

OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

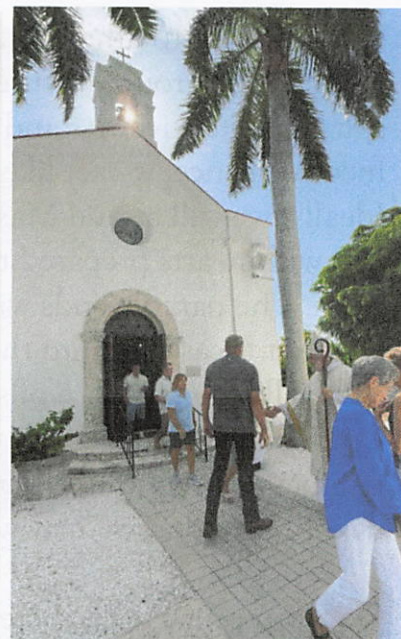
Father Anthony Hewitt, JCL, Pastor

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-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, OCTOBER 11, 2026

Gospel of Matthew Reflection

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and elders of the people in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come.” Matthew 22:1–3

The central theme of this parable is found in the opening line: “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.” In this parable, the king is God the Father, the Son is Jesus, and the Wedding Feast represents the Messianic Banquet—a celebration of the eternal joy of union with God. Today, the Holy Mass is a real participation in that Messianic Banquet and a foretaste of its fullness to come.

The first invited guests “refused to come.” This is commonly understood to refer to many among the people of Israel who rejected Jesus as the Messiah, especially the religious leaders. The second invitation was ignored by some and met with hostility by others. This reflects the way the prophets were treated throughout salvation history—ignored, rejected, and often persecuted. When the king learned of their refusal, he sent his troops to destroy those who had been invited, which is a clear reference to God’s justice, His judgment, and the penalty of grave sin: spiritual death. The king then sends his servants out to invite everyone they can find. This is the mission of the Church. From the moment Jesus founded His Church and entrusted it to the Apostles, the invitation to the heavenly banquet has gone out to the ends of the earth, and it continues to this day.

Each of us has received this divine invitation. Today, the fullest way to participate in the Wedding Feast is through Holy Mass. The Mass is truly our wedding banquet, and our union with Christ is sealed in Holy Communion. But do we see the Mass this way? Often, we tend to evaluate the Mass by the personality and preaching of the priest, the quality of the music, or other superficial elements.

When we fail to attend Mass as we would attend the Wedding Feast of the Son of God, then we, like the first group, “refuse to come”—even if we are physically present. True attendance requires spiritual attentiveness and interior participation. When we view the Mass as a burden or inconvenience, we act like those in the second group who responded with indifference or hostility. Ideally, we will attend Mass every Sunday—and more often if possible—willingly, joyfully, reverently, and with hearts prepared to encounter the bridegroom. This requires that we remain in a state of grace. The parable ends with a sobering image: A man found at the feast without a wedding garment is cast out into the darkness. The “wedding garment” symbolizes the state of the soul, especially the presence of sanctifying grace, which is received in Baptism and restored through Confession. To approach the altar without this garment is to risk being cast out, as the man in the parable was. We must therefore examine our conscience, repent of sin, and prepare our hearts with devotion so that we may worthily partake of this Heavenly Meal.

Do we approach this sacred celebration with joyful reverence, spiritual preparation, and genuine love for the bridegroom? Strive to make our presence at Mass much more than physical; let it be the expression of a properly clothed soul, joyfully responding to the King’s invitation. May our worthy participation in the Eucharist be a foretaste of the eternal banquet prepared for those who are invited and respond with all their hearts. Amen.

October 1, 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We will celebrate World Mission Sunday on October 18, 2026. Catholics throughout the world unite in prayer and generous sacrifice to support the Church’s missionary work and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday. Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme, “**One in Christ, united in mission.**” As members of one Body in Christ, we are called to share the Gospel and support the Church’s mission throughout the world.

The World Mission Sunday Collection in the Diocese of Venice in Florida will take place on the weekend of **October 17 & 18, 2026**. Your generosity supports mission territories through the formation of seminarians and religious sisters, churches, schools, healthcare, and pastoral programs.

Thank you for your continued generosity and prayers in support of the Church’s missionary mission. With prayerful best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ, + Emilio Biosca, O.F.M. Cap. Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Faith Appeal 2026

Parish assessment this year is \$144,000 (\$122,364.74 collected as of October 5) 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.

