have 600 kids singing together, it's really powerful. The kids don't know any differently, they just know, 'We are St. Cecilia's and we sing.' It all goes to the fact that we are called to be active participants in the Mass."

Especially in a school named after the patron saint of music, Mrs. Cardenas

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“Therefore Go and Make Disciples of All Nations” *Evangelization, the Church, and Our Commitments as Stewards*

According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus’ parting words to us before He ascended to heaven after His resurrection included these instructions: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

That is, quite frankly, a call to evangelization. Clearly, evangelization is not new to the Church – it is traced to that call from Jesus Christ, a call to His apostles and followers of that time, and that call continues today in relation to us and our lives as Catholics. “Evangelization” has become a bit of a “catchphrase” in today’s Church. Of course, it is not a new idea, nor is it a new call.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis’ absolute first publication – officially an apostolic exhortation – was titled *Evangelii Gaudium*, which means “The Joy of the Gospel.” In that document, the pope had much to say about evangelization, including this: “Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love” (120).

Nevertheless, the idea of evangelization is nothing new. Pope St. John Paul II issued an encyclical in December 1990 titled *Redemptoris Missio* – “The Mission of the Redeemer” – in which he called for the church to renew its efforts in evangelization. This has become known as the “new evangelization,” but within, what Pope St. John Paul II says is that the Church “must renew her missionary commitment.” He adds, “Faith is strengthened when it is shared and given to others” (2).

Yet, it would seem that some Catholics resist this call to evangelization, perhaps recalling images of street preachers, television evangelists or door-to-door groups saying “repent” or talking about the “wages of sin.” Or, we may feel that evangelization is the role of saints or missionaries or Catholic priests. The truth is that evangelization is rooted in a love of people and a desire that everyone comes to know the love of Christ and the blessings of living as part of His Kingdom.

Over a decade before Pope St. John Paul II addressed this issue, Pope Paul VI issued an apostolic exhortation in 1975 titled *Evangelii Nuntiandi* – “Evangelization in the Modern World” – in which the pope said, “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing of all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church” (14).

So, what does this mean to us as faithful stewards? Obviously, each of us is called to be an evangelist. That does not mean we go door-to-door or stand on street corners proclaiming our faith. Our own mission statement has a strong flavor of evangelization, especially because of our effort to embrace stewardship as a way of life. In recent years, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued two pastoral letters – one called *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy of Catholic Evangelization*, and the other titled *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. The connection between stewardship, evangelization and discipleship is obvious, it would seem.

Pope Francis also said in his first official statement *Evangelii Gaudium* the following: “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ” (10). That is who we are, or who we should be.



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

November is a Time for Thanksgiving

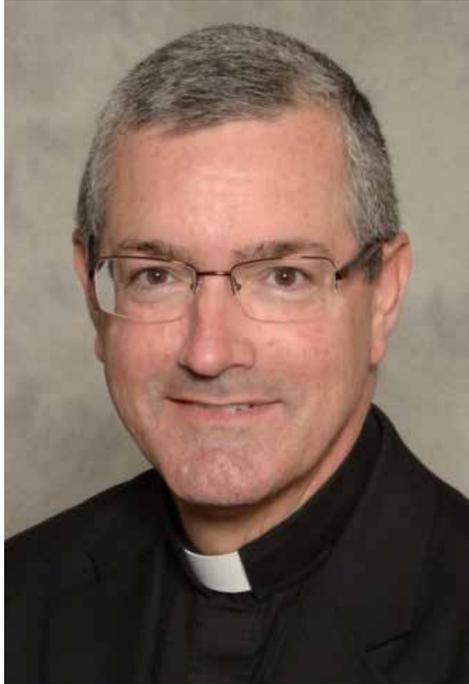
Dear Parishioners,

We are now in the month of November! The Church celebrates All Saints Day, followed by All Souls Day, and we continue to pray throughout the month for those who have died and gone before us, trusting that, by God's love and mercy, we will meet them again in the perfect happiness of Heaven. This is all in accord with the Faith that we have received from those who made many sacrifices to pass it down to us.

Later in November, our nation celebrates "Thanksgiving Day". Of course, in the Church, each and every day is "Thanksgiving Day" because "Eucharist" is a Greek word which means "thanksgiving". Hopefully, people will remember that we are actually pausing to thank God.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln made a Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer: "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God.

"We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined in



the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

"Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

"It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

We cannot help but pray for our brothers and sisters who have suffered from the recent fires so close to us, and others who have come through terrible storms. We find ourselves blessed in countless ways, and as stewards of so many gifts, we

pray to the God that made us that we may be instruments and channels of His peace and healing, that we may all join hands to thank God for His goodness.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark V. Taheny

Fr. Mark Taheny
Pastor

Longtime Parishioner Peggy Mylett Re

It is truly a blessing when someone's faith life knows no bounds of time and place. For parishioner Peggy Mylett, this is certainly the case, as she has kept Christ at the center of her life across decades and oceans. At 93 years old, Peggy has joyfully lived out her Catholic faith both in her homeland of Ireland and here in California. And she doesn't plan on that changing any time soon!

