



OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

Father Anthony Hewitt, JCL Pastor

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(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
Father Anthony email:	anthony.hewitt@olomcc.org

SOLEMNITY OF THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

JANUARY 5, 2025

Hurricanes Helene and Milton damaged our church, therefore,
Daily and Weekend Mass will continue to be celebrated in the **Parish Life Center (PLC)**.

**Second Collection today is for
Vocations/Seminary Support for the
Diocese of Venice**

*Thank you for sharing your time, talent
and treasure, may the Lord continue to
bless you abundantly.*

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

“When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” Matthew 2:1-2

The Magi were most likely from Persia, modern-day Iran.

They were men who regularly engaged in a study of the stars. They were not Jewish but were most likely aware of the popular belief of the Jewish people that a king would be born who would save them.

These Magi were called by God to encounter the Savior of the World. Interestingly, God used something very familiar to them as an instrument of their calling: the stars. It was among their belief that when someone of great importance was born, this birth was accompanied by a new star. When they saw this new, bright and brilliant star, they were filled with curiosity and hope. One of the most significant aspects of this story is that they responded. God called them using a star, and they chose to follow this sign, embarking on a long and arduous journey.

God often uses those things most familiar to us that are part of our daily life to send forth His calling. Recall, for example, that many of the Apostles were fishermen, and Jesus used their occupation to call them, making them “fishers of men.” He especially used the miraculous catch of fish to clearly indicate to them that they had a new calling.

In our own lives, God is constantly calling us to seek Him out and worship Him. He will often use some of the most ordinary parts of our lives to send forth that calling. How is He calling you? In what way is He sending you a star to follow? Many times, when God speaks, we ignore His voice. We must learn from these Magi and diligently respond when He calls. We must not hesitate and must seek to daily be attentive to the ways that God invites us to deeper trust, surrender and worship.

Reflect, today, upon God's call in your life. Are you listening? Are you responding? Are you ready and willing to abandon all else in life to serve His holy will? Seek Him, wait on Him and respond. Doing so will be the best decision you ever make.



Let us continue to serve through our actions. Amen.

Anniversary Masses in 2025 - Two Anniversary Masses will be offered in 2025, for married couples celebrating milestone anniversaries (25, 30, 35, 40 years, etc.). On February 1, 2025, an Anniversary Mass will be celebrated at St. Leo the Great Parish in Bonita Springs at 11:00 a.m., and on March 8, 2025, at St. Thomas More Parish in Sarasota, also at 11:00 a.m. Both events will include Mass celebrated by Bishop Frank J. Dewane, followed by a reception, and the availability of a photo with Bishop Dewane. Couples must register through their Parish; registration information is forthcoming and will be mailed to Parishes directly.

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 for further information. 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.

WARNING - Text/Email SCAM Alert - It has once again been brought to the attention of the Diocese of Venice that parishioners have received text/email messages from people pretending to be clergy – including Bishop Frank J. Dewane – or Parish/school staff, requesting donations in the form of gift cards and/or wire transfers. These messages, which are more frequent during the Christmas Season, often come from text/emails that look similar to official Diocesan/Parish/school numbers or accounts and often greet the recipient by name and have the priest's, Bishop's, or staff member's name in the "From" line and/or closing signature of the message. The SPAM often claims that the priest/Bishop/staff member is in need of gift cards or money to aid a sick child, relative, or parishioner. The message then asks the person to purchase gift cards/money and then to text/email the redemption code and PIN number. It is Diocesan policy that neither the Bishop, nor priests or staff request donations in the form of gift cards, PayPal, MoneyGram, etc. Without this awareness, some have responded to the spoofed messages, with consequences, including loss of funds. There is an established process in place on how parishioners can make donations and participate in the life of the Diocese, Parish, or school. If you receive such a SCAM text or email, please immediately contact the Diocesan/Parish/school directly!

Bereavement Retreat for Grieving Parents - The one-day retreat for parents who have lost a child that was cancelled due to recent hurricanes has been rescheduled for Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Saint Maximilian Kolbe Church, 1441 Spear Street, Port Charlotte. The retreat will be led by Deacon Henry de Mena, M.A. Registration is required; a flyer is attached with details and registration information. For more information contact Jim Gontis, gontis@dioceseofvenice.org

New, for Catholic Women! - Pope St. John Paul II coined the term "the feminine genius." Explore and expand *your* feminine genius and grow in faith in a new online community, designed specifically for Catholic women. *The Women's Formation Community* is a place where Catholic women come together to reflect on their unique charisms and vocation and receive ongoing intellectual formation among a vibrant community of like-minded women. A new offering from the Word on Fire Institute, the world's largest online Catholic community and formation program, *The Women's Formation Community* is currently available for **free** on a 30-day trial basis. Try it! To learn more, or to join, institute.wordonfire.org