



Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Personal Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh

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

NOVEMBER 2, 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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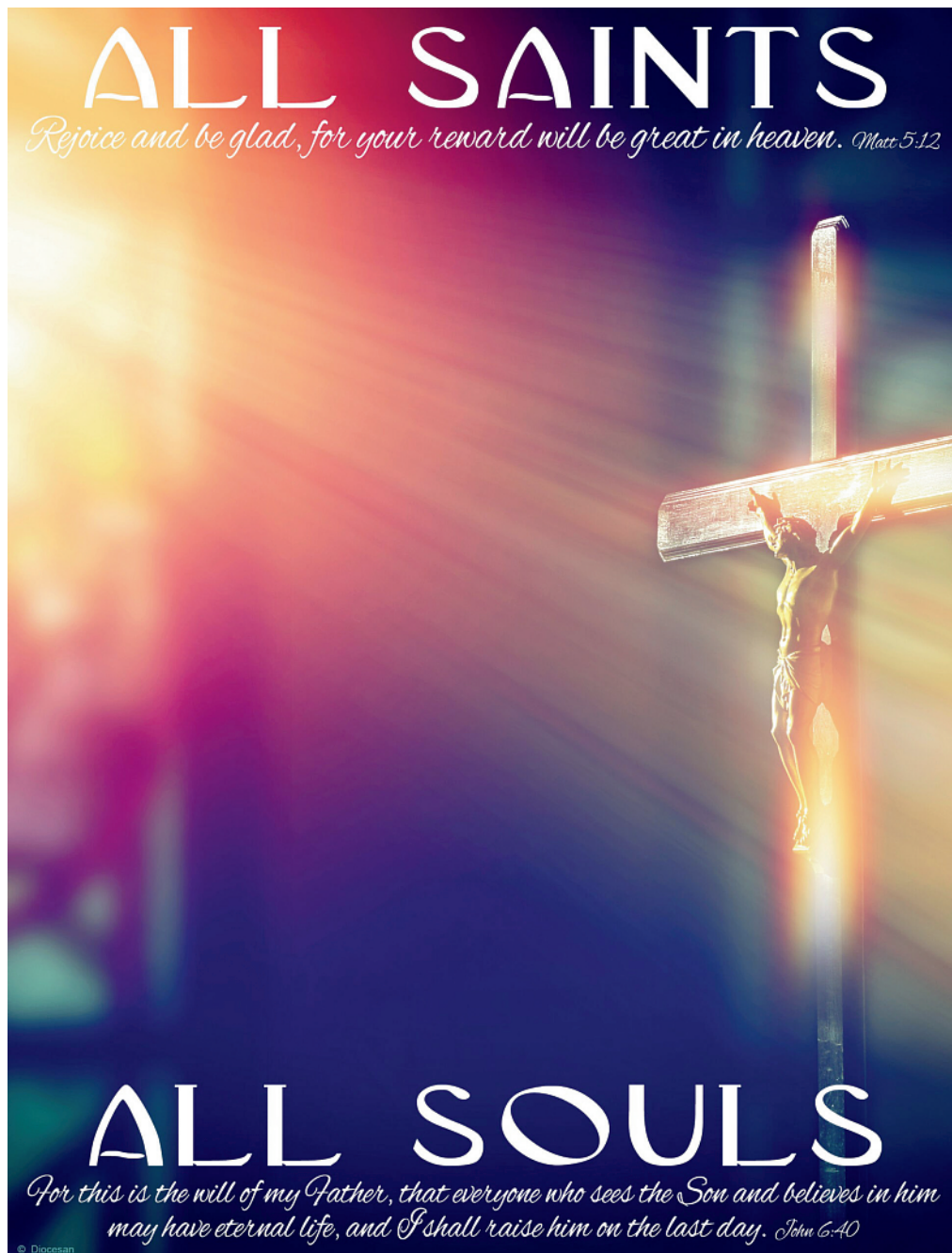
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[St. Benedict the Moor Parish-PGH](https://www.facebook.com/St.BenedicttheMoorParish-PGH)