Peggy first came to the United States from Ireland in 1948, staying with an aunt in Oakland. There, she began attending St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, which is where she and her childhood sweetheart, Tom, were married in 1950. The newlyweds moved to San Francisco and were parishioners at Star of the Sea for several years before deciding to make the move to the St. Cecilia Parish and school when their eldest child was 2 years old.

Both Peggy and Tom never doubted that they would continue to pass the Catholic faith down to the next generation, as their parents had done for them.



Peggy Mylett (center) with her children – (from left) Tom, Maureen, Kathy, and Jim.

“Growing up, there were nine children in my family and we went to Mass every Sunday,” Peggy recalls. “We had to walk five miles to get to the church from our farm. And every night we had to be home at five o’clock for dinner, but first we had to kneel on the stone floor and say the Rosary

together as a family.”
Keeping the faith of their families alive in their own lives, Peggy and Tom became active parishioners here at St. Cecilia. Peggy joined the League of the Sacred Heart, and Tom joined the Men’s Club and served as an usher and a lector. The couple also helped

*“I have **prayed hard** and I’ve got **a lot of blessings**, with my happy marriage and happy family. They’re all together and love one another’s company, and that to me is a blessing.” – Peggy Mylett*

reflects on a *Christ-Centered Life*



Peggy Mylett and her husband, Tom, were grand marshals for the 1997 San Francisco St. Patrick's Day Parade.

with many parish dinners over the years, enjoyed enhancing their prayer lives by attending weekend retreats, and sent all four of their children to our parish school and Catholic high schools.

To this day, witnessing her children continue to pass the family faith down to the next generation is one of Peggy's greatest joys, and she counts the closeness of her family - including her four children, 19 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren - as life's greatest blessing.

"I have prayed hard and I've got a lot of blessings, with my happy marriage and happy family," she says. "They're all together and

love one another's company, and that to me is a blessing."

Looking back at the 60-plus years she has been a parishioner at St. Cecilia, Peggy fondly remembers their first pastor at the church, Msgr. Collins, and the way he would keep a trunkful of M&M's in his car for the schoolchildren. She also recalls the countless nights she and Tom spent at Irish dances, including the dances they would organize to raise money for the 14 nuns that used to be in residence at St. Finn Barr Catholic Church. Another special memory for Peggy is the Mass that was held in her own home in the 1960s as part of a parish initiative to encourage non-

practicing Catholics to return to an active life in the Church.

In 2000, Peggy lost her husband, best friend, and dancing partner when Tom passed away. In the years since, she has continued to serve others, even carrying on with her work as the banquet manager at the United Irish Cultural Center until the age of 88! In 2007, she was recognized by Mayor Newsom for her 35 years of service to the UICC and Irish community.

Recently, Peggy has greatly enjoyed attending two of St. Cecilia's stewardship retreats and hopes that this ministry will continue to grow.

"It was such a lovely retreat for a weekend," she says. "I've been to two of them now, and I hope they have lots more. You feel happiness, and at peace. I hope more people will join in."

After more than 60 years here at St. Cecilia, Peggy is truly thankful for her many blessings, and for the support and friendship she has found in her fellow parishioners.

"I have good health, I'm able to walk and do my housework at 93, and I'm very blessed," she says. "I'm still going to the nine o'clock Mass every morning and have had some of the same friends there for many years. On Sundays, I go to 9:30 a.m. Mass, and you know the people there and even know the seat you will sit in. And if you're not there, people will call to ask if you are all right. The people at St. Cecilia are very friendly and very nice."



The Real Message of *Thanksgiving*

The mere mention of Thanksgiving brings many images to one's mind. Different families and multicultural societies like ours in the United States may celebrate in unique ways, but the basis is often the same. Families gather, they share time together, and they are treated to a meal, which is beyond the norm. Not everyone eats turkey and dressing, pumpkin pie, cranberries, and all those other food items we seem to associate with the holiday. However, there is always an element of thanksgiving and gratitude in the air.

In the midst of all the traveling, celebrating and camaraderie associated with Thanksgiving, we sometimes miss the real significance of this holiday. Regardless of what you may identify or accept as the beginnings of our Thanksgiving celebration, that idea of appreciation does pervade it all. Historically, it was President Abraham Lincoln who is given credit for making Thanksgiving "official" here in the United States in 1863. Nevertheless, President George Washington issued a Thanksgiving Proclamation on Oct. 3, 1789, 74 years to the day prior to Lincoln's.

Washington began his proclamation with these words: "Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, and to be grateful for His benefits..." For those who embrace and practice our idea of Catholic stewardship, this is the heart of our stewardship philosophy - that is, God needs to be at the center of our lives. God has gifted each of us, and we need to respond to God in gratitude for those many gifts.

