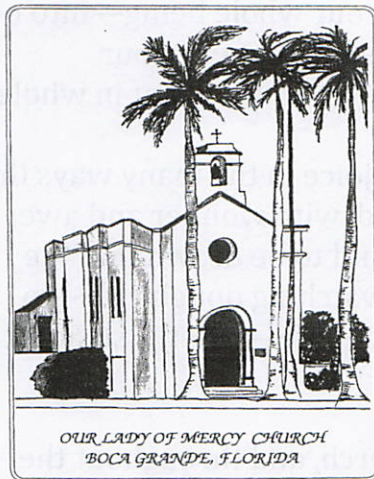




OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

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

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Office Hours, Monday – Friday:

8:00am-4:00 pm

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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, JULY 19, 2026

Gospel of Matthew Reflection

He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened." Matthew 13:33



Yeast is small—invisible once it is worked into the dough. And yet, its influence is pervasive and powerful. This simple image—yeast worked into three measures of flour, causing it to slowly rise—reveals that the Kingdom of Heaven is built quietly, almost imperceptibly, from within. Like leaven silently transforming dough from the inside, so too does God's grace operate—hidden yet active—in the heart, in the Church, and in the world.

Patently watching dough rise can be a small wonder, especially for children. In this brief parable, the yeast symbolizes the Word of God, and the wheat flour, the human soul. When God's Word is welcomed by faith, it possesses the power to transform the entire soul. Just as yeast elevates and expands flour into bread, so God's Word elevates human nature and conforms it to Himself. How awe-inspiring it is to behold the gradual transformation of a soul animated by divine grace!

Saint Augustine offers several interpretations of the "three measures" of wheat flour. He suggests they can represent the threefold interior life of the human person: heart, soul, and mind (cf. Matthew 22:37); or the three degrees of fruitfulness described in the parable of the sower—"a hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold" (cf. Matthew 13:23); or even the three righteous men mentioned in Ezekiel—Noah, Daniel, and Job (cf. Ezekiel 14:14), each representing a distinct path of fidelity under trial. Each of these interpretations reveals how God's transforming Word is at work not only in the individual soul, but within the Church and throughout all humanity. Though "three measures" might not sound like much, it was in fact a substantial amount. According to ancient Jewish and Roman measurements, three measures (or *satons*) could equal nearly fifty pounds of flour—enough to feed more than a hundred people. The parable, therefore, is about abundance—the superabundant fruitfulness of God's Word when it is thoroughly received—penetrating deeply into the individual soul, the Church, and society. Like leaven in dough, this transformation takes time. Though not immediately, it is steady, enduring, and complete.

Consider our own life: Has the Word of God been thoroughly mixed into our whole being—into our heart, our soul, and our mind? Has it leavened our interior life so completely that even our smallest actions are touched by grace? Has divine love taken hold of us—not in part, but in whole?

Furthermore, do we see our interconnectedness with the Church and rejoice in the many ways God is at work within Her and Her members? Do we gaze upon the world and, with wonder and awe, perceive God's hidden activity? It is easy to focus on the worldly chaos and to be drawn into the sensationalism of evil. But it takes a truly perceptive soul—like a child watching dough rise—to behold the quiet, steady work of God, who is ever bringing His Kingdom to life—quietly, steadily, and far and wide.

Reflect today on the quiet ways God is at work within us, within the Church, and throughout the world. Though we might not always perceive the movement of grace, trust that it is active—like yeast in dough—gently transforming, sanctifying, and preparing hearts for the glory to come. Resist the temptation to measure our spiritual growth by visible signs or immediate results. Instead, remain faithful to prayer, attentive to the Word, and docile to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. God's Kingdom unfolds in time, and its rising is certain. Even when the world seems overwhelmed by sin or division, remember that the leaven is at work. The final loaf is being prepared for the eternal banquet—and we are being made ready, one hidden grace at a time, until we are fully prepared to share in the joy of the eternal feast. Amen.

Second Collection July 18 and 19 is for Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Faith Appeal 2026

Parish assessment this year is \$144,000 (\$91,450.00 collected as of July 13) 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.



Prayer for Safety in Hurricane Season

O God, Master of this passing world, hear the humble voices of your children. The Sea of Galilee obeyed Your order and returned to its former quietude. You are still the Master of land and sea. We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control: the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant, can awake from its seeming lethargy, overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land, and spread chaos and disaster. During this hurricane season we turn to You, O loving Father, spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with passing of time.

O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our beloved Mother, we ask you to plead with your Son on our behalf, so that spared from the calamities common to this area and animated with a true spirit of gratitude, we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where a stormless eternity awaits us. Amen.

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.