

Saint Benedict the Moor Parish

Mission Parish for Black Catholics in Pittsburgh
“Without a Vision, the People Perish” (Proverbs 29:18)



91 Crawford Street • Pittsburgh PA 15219

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Mass Schedule

Sunday 11am
Livestream

facebook.com/SBTMPGH/live

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Sundays at 10:30 am
& by appointment.

Baptisms, Weddings, & Funerals

by appointment.



Our church is accessible.

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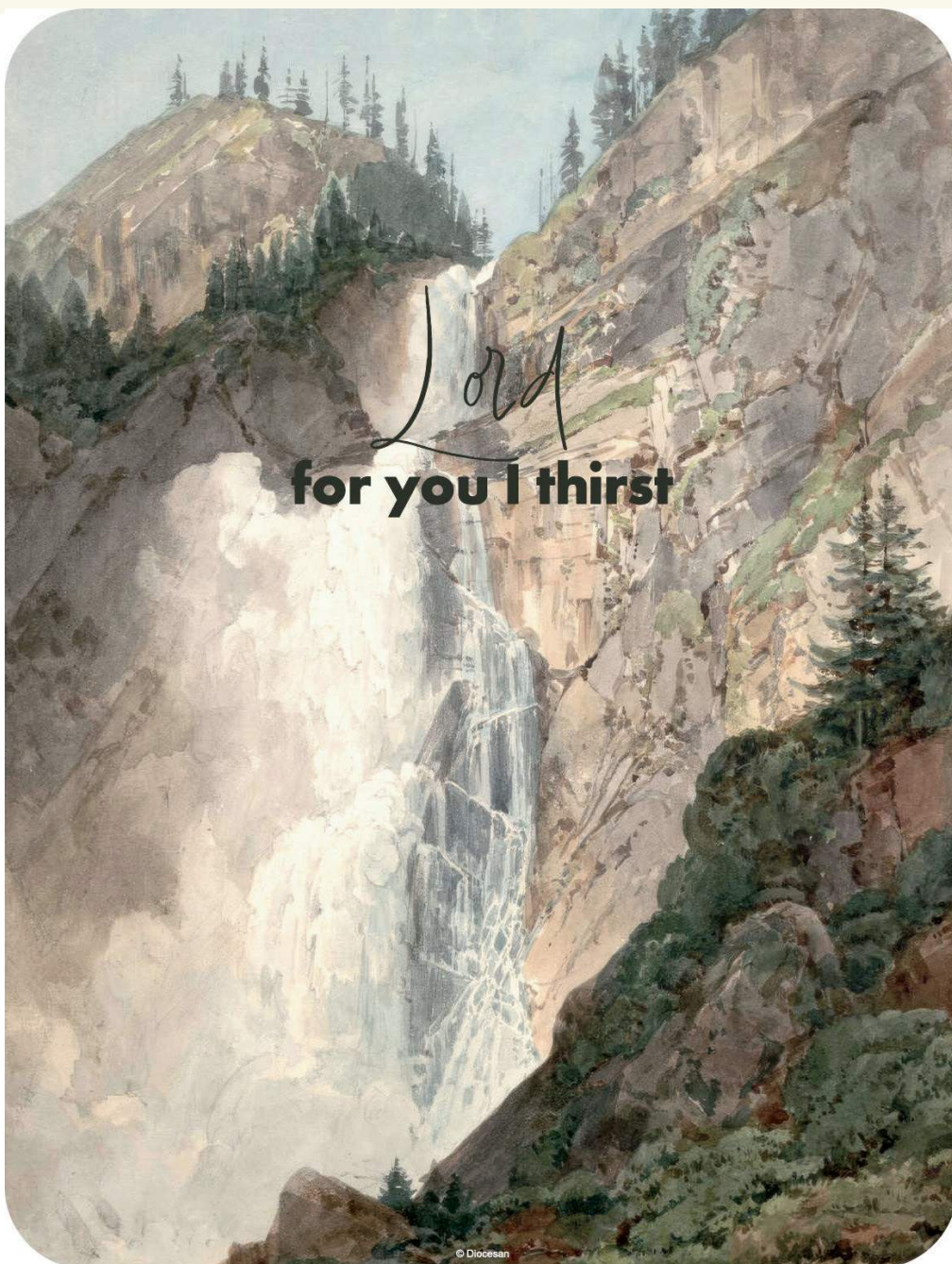
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Third Sunday of Lent | March 8, 2026

Mass Intentions

March 8, 11 am

Third Sunday of Lent

†Mabel Dorsella Whitley
(Jennifer Whitley)

Fr. Matthew Hawkins

March 15, 11 am

Fourth Sunday of Lent

†Vincent Tucker

(Greta Stokes-Tucker)

Fr. Matthew Hawkins

Stewardship

March 1 ~ 138

Offertory \$3,997

Parish Appeal \$230

Ash Wednesday \$35

Care for the Poor \$240

Church Building Upkeep \$75

Easter Flowers \$120

Human Development \$25

Technology Expenses \$95



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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:
888.808.1235

Bulletin Announcements

Bulletin announcements are due on Friday by 4 pm for inclusion in the following Sunday's bulletin. Please direct all announcement requests to:

craffaele@sbtparishpqh.org



"Give Me This Water"

The woman at the well came for water. She came at noon, alone, to do something ordinary — fill a jar and go home. She was not looking for God. But God was sitting on the edge of the well, waiting for her.

