



Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Personal Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh

"Without a Vision, the People Perish" (Proverbs 29:18)

JUNE 29, 2025

Mass Schedule

Sunday 11:00 am

Livestream:

facebook.com/SBTMPGH/live

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Sundays at 10:30am &
by appointment.

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals

by appointment.



Our church is accessible.

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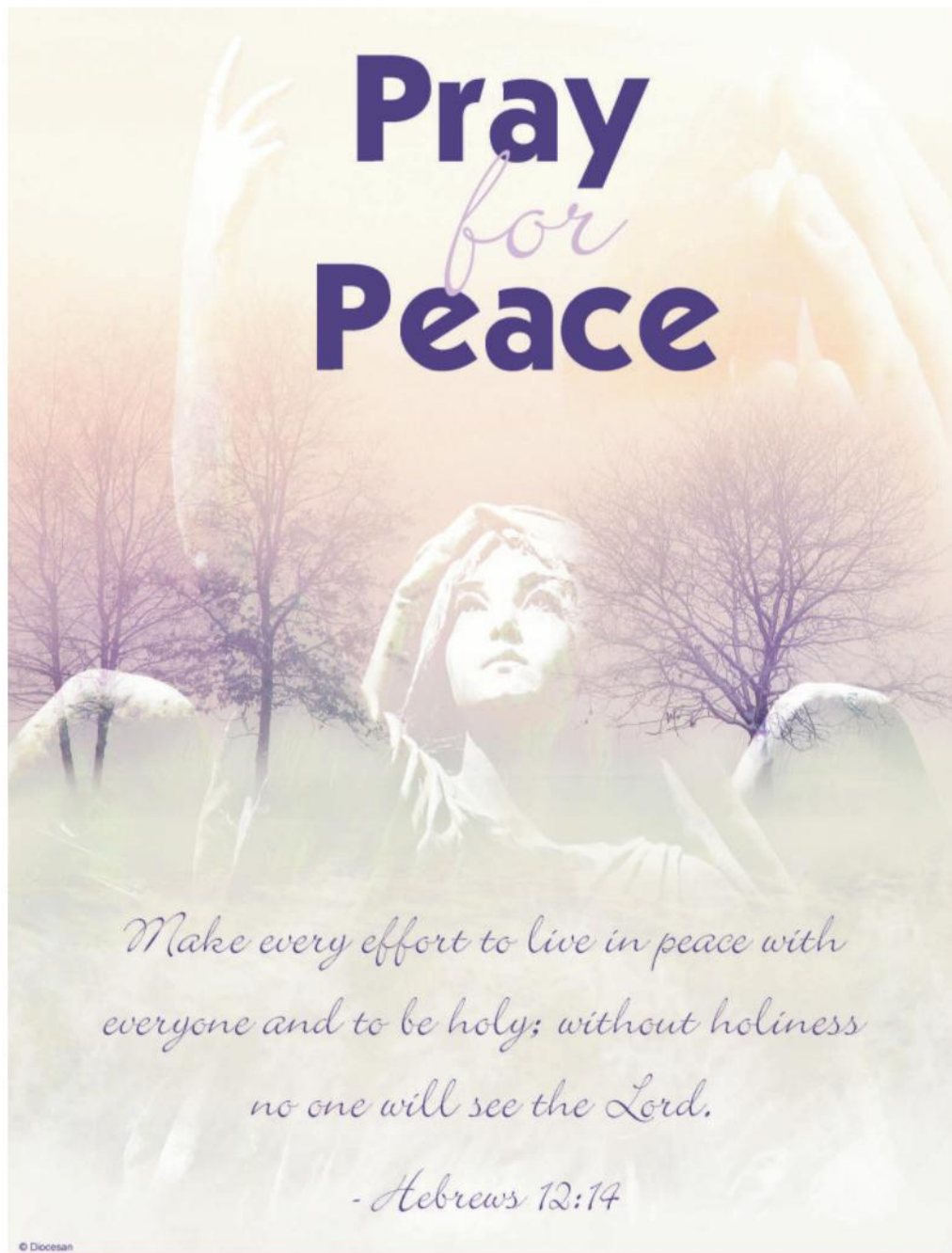
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St. Benedict the Moor Parish-PGH



[SBTMPARISHPGH](https://www.instagram.com/SBTMPARISHPGH)



[SBTmparishPGH](https://www.youtube.com/SBTmparishPGH)

Mass Intentions

June 29 11:00 am
Ss. Peter and Paul

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Ira Ritter Sr.+
(Rick & CeCe Zoucha)

