



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

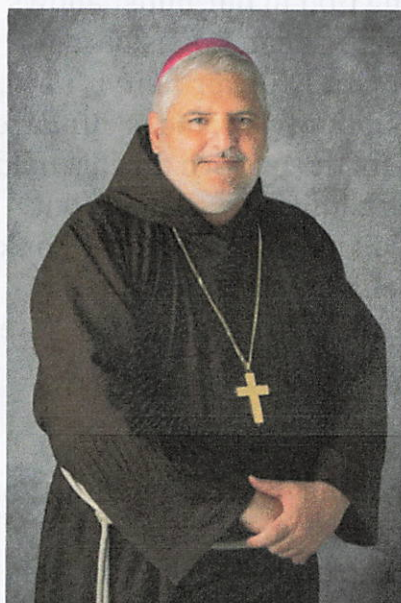
Office Hours, Monday – Friday:

8:00am-4:00 pm

Business Manager Erin Sifrit:

erin.sifrit@olomcc.org

NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME AUGUST 9, 2026



Thursday, August 27, 2026

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

Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida

will celebrate the 10 am Mass.

Following the celebration of the Holy Mass we will have a reception in the Parish Life Center.

There is a sign-up sheet on the table or email erin.sifrit@olomcc.org or call the parish office to let us know if you will be attending the Mass and reception so that we may plan accordingly.

All are invited to attend and to meet and greet our new bishop.

There will be a book at the entrance of the church where you are invited to write a welcome message to our new bishop. This book will be presented to him at the end of the reception.

August 27, 2026, there will be no 8:00 am Mass.



Gospel of Matthew Reflection

"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Matthew 14:27-31

Today's Gospel takes place the night after Jesus fed the 5,000 on a mountain near the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, using only five barley loaves and two fish. Afterward, He withdrew to pray alone and sent the disciples ahead of Him by boat, directing them toward the town of

Gennesaret, just south of Capernaum. While great miracles occurred the next day in Gennesaret, something just as remarkable took place during the night's journey across the sea.

The disciples found themselves rowing against a strong headwind, making the journey slow, arduous, and perilous. This scene is a vivid image of our journey through life. Life is rarely easy. It can often feel laborious, filled with hardships, and some trials may seem never-ending.

Between 3 and 6 a.m., as the disciples continued struggling against the waves, they saw a figure walking on the sea, coming toward them. While we may be familiar with the idea of Jesus walking on water, for the disciples, this would have been an unimaginable and terrifying sight. They did not recognize Him—not because His appearance had changed, but because fear blinded them. This still happens in our lives. We can misinterpret suffering or divine silence as abandonment. But Jesus allowed their fear precisely so He could confront it directly: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." In His divine wisdom, Jesus knew that countless disciples would read this story and ponder this moment until the end of time.

What message is He giving us? The courage that comes from recognizing God in our midst allows us to conquer fear—especially in our moments of suffering, when the path ahead seems hard, dangerous, and without end. Peter utters the perfect prayer in this moment of uncertainty: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you..." When we recognize God amid our trials, focus our gaze on Him, and pray this prayer, God will always answer, "Come." Peter sets the pattern for this bold, trusting prayer, but he falters in remaining faithful to it. Yet even this is allowed by God, for our instruction. Making an act of courageous faith does not guarantee we will not stumble. Peter sank not because he lacked faith entirely, but because fear began to overwhelm his trust. And in this, Jesus teaches us another lesson: Even when our faith wavers, we must not give in to despair. Peter did not drown—he cried out once more, "Lord, save me!" and Jesus immediately reached out His hand.

Reflect today on any trial or suffering we endure that tempts us to fear. Confront that fear head-on. Rebuke it. Look for Jesus, who comes to us during the trial, walking on and through that very storm. Know that it is truly Him, drawing near. As we overcome fear, keep our eyes fixed on Him, not on the storm. This is what strengthens our faith and enables us to keep moving forward toward the goal: Jesus' hand of divine grace. Amen.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Faith Appeal 2026

Parish assessment this year is \$144,000 (\$110,900.00 collected as of August 3) 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.

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.