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

Mass Intentions

November 2 11:00 am
All Souls Day

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Martha "Doll" Mercer
(Greeters)

November 9 11:00 am
*Feast of the Dedication of the
Lateran Basilica*

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Simon Whaby
(Simone Hickey)

Stewardship Oct. 26th

Offertory	Parish Appeal	Building Fund
\$3,003.00	\$1,190.00	\$265.00
Care for the Poor	Tech	World Mission
\$355.00	\$120.00	\$122.00

Mass Attendance: Oct 26th—152

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
Nicole Orlando
Pat Ellis
Peggy Bullard
Reggie Jackson
Rita Costa
Shania Long
Shelly Washington

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**

Christian Virtues in Conversation: Justice, Understanding, and the Principle of Charitable Disagreement

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



Justice, in the Christian tradition, extends far beyond courtroom verdicts and legal fairness. Thomas Aquinas described justice as "the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right," a virtue that fundamentally recognizes the dignity and worth inherent in every person. This recognition transforms how we engage in disagreement, making our conversations not battlegrounds for ego but sacred spaces where truth and understanding can flourish.

Anatol Rapoport, though not writing explicitly from a Christian framework, articulated principles that embody this deeper justice. His rules for constructive criticism insist that before we critique another's position, we must first restate it so clearly and fairly that our opponent says, "You've understood me better than I understand myself." We must acknowledge points of agreement and name what we've learned from them. Only then may we offer critique.

These rules challenge a fundamental injustice we regularly commit: denying others the dignity of being fully understood before we critique them. When we rush to rebut, cherry-pick the weakest parts of an argument, or reduce complex positions to strawmen, we commit a form of intellectual theft. We rob people of their full humanity, treating them not as image-bearers of God worthy of careful attention, but as obstacles to overcome or opponents to defeat.

The first reflection question—"Do I give others the dignity of being fully understood before I critique them?"—strikes at the heart of conversational justice. To truly understand requires humility, patience, and a suspension of our defensive instincts. It means listening not to formulate our counterargument, but to genuinely grasp what another person thinks and why. This is the intellectual equivalent of "love your neighbor as yourself"—we extend to others the same careful hearing we desperately want for our own ideas.

The second question—"Can I name at least one good point or insight I've learned from someone I strongly disagree with?"—tests whether our disagreements serve truth or merely our pride. If we've never learned anything from our ideological opponents, we haven't been listening; we've been performing. Scripture tells us that iron sharpens iron, but that sharpening requires genuine contact. When we acknowledge truth wherever we find it, even in uncomfortable places, we practice both humility and justice, recognizing that wisdom isn't the monopoly of our tribe.

The final question distinguishes between two fundamentally different approaches to disagreement. Do we approach conversations as "opportunities for mutual discovery or as arenas to 'win'?" This distinction reveals our underlying theology of truth. If truth is something we possess and defend, conversations become competitions. But if truth is something we pursue together, even—perhaps especially—with those who see differently, then disagreement becomes collaboration. We become fellow seekers rather than opponents.

Justice in conversation, then, means granting others what is rightfully theirs: the presumption of good faith, the careful hearing of their full position, the acknowledgment of their insights, and the respect of genuine engagement. It transforms disagreement from a zero-sum game into a mutual ascent toward truth. This is not weakness but the costly strength of Christian love—meeting others not where we wish they were, but where they actually stand.



Fr. Matthew Hawkins



Inheriting the Kingdom: A Reflection for All Souls' Day

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world." These words from Matthew 25:34 illuminate our commemoration of All Souls' Day with radiant hope. As we remember our beloved dead, we do not gather in despair but in confident faith, trusting that what God has prepared from the beginning of time is now their eternal home.

The readings for All Souls' Day weave together a mixture of consolation and promise. The Book of Wisdom assures us that "the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them." This ancient wisdom speaks directly to our hearts when we grieve. Our loved ones are not lost to oblivion or trapped in suffering; they rest securely in God's protective embrace. Death, which seems so final and devastating to us, is merely a moment of transition—what Wisdom calls "a time of visitation" when God gathers his faithful to himself.