July 6 11:00 am
Ss. Peter and Paul

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Robert E. Lewis+
(Greeters)

Stewardship June 22nd

Offertory	Parish Appeal	Building Fund
\$2,263.35	\$240.00	\$225.00
Care for the Poor	Tech	Peter Pence
\$140.00	\$100.00	\$50.00

Weekly Mass Attendance

June 22—120

Prayer Requests

Ann Betters
Antoinette Peters
Blessing Gbolo
Bonita Dsouza
Claudia Harrison
Damitra Penny-Harris
Delores Denton
Duane Ashley
Frances Tarkett
Gail Jackson
Hall Family
Janice Simmons
Jennifer Whitley
Joan Moran
Johari
John Young
Karen McDill
Ken Smith (Pizza)
Marie Alian
Pat Ellis
Peggy Bullard

Protection of God's Children

Report suspected child abuse at the
24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline:

800.932.0313

To report church-related abuse to
the Diocese of Pittsburgh call:

888.808.1235

If a child is in imminent danger call
911

Pastoral Message: A Catholic Witness to Peace



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As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be peacemakers in a world too often torn by violence. From the earliest centuries of the Church, some Christians have discerned a vocation to **conscientious objection**—refusing to participate in war or violence because of the Gospel's command to love our enemies.

In recent years, the **Ben Salmon, No Just War Registry for Conscientious Objectors** has been established to help Catholics bear public witness to the Gospel of peace. Named for a Catholic who refused to fight in World War I and wrote a powerful critique of just war theory, the registry allows individuals—especially young people—to **formally declare their commitment to Christian nonviolence**. This can serve both as a spiritual testimony and, if ever needed, a legal aid in the event of a future military draft.

As pastor, I affirm the **right of Catholics to conscientious objection**, which is supported by both the **Catechism of the Catholic Church** and statements from the **U.S. Bishops**. While the Church has long taught the criteria for a just war, it also respects the right of the individual conscience formed in prayer and fidelity to Christ.

If you—or someone you love—wishes to learn more about conscientious objection or would like to register their beliefs in accordance with the Gospel call to peace, please contact the parish office. We will be glad to assist in this process, offer spiritual support, and help you discern your path with integrity and courage.

Let us continue to pray for peace, and for the grace to be instruments of God's mercy in our troubled world.

Fr. Matthew



Fr. Matthew Hawkins



What Violence Reveals About Us

From a Christian theological standpoint, **war is not merely the failure of diplomacy** or the triumph of belligerence. It is, more deeply, a revelation—a kind of *apocalypse*, not in the sensationalist sense of catastrophe, but in its older biblical meaning: an *unveiling* of what is hidden. War strips away our cultural pretenses and civilizational cosmetics. It shows us not just what we do—but who we are.

We like to imagine ourselves as evolved, enlightened, and humane. But war drags us back to the mirror, and we recoil at what we see: **our lust for power, our fear of powerlessness, our moral evasions, our theological evasions.** War is not an anomaly in human history. It is a recurring sacrament of sin, a liturgy of death performed with technological precision and spiritual indifference. It is what happens when the myth of redemptive violence replaces the Gospel of the Crucified Christ.

We must consider what war reveals—*not only about politics or international relations, but about the human soul.* We must look at war theologically, not merely morally. We must not ask first whether war is justified or unjustified, but what war *reveals* about the state of fallen humanity in light of divine truth.

I. War Reveals Original Sin with Terrifying Clarity

Human sin is often abstract until it is

seen in its collective form: troops mobilized, bombs dropped, cities leveled. What we hide in our hearts—pride, wrath, greed—is suddenly institutionalized, celebrated, and liturgized in the theatre of war. Christian tradition teaches that sin distorts the soul; war broadcasts that distortion onto the world stage. The ancient prophet's lament rings true in every age: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"* (Jer 17:9). In this light, war is not a departure from human nature—it is its disfigured fulfillment.

II. War Reveals the Collapse of the Moral Imagination

To wage war requires a failure of vision: the inability to see the enemy as neighbor, or even as human. Language shifts: children become "collateral damage," civilians are "combatants," and enemies are reduced to "targets." This linguistic numbing permits moral atrocities. But Christian anthropology insists otherwise: every person bears the image of God. Every bomb dropped on a city is dropped also on the divine likeness. War demands that we *unsee* what God commands us to remember.

III. War Reveals Our Death Wish

Pope John Paul II described modern society as suffering under a "culture of death." War is its darkest liturgy. From Cain and Abel to nuclear warheads, we have clung to the same twisted logic: *if we eliminate them, we will be secure.* But the Gospel shatters this delusion. Jesus becomes the victim of human violence and **refuses to perpetuate the cycle.** He unmasks the lie that peace can be secured by bloodshed—especially the blood of the innocent.

