

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

FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME FEBRUARY 8, 2026

Ash Wednesday, February 18th, Mass Times: 8:00 am and 5:00 pm



Fridays of Lent

3:00 – 4:00 pm *Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*

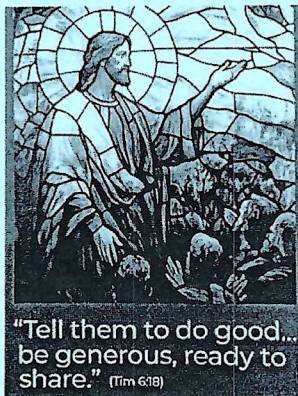
4:00pm *Stations of the Cross*



Mardi Gras Parish Family Potluck Dinner February 17, 2026

RSVP today for the Parish Mardi Gras potluck dinner on February 17th at 5:30-7:00pm in the Parish Life Center. Plan to bring your favorite dish and enjoy the fellowship and fun. Last name is A-J plan to bring an appetizer or salad; last name is K-Z plan to bring an entrée or dessert. Iced Tea, water, and paper products will be provided (BYOB if additional drinks are desired). Reserve a seat today by emailing Anne Scoronski at askoronski@mac.com. Please indicate "OLM Mardi Gras RSVP" in the subject line. In the body of the email please indicate the names of the attendees in your party and the item you plan to bring for the potluck. If you would like to volunteer to help with the event, please indicate it in an email and a committee member will call you back.

This weekend of February 7 and 8 is commitment Sunday for the annual Catholic Faith Appeal. Our parish assessment this year is **\$144,000**. 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. Last year 67 donors out of 250 gave to the CFA. I am grateful for their generosity. The goal this year is to reach 100 donors. Every dollar given to the CFA helps us reach our total. More will be shared about the CFA and the tremendous work that our donations provide for the various ministries of the Diocese of Venice in Florida.

Online Giving links below -Select Our Lady of Mercy

One time gift

<https://dioceseofvenice.org/ways-to-give/cfa/one-time-gift/>

Recurring monthly installments

<https://dioceseofvenice.org/ways-to-give/cfa/recurring-monthly-installments/>

May God continue to bless our generous parish. Fr. Anthony

Gospel of Matthew Reflection

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot." Matthew 5:13

Sodium chloride, also known as salt, is one of the most used substances in the world, used for seasoning, preserving, and purifying. Sodium chloride is a very stable compound and cannot lose its flavor unless there is a chemical reaction or dissolution. Why, then, did Jesus suggest that salt could lose its taste? One likely explanation is that the salt used in ancient Palestine could indeed lose its flavor due to impurities and the conditions in which it was stored. The Dead Sea, located in modern-day southeast Israel, contains a massive deposit of salt and other minerals. According to biblical history, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt in this region. Because of the vast salt and mineral deposits, the area surrounding the Dead Sea is desolate.



Salt extracted from the Dead Sea was never pure sodium chloride. Gypsum and other minerals were also present, making the salt impure. If this salt were stored improperly or encountered water, the sodium chloride could dissolve and wash away, leaving behind the solid residue of minerals. These residual substances, like gypsum, had the appearance of salt but were tasteless and useless for flavoring, preserving, and purifying purposes. When this happened, the "salt" lost its taste. In light of this explanation, Jesus' teaching becomes especially clear. The first notable feature of salt is its ability to add flavor to food. By calling His disciples the "salt of the earth," Jesus was instructing them to enhance the "flavor" of the world by bringing the truth of the Gospel and the joy of His message to others. A Christian life lived in fidelity to Christ would make the world a better and more virtuous place, just as salt enhances the flavor of food.

Salt is also commonly used for preservation. Before the age of refrigerators and freezers, salt was mixed with food to prevent corruption, by drawing out moisture and hindering bacteria and other microorganisms. Though this practice is still used today, it was especially vital in ancient times. By being the "salt of the earth," Jesus was calling His disciples to preserve the world from moral decay. Through their witness and proclamation of the Gospel, they were to act as a preservative against sin and spiritual ruin. If they were to "lose their taste," they would become indistinguishable from the rest of the world and ineffective in their mission. Hence, Jesus was exhorting them—and us—to avoid becoming watered down and bland in our witness to the Gospel.

Lastly, salt held a significant role in Jewish religious practices, symbolizing purity and consecration. In sacrificial rituals, salt was used to consecrate offerings, as commanded in Leviticus: "You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your grain offering. On every offering you shall offer salt" (Leviticus 2:13). By seasoning their offerings with salt, the Israelites preserved the sacrifices from decay, making them pure. This practice reflects the disciples' role in purifying the world through their example of holiness, their lives of self-sacrifice, and their participation in Christ's redemptive work. They were to live lives of integrity, leading others to God through the purity of their hearts and their unwavering commitment to His will.

Reflect today on this powerful metaphor of being the salt of the earth. The world desperately needs the enriching "flavor" of God's grace. Without Him, the world is left to corruption and decay. With God, we, and those we serve, are preserved as pure and holy offerings, adding to His glory and growing in holiness. Be the salt of the earth. Do not become watered down in our faith. Remain steadfast in our fidelity to Christ and His Gospel, and we will transform the world around us. In doing so, we will not only glorify God but will also share in His eternal joy.

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

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