



Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Personal Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh

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

SEPTEMBER 28, 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.

Staff

Rev. C. Matthew Hawkins,
Administrator:
mhawkins@diopitt.org

Priscilla Davis, Office Manager:
office@sbtmparishpgh.com

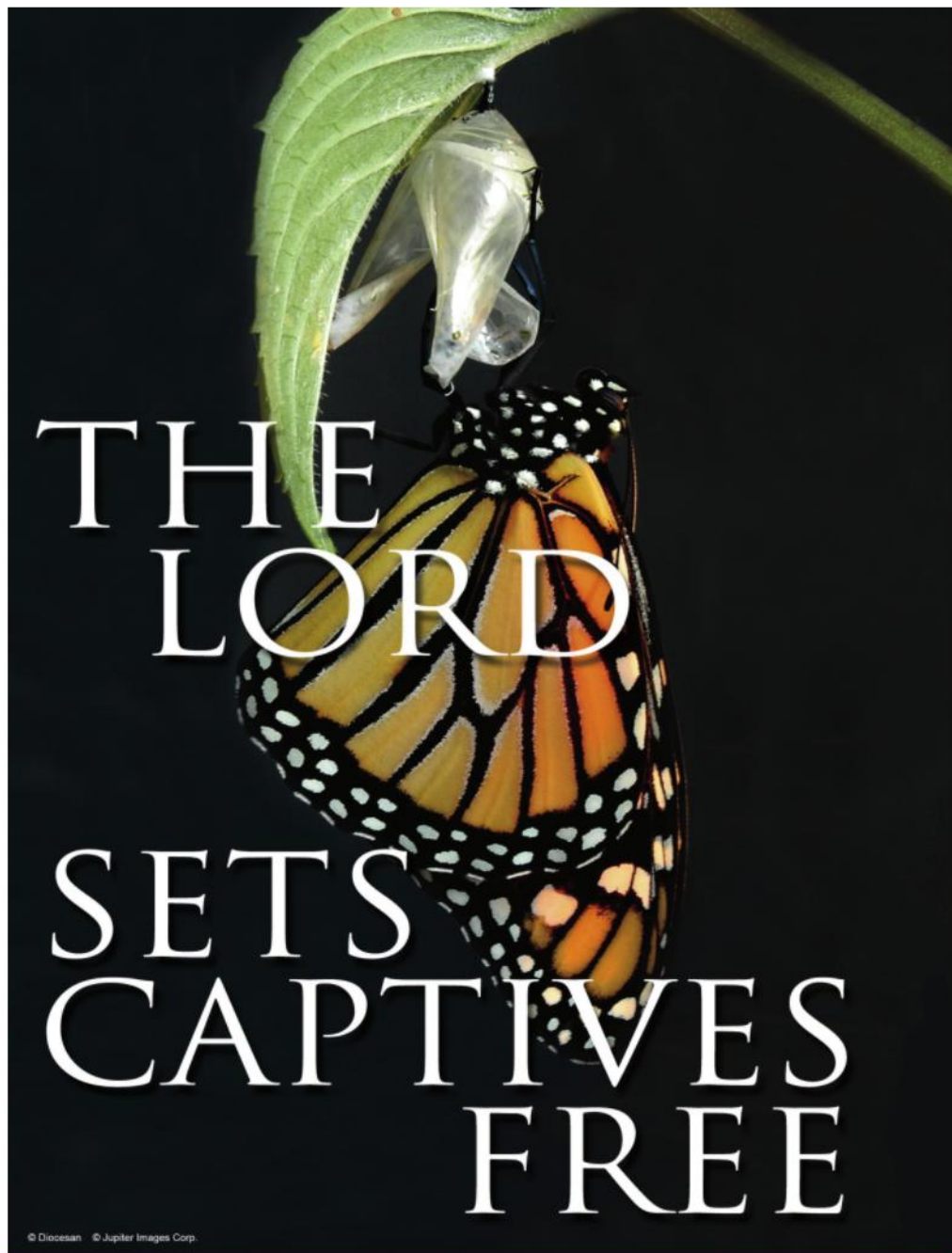
Jeannette Finch, Sacristan

Jennifer L. Whitley, Bulletin Editor:
bulletin@sbtmparishpgh.com

Lisa Joy Finch, Director of
Religious Education:
sbtm.faith.formation@gmail.com

Monte Reid, Director of Music

Henry Anyabuoke, Outreach
Minister:
henryanyabuoke@gmail.com



Saint Benedict the Moor Church • 91 Crawford Street • Pittsburgh PA 15219

office@sbtmparishpgh.com • 412.281.3141

Website:
sbtmparishpgh.com



St. Benedict the Moor Parish-PGH



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



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

Mass Intentions

September 28 11:00 am
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Theresa Weber
(Carol Derewicz & Janet Glass)