That message was the same message we hear in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. It is certainly the message of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Just as we as Catholics know it is important "to keep Christ in Christmas," it is equally imperative to keep God in Thanksgiving. Our recent presidents, whether Democrats or Republicans, men of faith or not, have used these phrases in their own proclamations: "...grateful for the God-given bounty that enriches our lives"; "...to give thanks to God for the blessings in our lives"; "Let us give our own thanks to God and reaffirm our love of family, neighbor and community"; "We offer praise to God for His goodness and generosity."

As much as we may enjoy the way our own families celebrate Thanksgiving - whether it includes turkey, goose or oysters - we must never lose sight of the real message of Thanksgiving. God has blessed us and we must offer thanks to the Lord. There are so many ways we as Catholics can assure that our Thanksgivings are filled with faith and appreciation to our Lord.

In spite of the preparations for whatever feast is planned, we can try to attend Mass as a family. Many parishes bless bread and other items so that the direct connection among our faith, our faith family and the Lord is made. Prayer should be a part of the beginning and the end of our celebration, and that prayer needs to reflect our gratitude to God. We are truly blessed, and it is no accident that in this country, Thanksgiving often immediately precedes Advent. Christ should be a part of our lives now and throughout the year.

Giving Glory to God, Our Music Ministers Sing, Play and Interpret

There is something inherently spiritual about music, lifting us out of ourselves in a truly unique way. Music can lighten our spirits during times of sorrow, empower us toward action and, most importantly of all, elevate our souls to new heights of prayer and devotion.

“That’s really what makes music so important to the liturgy,” says St. Cecilia’s Music Director Russell Ferreira. “It stirs our emotions and touches our very souls, allowing us as a faith community to pray more fervently, to celebrate more joyfully, and to mourn more profoundly.”

Having been part of St. Cecilia’s Music Ministry since the early 1980s, Russell describes this ministry as having “defined him as a musician.” It has been a way for him to share God’s great gift of music with others – transforming his musical talents into songs of prayer.

“As music ministers, we are workers in God’s field,” Russell says. “We write, we sing, we play, and we interpret. Music enables us to celebrate more fully the great sacrifice of the Mass.”

Our parish’s Adult Choir continues to enhance our liturgical celebrations each first Saturday at the 5 p.m. Mass and on all subsequent 11:30 a.m.



Members of St. Cecilia’s Adult Choir following one of their Sunday liturgies

Sunday Masses. They also lead us in song for special Christmas, Holy Week, and Easter liturgies. Recognizing that their music is much more than a mere performance, our dedicated choir members meet Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Green Room with additional practices being scheduled before major holidays. This helps ensure that their music is always an enhancement to the liturgy, aimed at lifting our hearts and

minds to God.

“During rehearsals, we pray in thanksgiving for the gift of this ministry, and we realize that we must always prepare well so that the note on our pages become the song within our hearts,” Russell says. “In so doing, we prepare not just our music, but we prepare ourselves and, through that, the congregation to worship God in spirit and in truth.”

The Adult Choir is currently seeking new members to assist with this sacred task. No formal audition or experience is required. All that is needed is a love for music and a desire to serve the Lord. Those interested in joining can contact Russell Ferreira at 650-588-7493 or russ10rtpt@aol.com, or simply show up at one of our Thursday evening rehearsals.

St. Cecilia Catholic Church

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Honoring our Patroness *continued from front cover*

hopes to share with her students the beauty of power of song, especially religious music.

"I tell them that to sing is to pray doubly," she says. "I take the time to look at the lyrics with the kids and I ask them questions. I talk with them about how we can't just sing the notes and the words - we have to sing the meaning, we have to look a bit deeper.

"There are so many beautiful hymns, going back to analyzing the text and really pulling the meaning out," Mrs. Cardenas continues. "A lot of times, we remember things better when there's a melody associated with them. Maybe you're not singing out loud, but [the song] is with you all the time."

Mrs. Cardenas hopes that the students will draw inspi-

ration from the saints, especially our patron, St. Cecilia.

"Look at the examples of the saints - St. Cecilia never gave up, she continued to pray and to preach," she says. "Even until the end, she was doing God's work.

"We're all saints in the making," Mrs. Cardenas continues. "You have a wonderful gift, you've been chosen by God to be part of the church, and as such, you can do things. You might think that you can't do anything if you're a fourth-grader or sixth-grader, but you can."

When all is said and done, Mrs. Cardenas hopes that her students develop a deep love and appreciation for the beauty of music, as she has over the years.

"I hope that they would get some pleasure out of singing," she says. "I hope they keep music in their lives always."

*For more information on the music program at St. Cecilia School,
please contact Mrs. Cecilia Cardenas at ccardenas@stceciliaschool.org.*

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.