What follows is one of the longest personal conversations Jesus has in all of Scripture. And at its heart is a single question that runs beneath everything: *What are you really thirsting for?* The woman speaks about water, about husbands, about which mountain to worship on. Jesus keeps gently pulling her past every surface answer until she arrives at the thing beneath the thing — the deep, unquenched ache that no jar of water and no human arrangement has been able to satisfy.

Lent does the same work in us, if we let it. The disciplines the Church gives us during these forty days — fasting, prayer, abstinence, almsgiving — are not rituals of deprivation. They are the Church's way of asking us the same question Jesus asked at that well: *What are you really thirsting for?* When we fast, we let ourselves feel the ache. We sit with hunger instead of immediately filling it, and in that unfilled space, something true can surface. We discover that beneath our hunger for food is a hunger for comfort, and beneath that a hunger for peace, and beneath that — if we are honest and patient — a hunger for God that nothing else has ever fully answered.

The Church's Lenten obligations are simple and concrete. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and abstinence. Every Friday of Lent is a day of abstinence from meat. Fasting means one full meal and two smaller meals that together do not equal the full meal, and it applies to those between eighteen and fifty-nine. Abstinence binds all the faithful from age fourteen onward. These are not burdens. They are invitations — starting points the Church offers because she knows we need something concrete to begin with, just as Jesus began with a concrete request: *Give me a drink.*

But notice — the conversation at the well did not end with the water jar. It ended with the woman leaving the jar behind entirely and running to tell her village what she had found. The obligations of Lent are the jar. They are real, and they matter, and we should take them seriously. But they exist to lead us past ourselves, toward the living water that springs up to eternal life.

As we cross the midpoint of this holy season, I invite you to sit with Jesus at the well of your own life. What are you really thirsting for? What surface answers have you been settling for? The fast strips away our easy satisfactions not to leave us empty but to show us what fullness actually looks like. God is not waiting for you to perform Lent correctly. He is waiting — as he waited at that well in Samaria — simply to be with you, and to give you what you did not know you came for.

A blessed Lent to you all.

-- Fr. Matthew



Holy Hour: Wednesday, March 18, St. Paul Cathedral



The Pastors of the Central Deanery are delighted to invite every parishioner to an evening of prayer and fellowship as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: 6 to 8 pm

Holy Hour: Eucharistic Adoration & Evening Prayer: 7 pm

Social Gathering: following the Holy Hour

St Benedict The Moor Parish • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Scripture Reflection for the Third Sunday of Lent by Fr. Matthew Hawkins

"Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world; give me living water, that I may never thirst again." John 4:42, 15



A Crisis at the Rock

The scene in Exodus is raw. The people of Israel, freshly liberated from Egypt, are dying of thirst in the desert. They turn on Moses with a question that sounds like an accusation: "Is the LORD in our midst or not?" It is a question born not from philosophy but from cracked lips and crying children. And God does not punish them for asking. He tells Moses to strike the rock, and water pours out for everyone.

We should be careful before judging Israel too quickly. Most of us have stood at our own Massah and Meribah—places where the distance between what God promised and what we are experiencing became unbearable. The diagnosis, the broken marriage, the child who will not return our calls. "Is the LORD in our midst or not?" is not a question reserved for ancient nomads. It lives in the silence after unanswered prayers. What God reveals at the rock is not that the question is wrong, but that His faithfulness does not depend on our ability to trust it. The water came anyway.

A Conversation at the Well

At the center of today's liturgy is one of the most remarkable scenes in Scripture: Jesus, tired and thirsty, sits at Jacob's Well and asks a Samaritan woman for a drink. Everything about this crosses a line—ethnic, religious, gendered. Jews did not speak to Samaritans. Men did not address unfamiliar women. Rabbis did not initiate conversation with people of questionable reputation. Jesus does all three before she even knows what is happening.

What follows is not a lecture but a conversation—patient, winding, full of misunderstanding. When Jesus offers "living water," the woman thinks plumbing. She wants convenience. Jesus is offering conversion. How often do we come to God asking for a slightly improved version of the life we already have, when He is trying to give us an entirely different one?

Then comes the turn: "Go, call your husband." Five husbands and a sixth man who is not her husband. The traditional reading treats this as an exposing of sin. But it is also the exposing of a wound—a woman who kept believing the next relationship would finally satisfy her deepest longing, and it never did. She is not simply immoral; she is exhausted from hoping. Jesus names the place where her thirst has been most misdirected, with the precision of a surgeon, not the cruelty of a judge.

