



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	Call the parish office
Parish website address:	ourladyofmercy.church
Online Giving:	ourladyofmercy.church

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 1, 2024

Due to the damage from Hurricanes Helene and Milton to the church
Daily and Weekend Mass will continue to be celebrated in the **Parish Life Center (PLC)**.

Monday-Friday 8:00 am
Saturday 5:00 pm vigil
Sunday 9:00 and 10:30 am

Second Collection Next Weekend

November 29, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There are thousands of Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests, who offer their lives in service working in Catholic schools, hospitals, and agencies, receiving minimal pay. Many remain in ministry and are committed to their vocations well into their retirement years. During your lifetime, there may have been religious men and women who were a positive influence on you.

Religious institutes are responsible for their own finances and for the care of their members but often lack adequate retirement savings due to reinvesting in the ministry and education of younger members, as well as the rising cost of health care. The Bishops of the United States established the Retirement Fund for Religious to help struggling religious communities meet the ongoing needs of their aging members.

As Christians, we are called to serve the Lord and help those in need. Our elderly religious offer examples of what it means to answer this call. The Retirement Fund for Religious Collection will take place on the weekend of **December 7 & 8, 2024**, in the Diocese of Venice. Your gift will provide vital funding for medications, nursing care, and helps religious congregations plan for future retirement needs. Thank you for your generosity!

I take this opportunity to extend to each of you the assurances of my continued consideration, as well as my prayers for you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida

A gift to the parish community is the Advent 2024 book “**Emerge Into Great Joy**” by S. James Meyer. One copy per family please.

Upcoming Mass Schedule

Monday December 9, Feast of the Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation 9:00 am Mass

Christmas Giving Stars

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In my 25 years of being a priest, at the parishes I served, with the help of some volunteers, Christmas gift Tags were prepared for the local community. This remarkable opportunity to give gifts to children in the Lee County area has been very successful over the years. Thousands of toys, gift cards, and clothing have been distributed to children who otherwise would have no gifts to call their own on Christmas Day, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the vestibule of the parish hall in a basket, you will find Christmas star tags with the age and gender of the child. If you are able, please purchase any age-appropriate toy, clothing, or gift card (Wal-Mart, Target) and bring the gift unwrapped with the tag attached back to the parish hall so that they may be collected and distributed before the Christmas Season begins. All tags and gifts can be returned up to **December 23rd**.

Through our generosity as a loving and merciful parish we will be able to bring smiles and laughter to children, parents and grandparents on Christmas Day. They will remember the love of Jesus Christ for the rest of their lives because of what we do for them this season. God bless us all.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.” Luke 21:34–36

“That day.” These two words are spoken twice in the passage above. To which day is our Lord referring? Clearly, He is referring primarily to the day of our final judgment and is warning us to make sure we are prepared for it in case it was to come at an unexpected moment. So how do we prepare? Animals have the natural gift of instinct. They know how to survive, how to reproduce, how to gather food and how to avoid danger. They know this because God has implanted this knowledge within them. By this natural gift of instinct, they know what to do and what to avoid.

The way we most properly prepare is through a special grace by which God reveals Himself and His will to our human reason. When that happens, we will know the best way to be fully prepared for “that day” the moment it comes. Perhaps one of the best ways to describe this ability is by describing it as a “supernatural instinct.” When our natural instincts become open to grace, and when the information on which we base our daily decisions in life comes to us by an ongoing and personal revelation from God through the infused gift of faith, then we will find that we simply know what to do and what to avoid. By analogy, just as a bird knows to fly south for the winter or a salmon knows to return to its place of birth to lay its eggs, so we will “know” within our spirit how to best serve the will of God and, thus, be most fully prepared for His imminent return. “Supernatural instinct” is nothing other than us allowing the grace of God to enter our lives to take control of everything we do and to lead us into the fulfillment of the perfect and glorious will of God. When that happens, we can be certain that we are perpetually prepared for all that comes and will never be caught by surprise like a trap. Amen.