

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-Fri

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

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 14, 2025

Second Collection today: Retirement Fund for Religious

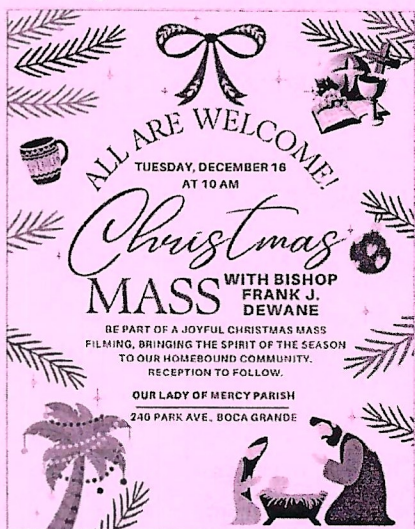
Christmas Mass Times

Wednesday, December 24th: 5 pm Vigil, 8 pm (Midnight Mass)

Thursday, December 25th: 7 am, 9 am, 10:30 am

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Thursday, January 1st, 2026, 9 am

The **Annual Christmas Gift Tag Basket** is at the entrance of the church. Each tag has a boy or girl with a corresponding age. Please provide an appropriate gift for the child and return the gift to the church or parish office with the tag attached. Gift cards are also appropriate gifts. Please return all gifts by December 23rd. Gifts will be distributed by the volunteers to the children in need, throughout Lee County. Hopefully, this Christmas morning each child we help will be filled with the joy of the Christmas Season.



Tuesday, December 16 at 10 am **Filming of the Christmas Day Mass celebrated by Bishop Dewane.** This is a great honor for our parish to be chosen for this beautiful Mass that will be televised throughout the Diocese of Venice and online accessible by the homebound, those in hospitals, assisted living facilities, prisons, and elsewhere. Please make every effort to attend. A reception to follow in the parish life center. Please note the 8:00 am Mass on Tuesday will not be offered as the 10 am Mass will replace it.

Gospel of Matthew Reflection

"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me." Matthew 11:4-6

Suppose a priest came to the church to put on a parish mission, and during that mission he miraculously healed the blind, crippled, terminally ill, and deaf. What if he even raised the dead to life? How would we respond? Most likely with amazement! We'd contact everyone close to us and tell them about those miracles, encouraging them to attend the next session.

Though Jesus' ministry was filled with miracles, they were far from the most important part of His mission. His miracles healed bodies that would eventually die, but His preaching healed souls that would live forever because His preaching ultimately pointed to His greatest work—to suffer and die for the salvation of souls.

If we were alive as Jesus walked the earth, performed miracles, preached the Good News, suffered death and rose again, which of His actions would have the greatest effect on us? When we consider our Lord's mission, we must consider it all as one unified whole, not missing the most important aspects. From a faith perspective, Jesus' suffering, death, and Resurrection are clearly His greatest acts. By freely embracing suffering and death, He transformed the worst into the best: the consequence of sin—which is death—into the instrument of eternal life. When Jesus said, "And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me," He was identifying those as blessed who discovered the great value of His Cross.

If we were to ask Jesus' first followers whether they would prefer to see Jesus perform miracles or suffer and die, most likely they would prefer the miracles. Such a question might have even left them confused. Why would anyone want to see a great prophet suffer and die? Yet, today, from a theological perspective, Jesus' suffering, death, and Resurrection are the greatest acts in human history.

Imagine being our Blessed Mother who witnessed it all, stood by her Son as He endured His Cross, and rejoiced with Him when He rose. Unquestionably, if we asked our Blessed Mother whether she preferred to see a few miracles from her Son or to witness His perfect sacrifice that brought salvation to the world, her holy and sorrowful heart would choose the latter.

When we pray, do we primarily ask for favors, blessings, or miracles? Or do we primarily pray for the Cross? Do we see greater value in having God remove some suffering from our life or in transforming our suffering by the power of His Cross? Ask for the grace to die with our Lord, to become a living sacrifice of love, and to have the strength to lay down our life for others. By choosing that which has eternal value, we choose the better part and will rejoice in that better part forever. Amen.

Safe Environment Training - 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 Safe Environment prior to beginning employment or volunteering. 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, also notify the Diocesan Victims Assistance Coordinator, Susan Benton, at 941-416-6114. Please visit the Diocese of Venice website for further information.

Advent Retreat - Contemplate prayer and the spiritual journey with Fr. Murchadh O'Madagain, Ph.D. **December 12-14**, 5:00 pm Friday through 1:00 pm Sunday. Guided conferences, shared silence, and spiritual reflection is the perfect way to prepare to welcome our Savior at Christmas! Fr. Murchadh is pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Myers. He has a doctorate in spiritual theology and is author of several books. Please visit olph-retreat.org or call (941) 486-0233 to register.

Thank you all for your time, talent, and treasure!