



OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

Father Anthony Hewitt, JCL, Pastor

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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

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME JANUARY 18, 2026

Gospel of John Reflection

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" John 1:29-30

Central to the Jewish faith was the Feast of Passover, the commemoration of God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12). In Jesus' time, Passover was one of three major annual feasts during which the Jews made a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Additionally, the Feast of Weeks celebrated the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai and the first fruits of the harvest (Leviticus 23:15-22), and the Feast of Tabernacles recalled the Israelites' wandering in the desert and celebrated God's providence (Leviticus 23:33-43).



Recall the first Passover meal. Moses instructed the people to sacrifice an unblemished lamb, mark the doorposts of their homes with its blood, and eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs in haste, ready to depart. This act of faith and obedience protected them from the angel of death who passed over the marked houses, sparing the firstborn of Israel, while striking down the firstborn of Egypt. The Passover thus became a perpetual memorial of God's saving power and His covenantal faithfulness to His people.

Because of the Passover, the idea of a sacrificial lamb was intimately familiar to the Jewish people. The Jews were also familiar with the prophecy in Isaiah 53—often referred to as the Suffering Servant—in which the servant of the Lord is described as "a lamb led to the slaughter," who bears the sins of many (Isaiah 53:7, 10-12). Additionally, each morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed in the temple as a continual offering for sin (Exodus 29:38-42).

As Jesus began His public ministry, the first thing said of Him came from John the Baptist: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." His words would have resonated within the minds and hearts of John's disciples. His disciples believed that John was a great prophet and the forerunner of the Messiah, sent to prepare the way for the Lord. They saw him as a holy man who called for repentance and renewal, and some even wondered if he himself might be the Christ, though John consistently denied this.

Because John's ministry was one of preparation for the Messiah, his disciples would have anticipated the Messiah's imminent arrival. Imagine the excitement, surprise, questions, uncertainty, and hope that would have filled their minds and hearts as they listened to John's prophecy about Jesus. John continued, "He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'"

Though John's proclamation about Jesus took on a powerful significance for his disciples that first moment that he revealed Jesus as the Lamb of God, John's words must resonate within each of us today. Now that the Christmas Season is complete and we enter Ordinary Time, we are invited to embrace Jesus' public ministry, with all His teachings and Paschal Sacrifice, as something extraordinary in our lives. We must approach His ministry with the same hope, enthusiasm, excitement, and anticipation that John's disciples experienced.

Reflect today on the moment when John the Baptist's disciples heard him proclaim, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Like them, strive to see Jesus with new eyes and hopeful anticipation as we begin Ordinary Time. This liturgical season marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, and it must also be a renewed beginning of His works in our life. Follow Him without reserve, allowing Him to take away our sins and share in His life and love. Amen.



Second Collection this Weekend January 17 and 18 for the Church in Latin America



Save the Date

Mardi Gras Parish Family Dinner

Tuesday February 17, 2026. More details to come.

Welcome back to all who have returned from the frigid cold of the more Northern states to the frigid cold of Florida. We have been back in our church for some time now post Hurricane Milton and Helene. With the generosity of so many parishioners and all the different trades we have our beautiful church repaired and ready to serve the faithful for years to come. For future storms we invested in flood panels to keep the surge of water from coming into the church, hopefully we will never have to use them.

The new organ is still being built and hopefully sometime this year we will have it installed. We are looking to have three parish dinners this year with the first one taking place on Fat Tuesday, our Mardi Gras celebration the night before Ash Wednesday. Lent is right around the corner. This year we have two young parishioners who are enrolled in the O.C.I.A. and they will receive the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist during the Easter Vigil. It is truly wonderful to see our parish continue to grow. If you are new to the parish, we invite you to register as a member of our parish family, registration forms are available at the entrance to the church next to the piano. Complete it and drop it off in the collection basket or hand it to me. If you email me, I will send you a form to complete. Registration helps in sacraments for you and your children and grandchildren. We are still looking to hire a part-time accountant/secretary for the parish. 25 hours at \$35.00 per hour and bridge toll and parking pass covered. Must have experience in QuickBooks. Let us use these quiet days of Ordinary Time to listen to the Word of God and follow where he leads us. Have a blessed week. Fr. Anthony

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!