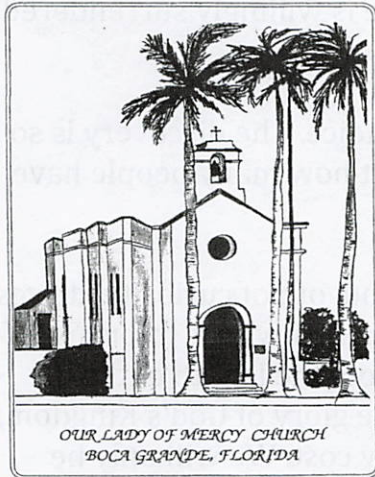




OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

Father Anthony Hewitt, JCL, Pastor

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 181, Boca Grande, Florida 33921
(941) 964 - 2254

Mass Schedule:

Saturday:	5:00 pm
Sunday:	9:00 & 10:30 am
Mon-Friday:	8:00 am
First Saturday Anointing:	After 5:00 pm vigil
Sacrament of Penance:	By appointment
Parish website address:	ourladyofmercy.church
Online Giving:	ourladyofmercy.church
Father Anthony email:	anthony.hewitt@olomcc.org
Office Hours, Monday – Friday:	8:00am-4:00 pm
Business Manager Erin Sifrit:	erin.sifrit@olomcc.org

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, JULY 26, 2026

Gospel of Matthew Reflection

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it." Matthew 13:44-46



In the first parable above, a person unexpectedly discovers a treasure buried in a field. Imagine that you take a metal detector with you while on a hike, simply curious about what might lie beneath the soil. Suddenly, the detector gives a strong signal. Expecting perhaps a rusted can we begin to dig. But as our shovel strikes something solid, we uncover an old chest. With growing anticipation, we lift it from the earth and open it—only to find it brimming with ancient and priceless jewels, gold and silver coins, and other precious items of immense worth.

In the second parable, the merchant is actively searching for a valuable pearl. He knows what he seeks and finally discovers one of exceptional worth—one that eclipses all others. In both cases, however, the response is the same: the man and the merchant each go and sell all they possess to obtain the treasure they have found. These parables pose two fundamental questions for each of us: Have we discovered the priceless treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven? If we have, are we willing to let go of everything else to attain it?

Like the man who stumbles upon the buried treasure, many people encounter God's grace in surprising ways—through a moment of prayer, a profound experience at Mass, an act of charity, or even during suffering. Maybe those people were not actively seeking divine treasure, yet in a moment of providence, the veil is lifted, and the beauty of God's Kingdom is revealed. Once they discover the treasure, their souls realize that nothing else compares. From that point on, they are moved to reorient their entire lives to possess that treasure fully.

The path of the merchant, by contrast, is that of the soul who longs for truth, beauty, and goodness, diligently seeking them out. The one who searches might spend years studying, praying, yearning, and pursuing what is of eternal value. And then—finally—the "pearl" is found. Christ is discovered.

The Gospel becomes clear. The longing is fulfilled. Again, everything else is willingly surrendered for the sake of that one Pearl of great price—Jesus Christ.

In both parables, the decision to sell all to gain the treasure is an easy choice. The discovery is so great that everything else the person possesses pales in comparison. But how many people have truly made such a discovery?

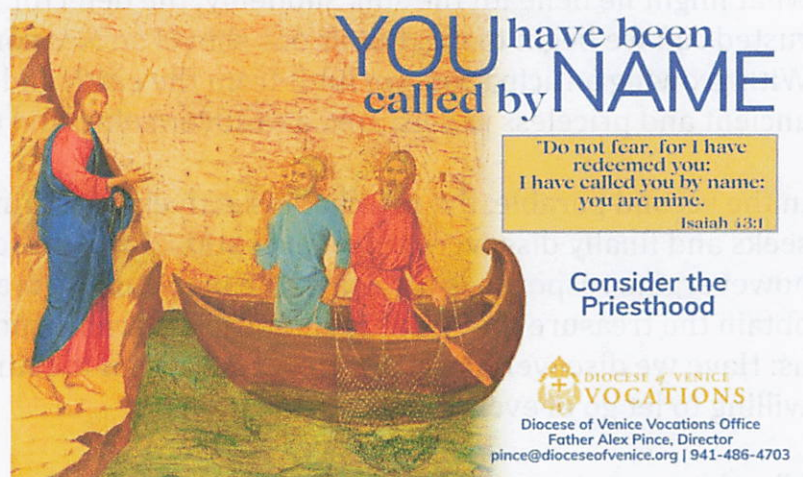
Many of us are like someone who learns of a treasure buried in a field and, out of curiosity, drives out to look—but spends little or no time searching. Or we are like a merchant who is informed of a rare and valuable pearl for sale far from home. Though interested, we note the length of the journey and abandon the thought. Though we may have heard about the glory of God's Kingdom, unless we truly discover it, we will not see the value of attaining it at any cost. We will only be willing to sell all we have—to detach from every hindrance to grace, every sin, obsession, and distraction—if we make the initial discovery of the priceless nature of God's Kingdom already present on earth and the fullness of His Kingdom that awaits us in Heaven.

Reflect today on this invaluable treasure, waiting to be discovered. Consider where we are on that journey of discovery. Have we heard about the priceless treasure of coming to know, love, and serve God? Have we read about the radical response made by many saints? Have we discovered God for ourselves, through prayer and moments of profound enlightenment? If we have not, keep searching—the Kingdom is here. If we have made this discovery, then consider all our attachments, and willingly surrender them to God, acknowledging that nothing is too much to offer to our loving God in exchange for the untold riches of the life of grace to which we are called. Amen.

Second Collection July 25 and 26 is for Recovery efforts for earthquake survivors in Venezuela.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Faith Appeal 2026

Parish assessment this year is \$144,000 (\$101,650.00 collected as of July 20) Envelopes are available at the front of the church. Please make checks payable to the *Catholic Faith Appeal* and in the memo write *Our Lady of Mercy Parish* so that we receive proper credit for your donation. Every dollar given to the CFA helps us reach our goal. May God continue to bless our generous parish. We are hopeful that 100% of our Parish community will respond to the 2026 Catholic Faith Appeal to successfully meet and perhaps exceed our goal. Please prayerfully consider giving to the Annual Catholic Faith Appeal 2026, with a pledge or one-time gift.



YOU have been called by **NAME**

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you:
I have called you by name:
you are mine."
Isaiah 43:1

Consider the Priesthood

DIOCESE of VENICE VOCATIONS
Diocese of Venice Vocations Office
Father Alex Pince, Director
pince@dioceseofvenice.org | 941-486-4703

Safe Environment Training (SET) - As part of the Safe Environment Program, the Diocese of Venice Requires that all employees and those volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults be fingerprinted and complete online training in SET prior to beginning employment or volunteering. Please visit the Diocese of Venice website. To report any abuse against minors to the Florida Department of Children and Families please call 800-962-2873. Further, if Diocesan personnel or volunteers are involved, notify the Diocesan Victims Assistance Coordinator, Senton, at 941-416-6114.