

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

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 7, 2025

Second Collection December 13 and 14

December 5, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Parishes in the United States will soon be conducting the Retirement Fund for Religious Collection, an annual appeal that benefits over 21,000 elderly members of religious orders. For most of their lives, elderly religious worked tirelessly, often for minimal pay and without pensions or retirements plans. Today, they need our help.

Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all their members; however, many are struggling to care for their elderly due to a lack of financial resources and personnel. Proceeds from the annual Retirement Fund Collection provide the financial assistance religious communities need for the day-to-day care of elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. This collection also provides the funding necessary to invest for long-term retirement needs.

Many of us know a religious who had a positive influence in our life, either in school, at your parish, or in a hospital. Please give to those who have given a lifetime. Parishes throughout the Diocese of Venice will conduct the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious the weekend of December 13 & 14, 2025. 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. Have a Blessed Advent Season.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane

Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Mass is on Monday, December 8 at 9:00 am.



Save the Date! 2026 Butterfly Ball - OLPH is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Join us as we celebrate the last 30 years and toast to the next 30 at our Butterfly Ball on **January 24, 2026**. For more information on how you can support or participate in the celebration, visit the olph-retreat.org

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 with the tag attached. Gift cards are also appropriate gifts. Please return all gifts by December 23 and then the volunteers will distribute the gifts to the neediest children throughout Lee County. Hopefully, this Christmas morning each child we help will be filled with the joy of the Christmas Season.



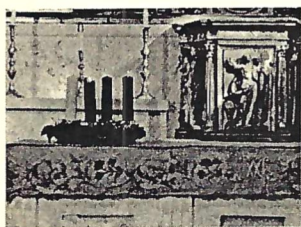
Safe Environment Training - As part of the Safe Environment Program, the Diocese of Venice requires that all employees and those volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults be fingerprinted and complete online training in Safe Environment prior to beginning employment or volunteering. 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.

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

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

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



"I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:11-12

This passage comes just before Jesus is baptized and begins His public ministry. John the Baptist had been ministering in the desert of Judea, preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Many came to him to be baptized with a baptism of repentance. But when John saw many scribes and Pharisees coming to him, he said, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance." The passage above is John's warning to them—and to us—about what will happen if we fail to repent.

At that time, when wheat was harvested, it was left to dry. Then, a winnowing fan was used to blow the wheat and chaff into the air. The lighter chaff would blow away, while the grains of wheat would fall to the ground to be gathered, milled into flour, and used for baking. John uses this familiar image to depict what Jesus will do with the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are like the grains of wheat that will be gathered and brought to Heaven. The wicked are like the chaff that, once separated from the righteous, will burn in the unquenchable fire of hell. Though it is comforting to speak of the glories of Heaven and to anticipate being brought there by our Lord, it is necessary to also consider the reality of the unquenchable fires of hell. Pondering the reality of those unquenchable fires is something we should not neglect. As we enter the second week of the penitential season of Advent, ponder this warning from Saint John the Baptist. Hear him speak those words directly to us. We must fear sin and avoid it, as much as we want to avoid the unquenchable fires of hell. Start with this foundational truth, so that having fostered deep repentance, we are ready to turn our heart and mind toward the glorious promise of Heaven. Amen.

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