



# 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](http://ourladyofmercy.church)

**Online Giving:**

[ourladyofmercy.church](http://ourladyofmercy.church)

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## THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH DECEMBER 28, 2025



**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

Thursday, January 1

9 am Mass

**Gospel of Matthew Reflection**

*When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. Matthew 2:13-14*

Today we honor and ponder the family life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The love within their home exceeded that of any other household, and the love within their family poured forth upon their extended family and wider community. Scripture gives us limited details about the life of the Holy Family. What we do know is that from the very beginning, they suffered through enormous challenges.



Mary's pregnancy was the first challenge they faced. She conceived the Christ Child before she and Joseph lived together. Though she knew how she conceived the Son of God, Joseph did not understand until the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. We can imagine that relatives and members of the community expressed their disapproval, given that the angel of the Lord did not reveal the truth to everyone.

Jesus was born far away from their home, in the little town of Bethlehem, in a cave, where animals dwelt. Humble shepherds were their first guests, and the magi from the East soon followed. Within a year or two after Jesus' birth, this family had to uproot from their home and flee to Egypt, find accommodations, and earn a living because Herod sought to kill the child Jesus.

After Herod's death, Joseph was instructed in two subsequent dreams that he could return to Israel and was to move his family to the small and unremarkable village of Nazareth. Though Nazareth was not held in high esteem, it was within this simple setting that Jesus was raised and learned the virtues of hard work, obedience, and humility. Nazareth, though overlooked by the world, became the sacred ground where the Savior of the world was prepared for His mission. Finally, given that Saint Joseph is not mentioned during the time that Jesus exercised His public ministry, it is commonly believed that Jesus and His mother experienced the human sorrow of Joseph's earthly death.

Despite the hardships the Holy Family endured, the love in their home overshadowed every challenge, making their family life a source of the utmost consolation and joy. Amidst the trials they faced, the Holy Family found joy, not in worldly comforts, but in their deep union with God and with each other. Their home was a sanctuary of love, prayer, and mutual support, where God's presence was always felt. How fascinating it will be one day, in Heaven, if God reveals to us the details about the earthly and hidden life of the Holy Family. Though the angels witnessed their lives as they unfolded in time, we can hope and imagine that God, in His goodness, will share these mysteries with the saints, revealing the true beauty of the Holy Family's earthly life together. Their conversations, interactions, charity, prayer, fun, work, and all that made up their family life will be a source of eternal admiration and gratitude.

Reflect today on the Holy Family. Ask God to give us insight into their lives together. As we do, use any insights as a source of inspiration for our own life and relationships with those closest to us. Though we will all fall short of the charity that permeated the home of the Holy Family, we can work to imitate them by allowing God to increase our charity toward one another. Through daily prayer, acts of sacrifice, and a commitment to love one another, we can create a family life that reflects the holiness and unity of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Amen.

Second Collection Next Weekend January 3 and 4

December 26, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is a magnificent blessing for the Diocese of Venice to have many dedicated Priests who have responded to Christ's call to follow Him in the Priesthood. Further, the Diocese continues to be blessed with a number of vocations; thirteen men are presently in formation, studying for the Priesthood. As we begin this new year, I am asking for your support for these men, and those recruited for entry this coming year, through the Annual Seminary Collection.

Each year, the Annual Seminary Collection plays an important role in providing the funds needed to assist the Diocese's seminarians with tuition, room and board, health care, transportation, and other expenses. Funding from the Collection also helps in the recruitment of potential seminarians. By means of your generous donations and steadfast spiritual support, you journey together on the path of Faith with the future Priests of the Diocese.

Parishes in the Diocese of Venice will conduct the Annual Seminary Collection on the weekend of January 3 and 4, 2026. Thank you for your continued generous support for our seminarians and for your prayers for vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life.

I take this opportunity to extend to each of you my blessings and assurances of my prayers in this New Year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
+ Frank J. Dewane  
Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida



**2026 church calendars** are available at the entrance to the church. These calendars have the daily Mass schedule, the Holy Days and the Saints throughout the year highlighted. One per family please.

**Thank you** for donating a gift to a child through our Annual Christmas Gift Giving. Many children were overwhelmed with joy at the kind and thoughtful gifts they were able to open on Christmas Day.

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