The Twenty-Third Psalm deepens this comfort with its intimate imagery. The Lord is our shepherd, and by extension, the shepherd of those who have gone before us. Even as they walked "through the

valley of the shadow of death," they feared no evil, for God's rod and staff gave them comfort. Now, on the other side of that valley, they dwell in the house of the Lord forever. The table prepared in the presence of enemies has become the eternal banquet; the cup that overflowed with blessing now pours forth endless joy.

Saint Paul's letter to the Romans reminds us of the foundation of our hope: "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." This is crucial for our remembrance of the dead. We do not pray for those who achieved perfection on their own merit, but for ordinary saints—our parents, siblings, friends, and neighbors—who were loved by God despite their weaknesses. Christ's sacrifice was not reserved for the spotless but offered freely for all. The inheritance promised in Matthew 25:34 is not earned but given, prepared since creation for all whom God calls blessed.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus makes an astounding promise: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me." Here is the heart of our faith in the communion of saints. Those we have loved were given to Christ by the Father, and Christ will not lose them. With absolute certainty, he declares, "I will raise them up on the last day." This is not wishful thinking but divine guarantee. The same power that raised Jesus from the tomb will raise our beloved dead to eternal life.

The inheritance spoken of in Matthew 25:34 reveals something profound about God's nature: heaven was not an afterthought, not a contingency plan, but a kingdom "prepared since the creation of the world." Before the first sin, before the first death, before the first tear was shed, God had already prepared an eternal home for his children. This inheritance awaits not only the famous saints whose lives we celebrate but every person who sought, however imperfectly, to love God and neighbor.

On All Souls' Day, we stand at the intersection of memory and hope. We remember those who have shaped our lives, whose absence leaves an aching void. Yet we remember them in light of the resurrection, trusting that they are being perfected in God's love, prepared to receive their full inheritance. Our prayers for the dead are acts of love that transcend the grave, expressions of the communion that binds together the Church on earth with the Church in heaven and the Church being purified.

As we light candles and speak their names, as we offer Mass for their souls and visit their graves, we participate in God's great work of love. We entrust them again to the One who first gave them to us, confident in Christ's promise that he will "not reject anyone" who comes to him. The kingdom prepared from the beginning of the world now opens its gates to welcome them home: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance."

May eternal light shine upon them, and may they rest in peace.

This Week: The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)

Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34).

Reading: Wisdom 3:1-9

Responsorial Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Second Reading: Romans 5:5-11

The Gospel: John 6:37-40

Next Week: Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome

I have chosen and consecrated this house, says the Lord, that my name may be there forever. (2 Chronicles 7:16).

Reading: Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

Responsorial Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11, 16-17

The Gospel: John 2:13-22

Understanding Pope Leo XIV's *Dilexi Te*: "I Have Loved You" Chapter Two: God Chooses the Poor

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



Chapter 2 establishes the theological foundation for the Church's preferential option for the poor. God's merciful love is manifested through his descent into human history to free humanity from slavery and death, and he addresses human poverty by becoming poor himself in the Incarnation. The preferential option for the poor reflects God's compassion toward human weakness and his special care for the discriminated and oppressed, as demonstrated throughout the Old Testament, where God is presented as the friend and liberator of the poor.

Jesus embodies this divine preference through his radical poverty from birth to death - born in a manger, living as an itinerant teacher without possessions, working as a carpenter, and experiencing the exclusion suffered by the poor. He proclaimed good news specifically to the poor, healed the marginalized, and overturned social prejudices that linked poverty with sin, declaring "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

The chapter emphasizes that love for God and love for neighbor are inseparable, with Jesus uniting the two great commandments. Works of mercy toward the poor authenticate genuine faith and worship, as illustrated in the parable of the Last Judgment and the Letter of James, which teaches that faith without works is dead. The early Christian community exemplified this through sharing goods and organizing care for widows, with the Bible promising blessings to those who give generously to others.

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>



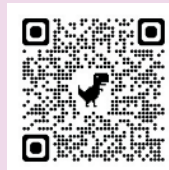
Happy Birthday to Everyone Celebrating a Birthday in November!



Blessings for Many More!

St. Benedict the Moor Online Giving

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