IV. War Reveals Our Idolatry of Nation and Empire

What do we sacrifice for? What inspires our devotion, our loyalty, our willingness to kill? For many, it is not Christ, but the nation-state. Flags become icons. Borders become sacred. Soldiers become priests of national security. As St. Augustine warned, the "peace" of empires is often the silence of graves. And yet, many Christians continue to bow to Caesar while claiming to serve the Lamb. War reveals our true allegiances.

V. War Reveals Our Rejection of the Cross

To choose peace is to risk being weak. To turn the other cheek is to invite scorn. But the Gospel declares: God became weak. Salvation came not by conquest but by crucifixion. War reveals how deeply we resist the path of the Cross. We prefer the lion to the Lamb. We would rather win than die faithfully.

VI. War Reveals Our Theological Doubt

Do we really believe that *"Blessed are the peacemakers"* applies to nations? Or that *"Love your enemies"* applies to foreign policy? When Christians support violence as the only practical option, we reveal something deeper: we do not actually trust the Gospel to be politically viable. We fear the Sermon on the Mount might be beautiful nonsense. War reveals our theological lukewarmness.

VII. War Reveals Our Ache for Redemption

And yet, even here—especially here—war reveals a wound that cries out for healing. Amid the rubble and horror, we sense our need for grace. In the orphan's tears and the refugee's flight, we glimpse not just human cruelty, but the world's longing for another way. War reveals the **urgent necessity of salvation**, not just for individuals, but for humanity as a whole. In this way, war can function—ironically—as a confession: *we have no idea how to save ourselves.*

Final Word:

War is not just a geopolitical event—it is a theological unveiling. It exposes the idols we bow to, the fears we hide behind, the blood we are willing to spill for false peace. And yet, it also reveals our need for the One who does not return violence for violence, who suffers rather than kills, who dies rather than dominates. In the ashes of war, the Christian does not look for vengeance, but for a cross-shaped hope.

"Father, forgive them—they know not what they do."

This is not a sentimental excuse. It is the most terrifying—and salvific—truth we dare to confess.

Introduction to Christianity: Not Conformed to this Age

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



As Catholics, we are called to be peacemakers—not merely in sentiment, but in action and prayer. The Eucharist we celebrate is the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, the Prince of Peace, who refused the sword and forgave his executioners. To follow Him is to renounce vengeance, to reject the logic of domination, and to embrace the cross as the path to reconciliation.

Peace is not passivity. It is the hard work of justice. It demands truth-telling, humility, forgiveness, and the protection of human dignity from conception until natural death. To pray for peace without working for it is hypocrisy; to work for peace without prayer is pride. Both are needed. In prayer, we are formed by the heart of Christ. In action, we

become His instruments in the world.

War, violence, and hatred are not abstractions—they leave real bodies broken, families torn apart, and souls disfigured. When we are indifferent to such suffering, we deny the Body of Christ in our neighbor.

Today, we live in a world addicted to conflict, where anger is monetized and division is politically useful. But Catholics must refuse to be conformed to this age. Our allegiance is not to empires but to the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom will come not by force, but by witness—by the lives of those who dare to forgive, to love their enemies, and to seek the good of all.

Let us therefore pray as if peace depends on God—and work as if it depends on us.

This Week: Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

"You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)."

First Reading: Acts 12:1-11

Responsorial Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Next Week: Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Let the peace of Christ control your hearts; let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..(Colossians 3:15a, 16a)."

First Reading: Isaiah 66:10-14c

Responsorial Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

Second Reading: Galatians 6:14-18

June 29: Central Deanery: A Collaborative Future for Our Parishes

To nurture greater collaboration and unity in ten of our City of Pittsburgh Parishes, Bishop Zubik recently announced the formation of a new deanery within the North Vicariate of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. This new deanery, which will be formally established on **July 1, 2025**, will be known as the **Central Deanery**.

It will consist of ten neighboring parishes, uniting Divine Mercy, St. Benedict the Moor, St. Jude, St. Mary Magdalene, Saint Paul Cathedral, St. Pio of Pietrelcina, and the Shrines of Pittsburgh Parishes (Immaculate Heart of Mary, Most Holy Name of Jesus (St. Anthony Chapel), St. Nicholas, St. Patrick/St. Stanislaus).

This formation marks a step towards fostering even greater cooperation and building a more unified, vibrant Catholic presence across our beloved city.

Saint Benedict the Moor Offertory for Online Giving

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