



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

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

September 25, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each October, the Church in the United States observes Respect Life Month, and the first Sunday of October is celebrated as Respect Life Sunday. This year's theme, "Mary, Mother of Life," calls us to turn our hearts to the Blessed Mother, who received the gift of life with faith, humility, and trust in God's plan. Through her maternal care and intercession, Mary leads us to a deeper reverence for every human person and reminds us that all life is sacred, from conception to natural death.

On the weekend of **October 3 and 4, 2026**, parishes throughout the Diocese of Venice will conduct a special collection in support of this vital, life-affirming mission. All funds collected remain within the Diocese and assist the Respect Life Office in sustaining programs such as Walking with Moms in Need, Project Rachel, and Catholic Days at the Capitol. Your generosity also helps provide outreach and formation for students and youth groups, encouraging young people to become faithful Catholic leaders who witness to the dignity of life in our communities.

Please continue to pray for a renewed respect for the gift of human life, especially for those who are most vulnerable and whose inherent dignity is often overlooked. May we, as one family of faith, continue to proclaim and defend the Gospel of Life through our prayers, our witness, and our works of charity. Thank you for your dedication, generosity, and faithful support of this important mission.

With gratitude and prayerful affection, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Emilio Biosca, O.F.M. Cap.

Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida

National Rosary Congress on Friday, October 9, our parish will participate. We will begin with Mass at 8:00 am. Adoration will begin at 8:30 am. At the beginning of each hour, we are encouraged to pray the rosary. Benediction will take place at 3:00 pm. All are invited to spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament on this special day.



Gospel of Matthew Reflection

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people: "What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?" Matthew 21:28-31

This parable must have been difficult for the chief priests and elders to hear, especially since it was clearly directed at them. In fact, after Jesus tells them a second parable, not included in today's Gospel, we read, "although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet" (Matthew 21:46). It seems they dismissed Jesus' words and His rebuke, but fear of public backlash, rather than fear of God's judgment, kept them silent for a time.

In today's Gospel, the first son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes, those who initially violated God's law but later repented after hearing the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus. The second son represents the chief priests and elders. After telling the parable, Jesus declares, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you." Like the second son, the religious and civic leaders paid lip service to God's law, but their actions did not align with its intent. They were hypocrites, blind to their own rejection of God's saving Word, and they misled others by their outward piety and self-righteous attitudes.

Consider more carefully the reactions of the two sons. We might imagine that the second son, who said, "Yes, sir," represents all who put on a false appearance of holiness. In the sight of others, they say the right things, but behind closed doors they fail to act. The first son is markedly different. Though he initially responds with defiance—"I will not"—his conscience eventually moves him to do what is right. Some may wonder why Jesus didn't include a third son, one who says, "Yes, sir," and then follows through. But Jesus likely omits such a son because all of us fall into one of the two categories He presents. Only our Blessed Mother obeyed perfectly in both word and deed from the first moment of her Immaculate Conception.

The first son becomes our model because each of us, in some way, struggles to enter perfect obedience to God's will. From childhood, we contend with what the Church calls concupiscence, the disordered tendency that arises from Original Sin. Though we are created good and in the image of God, our nature is wounded and inclined toward what is contrary to His will. The spiritual journey we undertake in this life is one in which grace slowly reorders our fallen inclinations and restores us to the obedience we are called to live.

Reflect today on the first son and humbly see ourselves in him. In what ways do we find it difficult to say "Yes" to God's will right away? It is not a sin to struggle with obedience. This struggle is part of our fallen human nature. Like the first son, we must allow grace to work within us, forming our conscience and compelling us to act in accordance with God's will, especially in the areas where we resist. When we allow grace to move us beyond our initial hesitation, we grow in virtue and become more like our Blessed Mother and our Lord Jesus, who both said "Yes" to the Father and followed through completely. Amen.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Faith Appeal 2026

Parish assessment this year is \$144,000 (\$122,364.74 collected as of September 21). 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. 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.

We need \$21,636 to reach our parish goal.

POPE'S SEPTEMBER INTENTION

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For the care of water:
Let us pray for a just
and sustainable
management of
water, a vital
resource, so that
everyone may have
equal access to it.

