



Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Personal Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh

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

NOVEMBER 16, 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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[St. Benedict the Moor Parish-PGH](https://www.facebook.com/St.BenedicttheMoorParish-PGH)



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



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

Mass Intentions

November 16 11:00 am
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Donna Louise Finch-Robinson
(Finch, Carter, Sanford, Brown,
& Robinson Families)

November 23 11:00 am
Feast of Christ the King

Fr. Matthew Hawkins
Jemel Thomas
(Priscila Davis)

Stewardship Nov. 9th

Offertory	Parish Appeal	Building Fund
\$3,618.00	\$1,470.00	\$235.00
Care for the Poor	Tech	Military
\$192.00	\$115.00	\$160.00

Mass Attendance: Nov. 9th—162

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
Sager McDill
Ken Smith (Pizza)
Marie Alian
Nicole Orlando
Pat Ellis
Peggy Bullard
Reggie Jackson
Rita Costa
Shania Long

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
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Christian Virtues in Conversation: The Virtue of Perspective-Taking

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



The characteristic of our times is fractured discourse and ideological echo chambers. In response to this, Christ calls us to a radically different mode of engagement—one rooted not in winning arguments but in embodying Him. At the heart of virtuous conversation lies perspective-taking, a practice that reflects the very nature of the Incarnation and transforms how we encounter others.

The Apostle Paul's exhortation to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15) establishes empathy as a foundational Christian duty. This command transcends mere emotional mirroring; it demands that we enter authentically into another person's reality, bearing their burdens and celebrating their joys as though they were our own.

Such empathy is not weakness but rather an expression of charity—the theological virtue that compels us to love our neighbor as ourselves. When we take another's perspective, we acknowledge their full humanity, their dignity as image-bearers of God, and their complex interior life that extends far beyond what we can immediately perceive.

The Incarnation itself models this practice at the cosmic level. God did not remain distant, shouting corrections from heaven or condemning humanity from afar. Instead, Christ entered fully into human experience—feeling our hunger, our exhaustion, our grief, and our temptation. This is perspective-taking at its most profound: the Creator assuming the viewpoint of the creature, the eternal entering time, the infinite embracing limitation. When we practice perspective-taking in conversation, we participate in this incarnational pattern, making ourselves vulnerable enough to see through another's eyes.

Yet the practice of perspective-taking faces a persistent pitfall: moral superiority. How easily we slip into the posture of the Pharisee who stood in the temple and prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men" (Luke 18:11). When we approach conversations from this elevated position, we dehumanize others, reducing them to categories—"sinners," "heretics," "the deceived"—while congratulating ourselves on our enlightenment. This posturing betrays the gospel itself, which declares all equally in need of grace.

Moral superiority transforms conversation into performance, where we display our virtue rather than extend it. The other person becomes a prop in our self-righteous narrative rather than a fellow traveler worthy of genuine understanding. We listen only to identify errors, not to comprehend experiences. We speak to correct, not to connect. In doing so, we become the very obstacle to grace that Christ condemned most harshly in the religious leaders of His day.

True perspective-taking requires the humility to recognize our shared condition before God. It demands we approach every conversation aware that we too are beggars telling other beggars where to find bread. This humility opens space for authentic dialogue, where understanding precedes judgment and charity tempers critique.

In a world that rewards the loudest voice and the quickest condemnation, Christians must model a better way. By embracing perspective-taking as spiritual practice, we embody the incarnational love of Christ, creating conversations that honor human dignity, foster genuine understanding, and point beyond ourselves to the One who first took our perspective and redeemed it.



Fr. Matthew Hawkins



When Stones Fall and Bread Must Still Be Earned

Some Sundays, the Scriptures are like a gentle breeze. This is not one of them. Today the Word comes like a controlled burn: necessary, purifying, and a little frightening. Malachi speaks of a day blazing like an oven. Jesus points to the magnificence of the Temple and casually predicts its ruin. Meanwhile, Paul tells us there's no excuse to sit idle, even if the world is ending. And the psalmist, seemingly oblivious to all this fire and rubble, invites rivers and hills to burst into song.

Four voices. One truth: *God's justice is not an abstraction — and it always begins by shaking our false securities.*

The Sun That Burns and Heals

Malachi's image is arresting: the same rising sun that sets the proud aflame brings healing to those who fear the Lord. We prefer softer metaphors: a gentle shepherd, a warm embrace. But the prophet reminds us that God is not a plush toy. Divine love is not sentimental; it is *scorchingly real*. It burns away idols, pretensions, and self-deception, not because God is cruel, but because we are stubborn.

This is not punishment for punishment's sake; it is purification. Gold resists the furnace until it shines. Wheat grows amid chaff until harvest. Holiness is not a spa treatment; it is surgery. We must stop praying to be

made saints without any discomfort. The saints became luminous by first being stripped of their worldly possessions. The light we ask for will expose us before it transfigures us.

The Temple Will Fall — and So Will Our Comfort

In the Gospel, Jesus unsettles his admirers. They gaze at stone grandeur; He sees fragility. "Not one stone will be left upon another." A terrible prophecy and a liberating one. The spiritual danger is not in loving holy things, but in mistaking them for God Himself.