And when she tries to deflect—"Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain..."—Jesus honors the question but refuses to let it become an escape hatch. He presses through to revelation: "I am he, the one speaking with you."

The Jar Left Behind

The detail that haunts me is small: "The woman left her water jar." She came to the well for water and leaves without it. Throughout the Gospels, encounters with Christ result in people abandoning what they carried—nets, tax ledgers, burial cloths. What we came for becomes irrelevant in light of what we found.

Lent is a season for asking ourselves what water jar we keep dragging back to the well. What source of comfort or identity do we keep returning to even though it has never fully satisfied us? The living water Jesus offers is not one more thing to add to what we are already carrying. It requires us to set something down.

While We Were Still Thirsty

Saint Paul gives us the theological ground beneath all of this: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Not after we got our lives together. Not after we proved ourselves worthy. While we were still thirsty and drinking from every wrong well, the love of God was "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit."—Paul's water language is no accident.

The Samaritan woman did not earn her encounter with Jesus. Israel did not deserve water from the rock. We do not have to become presentable before we approach the Lord this Lent. Grace meets us at the well in the heat of the day, when we thought we were alone, and asks for something small—a drink, a conversation, an honest answer—so that it can give us everything.

The woman went back to her village and said, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could this be the Christ?" Her testimony was not polished. It was a question. But it was honest—and it was enough.

Readings

This Week: Third Sunday of Lent

"Lord, you are truly the Savior of the world; give me living water, that I may never thirst again."

John 4:42, 15

Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

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

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

The Gospel: John 4:5-42

Next Week: Fourth Sunday of Lent

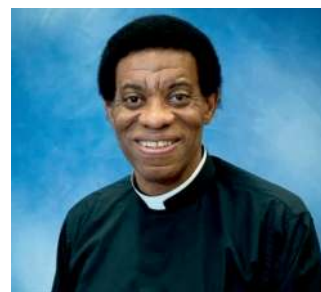
"I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life." John 8:12

Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

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

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

The Gospel: John 9:1-41



The Tools of Our Trade

Recommended Resources for Missionary Discipleship

Dear Parishioners of St. Benedict the Moor,

As a mission parish, we occupy a unique place in the heart of our city. But the call to missionary discipleship is not reserved for a select few—it belongs to every one of us. To live out this vocation well, we must be grounded in truth, equipped with knowledge, and formed by the wisdom of the Church. Just as a craftsman needs the right tools to build, a disciple needs the right resources to bear witness.



With that in mind, I want to share some resources that I believe can deepen our faith and strengthen our mission. No one is expected to read all of these—think of this as a guide for those who want to go deeper. If even one of these titles finds its way into your hands, that’s a wonderful start.

Grounding Ourselves in the Word

All Christians ground their faith in Sacred Scripture, yet many of us may feel we could understand these holy texts more deeply. One of the best ways to grow in our relationship with Christ is to know Him more fully through His Word.

I encourage all parishioners to join our weekly Bible study on Zoom—a great first step. For those who would like a study Bible of their own, here are three excellent options:

- *The Catholic Study Bible* (3rd Ed.), ed. Donald Senior, John Collins, and Mary Ann Getty (Oxford University Press)
- *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: Old and New Testaments* (2024), ed. Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch (Ignatius Press)
- *The Great Adventure Catholic Bible* (2nd Ed., 2024), Ascension Press

Any one of these would make a wonderful companion for personal study or for following along with our Bible study sessions.

Knowing the Heart of the Church

Beyond Scripture, having a good understanding of the Church’s official teachings helps us share our faith with confidence. We cannot share what we do not know. For anyone looking to deepen that knowledge, I recommend the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—either the Second Edition, Revised (2023, Our Sunday Visitor) or the Ascension Edition (2023). You don’t have to read it cover to cover; even browsing a section that interests you can be richly rewarding.

Living the Mission

St. Benedict the Moor is a mission parish, and for those who want to reflect more deeply on what that means in practice, I recommend *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization* (USCCB, 2017). It offers a compelling vision of what it looks like to move beyond being “members” of a parish and to become true missionaries in our neighborhoods.

Given our parish’s deep and historic commitment to social justice, some of you may also find the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2024) to be a valuable resource. It synthesizes the Church’s wisdom on how we are called to treat our neighbor and to build a more just society.

A Special Note for Catechists

For our catechists and all those involved in passing on the faith, I especially recommend the *Directory for Catechesis: New Edition* (2020). This is the definitive guide for teaching the faith in a way that is both faithful to tradition and effective for the modern world.



These books are more than ink on paper—they are the equipment for our journey. Whether you pick up one title or several, know that any step toward deeper study is a step toward deeper discipleship. By investing in our own formation, we become better prepared to answer the call of Christ and to serve our community with clarity and love.

Peace in Christ,

Fr. Matthew Hawkins



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