October 5 11:00 am
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Simon & Lamia Whaby
(Simon Hickey)

Stewardship Sept. 21st

Offertory	Parish Appeal	Building Fund
\$2,749.30	\$210.00	\$1,068
Care for the Poor	Tech	Bishop's Ed Fund
\$120.00	\$0.00	\$50.00

Weekly Mass Attendance September 21—148

Prayer Requests

Antoinette Peters
Bonita Dsouza
Claudia Harrison
Damitra Penny-Harris
Delores Denton
Frances Tarkett
Gail Jackson
Genevieve Sanford
Hall Family
Irene Chong
Janice Simmons
John Young
Karen McDill
Ken Smith (Pizza)
Marie Alian
Pat Ellis
Peggy Bullard
Reggie Jackson
Rita Costa

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

From Winning to Understanding: Christian Virtues in Conversation

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



There is a family of Christian virtues that comprises the conversational disciplines, shifting our focus from *winning* to *understanding*. Some of these disciplines are well-known in philosophy and psychology, such as steelmanning, Rapoport's Rules, and Socratic questioning. In contrast, others originate from the pastoral and spiritual tradition, including **empathic reframing, narrative exchange, and shared inquiry**. In future columns, I will explore each of these disciplines through the lens of Christian virtues, making them more than mere conversa-

tional techniques.

For instance, through the lens of Christian virtue, **Steelmanning** becomes an exercise in **charity**—choosing to represent another's position in the strongest possible form because love "rejoices with the truth" (1 Cor. 13:6). **Perspective-taking** becomes an expression of **empathy**, mirroring the Incarnation itself: God entering our experience to redeem it. **Epistemic humility** involves recognizing that we are pilgrims on the way, seekers of truth who rely on the Spirit's guidance, rather than our own certainty.

These practices echo the way Christ himself engaged others. He met people where they were (John 4), asked probing questions (Matt. 16:15), told stories that invited reflection (Luke 15), and even listened to those who opposed him (Luke 20:1–8). He never reduced a person to their argument; he saw them in their full humanity.

Why It Matters for the Church

The Church today faces divisions not unlike those of Corinth—splits over politics, identity, culture, and conscience. When dialogue devolves into defensiveness or contempt, the Body of Christ suffers. What we need is not more rhetorical force but deeper spiritual formation: learning to engage one another as fellow pilgrims, not as ideological adversaries.

If we practice these virtues, we will build trust in fractured communities, create space for evangelization by removing needless barriers, and help Catholics (and Christians broadly) engage the wider world with both conviction and compassion.

In a parish context, this means fewer heated arguments and more fruitful discernment. In ecumenical or interfaith contexts, it means moving beyond stereotypes to real relationships. And in personal conversations, it means discovering that even our fiercest opponents are image-bearers of God, worthy of our patience and love.

The goal is not to erase differences or silence convictions. Christians are called to witness to the truth boldly. But how we witness matters. As St. Peter exhorts: "*Always be ready to give an answer... but do so with gentleness and reverence*" (1 Pet. 3:15–16).

These columns are an invitation to that gentleness and reverence: to see dialogue not as a battlefield but as holy ground, where we encounter our neighbors and, in them, we encounter the presence of Christ.



The Society of St. Vincent de Paul's (SVdP) Annual Fundraiser

Support our Parishioners and neighbors in need by purchasing a SVdP Raffle Ticket to continue the good works of our Mother Teresa Conference in providing furniture, household goods, clothing, food, and other assistance in our Parish community and Hill District neighborhood. Tickets will be available post Mass the weekends of September 21 & 28. Tickets are \$5 a piece or *FIVE* tickets for \$20, which gives you a chance to win \$5,000, \$2,500, or \$1,000. Winning tickets will be drawn October 19.