Every age builds its temples, marble cathedrals or political ideologies, spiritual reputations or bank accounts, family honor or personal image. We cling to the visible. We baptize our comfort and call it faith. But sooner or later, life gives us a holy demolition. The question is not whether the stones will fall; they always do. The question is whether we will cling to them or follow Christ through the dust.

Endurance Is Not Glamorous, but It Saves

"By your endurance you will save your souls," Jesus says. Not by our brilliance, our accomplishments, our eloquent faith statements, or our spiritual mood. *Endurance*. A stubborn, unsentimental fidelity. When faith is praised, endurance feels heroic. When faith is mocked, ignored, or becomes inconvenient, endurance feels lonely.

Jesus does not promise admiration. He promises misunderstanding, betrayal, and difficulty, and then, quietly, divine faithfulness that outlasts all of it. If the Christian life feels too comfortable, perhaps we have made peace with mediocrity. If we find ourselves occasionally bewildered, stretched, opposed, or weary, take heart. That is exactly where endurance is forged. It is no accident that Christ calls His followers "disciples," not "enthusiasts."

Work While You Wait

Paul almost sounds like he missed the memo about cosmic upheaval. Yet his point is deeply theological: *your belief in eternity should make you more faithful in the present, not less*. The early Christians expected Christ's return. Some took that expectation as permission to sit back and wait. Paul

answers with unromantic clarity: Earn your bread. Serve. Contribute. Do the ordinary things with extraordinary faithfulness.

There is something profoundly incarnational here. Waiting for heaven does not mean ignoring earth. Daily work — literal and spiritual — becomes participation in God's Kingdom. The Christian who hopes in God is not idle; weeding the garden can be an act of hope, and washing dishes can be a declaration of faith.

Hope That Refuses to Blink

The Psalm's jubilant praise may seem out of place beside talk of fire and collapse. Yet the Psalmist reveals the end of the story: God will come to rule with justice. Creation itself rejoices. There is no cynicism in heaven, no fatalism in the Kingdom. We do not endure for the sake of stoic grit, but because joy is coming — joy beyond sentiment, born not of avoidance but truth.

Hope is not denial; it is defiance. The Christian looks at the world's disorder and at our own and still sings.

The Christian life is not a shelter from trouble, but a call to love and labor in the midst of it. The world may shake, but Christ remains. Let us stand firm, work faithfully, and welcome the rising sun even when it begins as fire.

This Week: Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand (Luke 21:28).

Reading: Malachi 3:19-20a

Responsorial Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9

Second Reading: 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

The Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

Next Week: The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come (Mark 11:9, 10)!

Reading: 2 Samuel 5:1-3

Responsorial Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

Second Reading: Colossians 1:12-20

The Gospel: Luke 23:35-43

Understanding Pope Leo XIV's *Dilexi Te* (Chapter 4): Sin That Wears a Suit Fr. Matthew Hawkins



Chapter 4 of *Dilexi Te* turns from historical foundations to a sober diagnosis of the present: sin does not merely lurk in private hearts; it becomes embedded in economic systems, political calculations, and cultural

mentalities. The document draws on Medellín and Puebla to insist that poverty is not accidental but “structures of injustice” — a “social sin” requiring systemic conversion, not pious hand-wringing. The text condemns ideologies that enshrine “absolute autonomy of the marketplace,” producing a “dictatorship of an economy that kills” and widening the canyon between “those happy few” and the many for whom dignity remains theoretical. Crucially, it rejects the catechism of laissez-faire hope in “invisible forces” that will allegedly deliver justice if only we wait long enough. Salvation postponed is oppression prolonged.

Yet the exhortation refuses to render the poor as objects of elite rescue. Echoing Latin American pastoral theology, it affirms that the poor possess “unique insights indispensable to the Church and to humanity.” They are not scenery in a morality tale; they are subjects of history and evangelizers of the Church. Their cries are not ambient noise but prophetic summons. Thus, charity is not sentiment but “a force for change in history,” calling for political dialogue capable of addressing “the deepest roots” of exclusion. The implicit paradox: the Church must be poor to learn from the poor, powerful enough to confront power, and humble enough to receive the truth voiced from the margins. The fundamental question: will the Church risk being taught by those it claims to serve, or continue performing charity without conversion?

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>

Help Us Plan Our Parish Kwanzaa Celebration

St. Benedict the Moor Parish is preparing to host a **Kwanzaa celebration** that honors African heritage through the lens of our **Catholic faith**. This will be a prayerful and joyful event that reflects the Gospel and fosters unity, community, and spiritual reflection.

Fr. Matthew invites parishioners to join a **planning session** to help shape this celebration. Together, we will complete the **Kwanzaa Celebration Planning Worksheet** by **December 1st**.

Interested in participating?

Please contact the **parish office** with your availability to receive meeting details.

Let us come together in faith and fellowship to celebrate the richness of our heritage and the light of Christ in our community.

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