

Dear Parishioners, Friends, and Visitors to the Cathedral,

Like many of the early Roman martyrs, the Saint we celebrate on November 22nd is someone about whom we know almost nothing. There is evidence of her feast being celebrated at least as early as AD 545, and she is mentioned in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I). Saint Cecilia (also known as Saint Cecily) is said to have been born of a prominent Roman family during the era when it was a capital crime within the Roman Empire to be a Christian (AD 64 – AD 313). As such, it was an offense that was punishable by death. She was raised as a Christian, and tradition tells us that she was given to fasting and prayer from a young age. Cecilia made a personal vow of virginity, so as to belong completely to Christ, but her father had other plans, and betrothed her to a young man named Valerian. On their wedding night, she confessed her vow to her husband and told him that there was an angel watching over her to keep safe her promise. In order to satisfy his desire for the truth of what she was saying, Cecilia told Valerian that if he became a member of the Church, he would see the angel. She sent him to find Pope Urban along the Appian Way, and when Valerian found him, he accepted the Catholic faith and was baptized. Upon returning to Cecilia, he saw the angel standing behind her, placing a crown of flowers on her head. Having now been converted to Christ, he set out to bury the bodies of Christians who had been martyred (an action that was illegal), and because of this, was arrested and put to death himself.

Saint Cecilia took her husband's body and buried it, after which she was rounded up and told to renounce her faith or be killed. Instead, she gave witness to her persecutors and captors of her Christian faith. Cecilia was sentenced to death through suffocation. She was to be locked in an enclosed space so that the toxic fumes from a furnace could suffocate her. After a day and a night though, she was still alive and so her sentence was changed to beheading. The soldier sent to decapitate her, however, botched the job, and after three swings with the sword, fled in fear, leaving her still alive on the ground to die. Tradition tells us that it took Saint Cecilia three days to die, all the while she lay there singing the praises of God. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Cecilia is regarded as the Patron Saint of music.

Saint Augustine once said: "cantare amantis est," meaning, singing belongs to one who loves. After all, how many songs on the radio have to do with love – lots! It just seems that when one is smitten, he or she naturally overflows with song to and about the one who is loved. Saint Cecilia's heart could not contain the intense love that she had for Jesus Christ, and this naturally brimmed over into music in her own life. It is also for this reason, that music occupies such an important place when the Church gathers together to pray during her sacred rites. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that "Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when sacred rites are solemnized in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 113). This means that, when we come to Mass or other liturgical rites of the Church, singing is not something passive that we listen to, as if we were at a concert. Rather, it is something that we are called to participate in, as an expression of our love for God.

Father Sean Ralph



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Sharing Thanksgiving with the Needy



Not all of us are fortunate enough to have a "Norman Rockwell" dinner on Thanksgiving. With this in mind, the Bishop Cosgrove Center will serve Thanksgiving meals to approximately 600 guests on Wednesday, Nov. 22nd. To make it extra special, they would like to offer a variety of desserts: cakes, pies, cookies, cupcakes, and pastry. We are asking for your help in this endeavor. We ask that you do not bring anything that needs to be refrigerated. Between Saturday, November 18th, (after the 4:30 pm Mass) and 12:00 noon, Tuesday the 21st, please bring your homemade or bought contributions to the Brides Room (or give to an usher), or to the Rectory on Monday & Tuesday morning. The Cosgrove Center will pick up the donations before noon on **Tuesday, Nov. 21st.**



Fr. Michael Gurnick

Having served as Secretary and Vicar for Clergy & Religious for the Diocese of Cleveland since 2010, and as a priest-in-residence at the Cathedral, Father Michael Gurnick will begin a 90-day sabbatical for personal renewal and enrichment, effective 10 December 2017.

Upon returning from his sabbatical in March, Father Gurnick will assume his new appointment as Pastor of Saint Patrick Parish on Bridge Avenue. In addition to serving as Pastor of Saint Patrick, he will also serve as Director of Continuing Education and Formation for Ministers in the Diocese, effective 1 July 2018.

You are invited to join Father Gurnick here at Saint John Cathedral for a Mass of Thanksgiving on **Sunday, 3 December 2017, at 12:15 pm.** Coffee and doughnuts will follow in the vestibule following the liturgy.