Please consider joining our volunteers as we share in works of charity. AND, *if you need assistance*, please contact SvdpStTeresaPgh@gmail.com or 412-204-7446. Thank you and may God Bless you!



Fr. Matthew Hawkins



The Cry of the Poor and the Call of the Gospel

We do not need to look far to hear the cry of the poor. It echoes in our cities, where some can barely keep up with rising rental costs, while others build multiple mansions to flaunt their wealth. It rises in our communities, where some children go hungry while others waste food for entertainment. Scripture refuses to let us grow numb to this disparity. The readings from last week and this week confront us with the urgency of the Church's teaching on the *preferential option for the poor*—the conviction that God takes the side of the vulnerable, and so must we.

Amos and the Exploitation of the Poor

Last Sunday, the prophet Amos exposed the greed of merchants who could not wait for the Sabbath to end so they might return to cheating the poor (Amos 8:4-7). They made "the ephah small and the shekel great," tipping the scales in their favor. Their gain came not from honest work but from exploiting those who had no power to resist. God's verdict was clear: such injustice would not be forgotten.

This week Amos turns his gaze from the marketplace to the banquet table (Amos 6:1a, 4-7). He describes the complacency of the wealthy lying on ivory beds, feasting on lambs and calves, strumming idle songs, anointing themselves with the finest oils—all while they ignore the ruin of their people. The prophet does not

condemn joy or beauty, but he condemns indifference. The tragedy is not merely their luxury but their blindness. They do not grieve for the suffering around them. Their reward will be exile.

Amos links dishonesty in the marketplace with complacency in prosperity. Both reveal a heart hardened against the poor. Both provoke divine judgment. Both stand as timeless warnings for us.

Jesus and the Stewardship of Wealth

Last week's Gospel (Luke 16:1-13) told the parable of the dishonest steward. At first glance, the steward's cunning seems troubling, but Jesus highlights his shrewdness. Wealth is fleeting, but relationships endure. If even a corrupt steward can prepare for the future by making friends with what is not his own, how much more should disciples use worldly goods to build the kingdom of God? Jesus concludes starkly: "You cannot serve God and mammon." To serve God requires using possessions for mercy, not mastery.

The Gospel insists that wealth is never neutral. It either becomes an idol that enslaves us or a tool that frees us to love. Stewardship demands a choice. What we do with money reveals who we serve.

The Great Reversal in the Parable of Lazarus

This week's Gospel (Luke 16:19-31) brings the lesson home with unforgettable imagery. The rich man dresses in purple and fine linen and feasts daily, while at his gate lies Lazarus, covered with sores, longing for scraps. The dogs show more compassion than the man. Death reverses their fortunes: Lazarus is carried to Abraham's side, while the rich man suffers torment.

The parable does not suggest that poverty automatically saves or wealth automatically damns. Rather, it reveals the consequence of indifference. The rich man's sin is not cruelty but complacency. He never noticed Lazarus. Even in torment, he sees Lazarus as a servant to send, not as a brother to embrace. The chasm fixed in the afterlife reflects the chasm he allowed to exist at his gate.

This parable dramatizes the preferential option for the poor. God notices what the world ignores. God lifts up the one lying at the threshold, unseen

by human eyes. The measure of our discipleship is not how much comfort we accumulate but how much compassion we show.

Amos and Luke converge in a single message: wealth without justice leads to ruin, but attention to the poor leads to life. The Church teaches the preferential option for the poor not as a slogan but as a demand flowing from the Gospel itself. To take the side of the poor is not charity alone but fidelity to Christ, who became poor for our sake.

Conclusion: Serving God, Not Mammon

The readings from these two weeks move from warning to invitation. They warn against dishonest gain, selfish luxury, and blind indifference. They invite us to use wealth wisely, to see the poor clearly, and to embody God's compassion.

The preferential option for the poor is not an option in the sense of being optional. It is the option God has already made. Christ identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. To serve them is to serve him. To ignore them is to ignore him.

Amos thunders, Jesus teaches, and Lazarus waits at the gate. The question is simple but searching: Whom do we serve—God or mammon? The answer is revealed not by words but by where we place our treasure and to whom we open our hearts.

This Week: Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich, he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

First Reading: Amos 6:1a, 4-7

Responsorial Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 6:11-16

The Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

Next Week: Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

The word of the Lord remains forever. This is the word that has been proclaimed to you (1 Peter 1:25).

First Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

Responsorial Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

The Gospel: Luke 17:5-10

Fall Listening Sessions

As we embark on a collaborative effort among our Central Deanery Parishes, the vision for our Central Deanery needs to be a shared endeavor, enriched by the input and feedback of our parishioners. Your insights and hopes, as the faithful, will be pivotal as we journey together to discover where the Spirit leads us.

In the fall, dedicated listening sessions will be held in each of the parishes within the deanery. These sessions will be opportunities for both information sharing and for gathering feedback directly from you, the faithful.

We encourage everyone to participate, as your involvement will help shape the future of our collaborative efforts and strengthen the Church in this part of our diocese.

We also invite you to consider attending sessions at other parishes to learn more about their hopes and concerns, as well as what we have in common.

The listening sessions will take place in the following parishes from 6:30 to 8 pm:

October 14 - St. Benedict the More Parish
October 15 - St. Jude Parish
October 21 - Divine Mercy Parish
October 22 - The Shrines of Pittsburgh
October 28 - St. Mary Magdalene Parish
October 29 - St. Paul Cathedral Parish
October 30 - St. Pio of Pietrelcina Parish

Saint Benedict the Moor Offertory for Online Giving

It is now easier than ever to support our parish through online giving. Please give online and watch our parish grow.



Discover the Spiritual Roots of Our Parish



Have you ever wondered about the remarkable story behind St. Benedict the Moor Parish? How did we become the vibrant faith community standing at Freedom Corner? What lessons can our 150-year journey teach us about perseverance, identity, and God's faithfulness?

Fr. Matthew Hawkins has crafted a powerful new study guide, "Faith on Freedom Corner," that unveils the extraordinary history of our parish—from humble beginnings in 1844 through our pivotal role in Pittsburgh's civil rights movement to our restoration as a personal parish in 2020. But this isn't just a history book. It's a spiritual journey that connects our past to our present calling as disciples of Christ.

Discover how early missionaries planted seeds of faith that grew into our thriving community. Learn about St. Benedict the Moor himself—born into slavery in 16th-century Sicily, yet rising to become a beacon of humility and love. Explore how our parish has consistently demonstrated that the Catholic Church is strongest when it honors both its universal mission and the unique gifts of each community.

This engaging guide includes reflection questions, Scripture connections, and practical applications perfect for personal devotion, family discussions, or small group sharing. Whether you're a longtime parishioner or new to our community, these stories will deepen your understanding of how God works through ordinary people to create something extraordinary.

Visit our parish website today to download your free copy. Let our shared heritage strengthen your faith journey and inspire your witness in the world. Your story is part of this continuing legacy.

Website: <https://Sbthmparishpgh.com>



Living With Defiant Hope



Whether or not you joined us for our recent retreat, you are invited to take part in the journey it began. Two new resources are now available to help you discover what it means to walk through the "narrow gate" with courage, discipline, and trust in God's faithfulness:

Hope and the Narrow Gate – a Sunday homily with reflections on hope as more than optimism: a defiant trust that God is with us, even in exile.

Living with Defiant Hope – a prayer companion filled with meditations, Scripture, and questions for personal or group reflection. Go to "Continuing Our Retreat Journey August 2025" on the Ministries Page of our parish website. Come, keep singing the Lord's song—even in a strange land.



catholicmatch®
Pennsylvania



CatholicMatch.com/goPA



**Get this bulletin
emailed to you
every week.**

Simply go to
www.DM.CHURCH/3440

...or scan →



DISCOVERMASS

EITC/OSTC Scholarship credits are available! 90% State Tax Credit available to Business and Qualified Individuals! Make a difference in local kids' lives by redirecting 90% of your PA tax liability to Catholic schools.

Contact Michael Freker @
mfreker@diopitt.org or call 412-456-3055



Find your
path here.

www.sosf.org



**SISTERS
of ST. FRANCIS**
of the Neumann Communities
House of Discernment

GOLDEN COMFORT
PROFESSIONAL
CLEANING

412.828.5227
www.goldencomfort.com

THE WILSON GROUP W73
Host to Post Workflow
Solutions Provider

Scott Bowman
Account Executive

sbowman@thewilsongroup.com
o: 412.586.7191 | c: 412.980.4920

147 Delta Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

SHARP
Authorized Dealer

FP®

www.thewilsongroup.com

