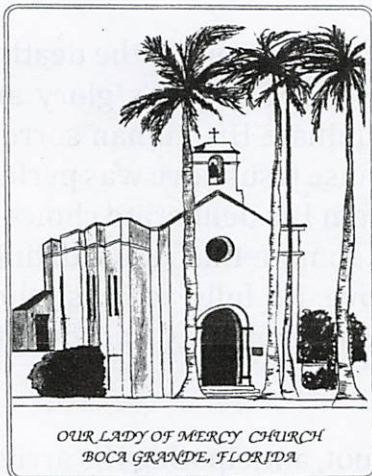




OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

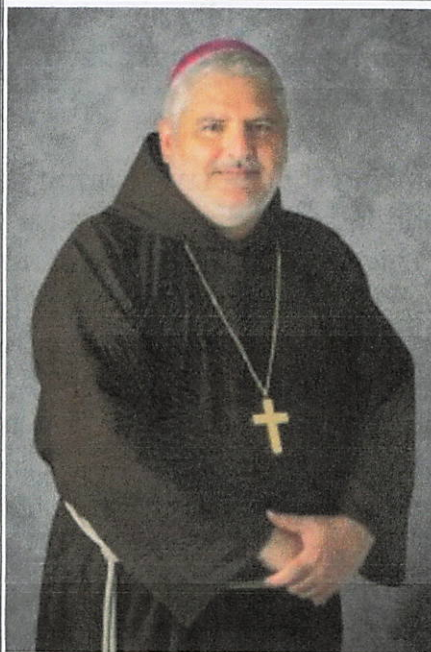
Father Anthony Hewitt, JCL, Pastor

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

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME AUGUST 2, 2026



On 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.

Please RSVP: email erin.sifrit@olomcc.org or call the parish office for Mass and reception so that we may plan accordingly.

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

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

Gospel of Matthew Reflection

"Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Matthew 14:17-20

In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, there are two distinct miraculous feedings of large crowds. Today's Gospel depicts the first one, given primarily to Jewish people near the Sea of Galilee. Five thousand men (not counting women and children) were fed from five loaves and two fish, resulting in twelve baskets left over. This feeding of the five thousand is notably the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four Gospels, underscoring its significance. Matthew and Mark also recount a second miraculous feeding—this time of four thousand people—in the largely pagan region of the Decapolis, using seven loaves and a few fish, with seven baskets left over.

This first miracle takes place within the context of Jesus' sorrowful heart, as He mourns the death of His cousin, John the Baptist. Jesus knew that John's death occurred for the Father's glory and according to His permissive will. Yet this divine perspective did not eliminate His human sorrow. Holy sorrow is a profound expression of love in the face of suffering. Because Jesus' love was perfect, His sorrow was genuine and deep. The depth of His sorrow is evident from His deliberate choice to withdraw by boat to be alone, to fully embrace His grief. It is beautiful to note that Jesus' divinity does not overshadow or diminish His humanity. Rather, with divine love, He fully accepts John's death, and with a genuinely human heart, He properly mourns. In Jesus, humanity and divinity intertwine perfectly.

Upon disembarking, Jesus finds that a large crowd has followed Him on foot, anticipating His arrival, hungry for His teachings and miracles. Here we encounter a second revelation of Jesus' divinity shining through His humanity. Seeing the crowd and perceiving their brokenness, sinfulness, and suffering, "his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick." The Greek word translated here as "pity" indicates a deeply felt, visceral compassion. This compassion, divine in origin, flows perfectly through Jesus' sacred humanity. His compassionate gaze vividly reveals God's merciful love: Jesus does not merely sympathize; He acts decisively, healing the sick and alleviating their suffering. His divine love compels Him to act for the good of His people.

The miracle itself recalls God's providential care for the Israelites during their forty years in the desert, when manna appeared each morning, providing sufficient food for each day. That miracle, coupled with today's Gospel, teaches us a consistent truth: God always provides for us when we turn to Him, seeking Him earnestly as the crowd did. The multiplication of the loaves and fish also foreshadows the Eucharist, likely the reason it is recorded in all four Gospels. In the Eucharist, God provides abundantly for our spiritual nourishment. When received with faith and trust in God's providence, Jesus' Body and Blood nourishes every virtue within us, empowering us to flourish spiritually. The Eucharist prepares us for eternal life, where we anticipate sharing in the eternal Wedding Banquet of Heaven—a perfect, everlasting celebration free from all sin, sickness, and suffering.

Reflect today on Jesus' tender care. He looks upon our needs with the same compassion He showed to the crowds in the wilderness. Consider especially how He desires to feed us daily through the Most Holy Eucharist, the true Bread from Heaven. Bring to Him whatever we have, even if it seems small or insufficient—our struggles, weariness, prayers, and hopes—and trust that in His hands, they will be multiplied for the good of our soul and the souls of others. Let this miraculous feeding stir within us a deeper faith in God's providence and a more fervent desire for the Eucharist, where Christ Himself is our sustenance, our healing, and our foretaste of eternal joy. Amen.

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.