

OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

Boca Grande, Florida

Father Anthony Hewitt, Pastor

Mailing Address:

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Mass Schedule:

Daily (except Saturday)

8:00 A.M.

Saturday Vigil

5:00 P.M.

Sunday

9:00 & 10:30 A.M.

Confessions: Saturday

By Appointment

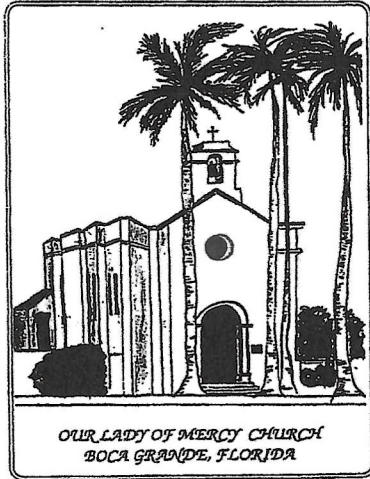
Web address:

ourladyofmercy.church

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TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

OCTOBER 15, 2023

NOTE FROM OUR PASTOR

Dear People of God,

Holy Hour is every Tuesday at 10:00 am. We will start with Exposition of the Blessed Eucharist, then silent adoration, and ending with Benediction at 11:00 am. This is a beautiful opportunity to spend time before our Lord and to offer prayers for our needs. It is my hope that we pray for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life during this time with Jesus, as well as the renewal of Church in the Eucharist the world over. May this time before Jesus bring us grace and healing. Attached are prayers you might want to pray at the Holy Hour.

Father Anthony

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

(Letter from Bishop Dewane)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

World Mission Sunday will be celebrated on October 22, 2023. This annual celebration joins Catholics worldwide into one community of Faith, inviting us to recommit ourselves to the Church's missionary call through prayer, participation in the Sunday Eucharist, and sacrifice. Pope Francis' message for World Mission Sunday reflects on the theme, "Hearts on fire, feet on the move," based on the story of the disciples who encounter Jesus on their way to Emmaus (cf Lk 24:13-35). Our Holy Father invites us to set out "to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist." Throughout the year, the Pontifical Mission Societies support the work of mission priests, religious Sisters, and Brothers, and lay pastoral leaders. These missionaries not only provide food, housing, education, and medical care to the most impoverished communities throughout the world; they offer hope and compassion.

The World Mission Sunday Collection, in the Diocese of Venice in Florida, will take place on the weekend of **October 21 and 22, 2023**. World Mission Sunday offers each one of us an opportunity to come together to support the life-giving presence of the Church among the poor and marginalized.

Thank you for your generosity to those in need and your prayers for those in mission territories. I take this opportunity to extend to you the assurances of my continued consideration, as well as my prayers.

WILL YOU GO TO THE WEDDING FEAST?

"On this mountain the Lord of Hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines...." Thus begins the first reading of today's Mass, a reading from the prophet Isaiah, who lived about seven centuries before Christ. In the literatures of most countries there is a longing for a future golden age (or sometimes nostalgia for a past one). Such a future time or place is called Utopia, a 'non-existent place' (from the Greek, *ou* = not, and *topos* = place). Practical people have always been wary of such thinking. "An acre in Middlesex," said Macaulay, "is better than a principality in Utopia." Isaiah's prophecy, however, was not based on wishful thinking but on God's promise, a promise that he expected God to fulfil, not in Utopia, but "on this mountain."

All God's promises are being fulfilled in Jesus; this is the faith of Christians. "The Son of God, Jesus Christ...was not 'Yes and No'; but in him it is always 'Yes'. For in him every one of God's promises is a Yes" (2 Corinthians 1:19-20). Isaiah's prophecy, like all the others, is fulfilled in him. He is the one who prepares the "messianic banquet" - a symbol of the joy of the "messianic kingdom", to be inaugurated by the Messiah. There is a special interest, then, when we hear Jesus begin a story with the words, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son." We will come back to the story. The Last Supper is presented in the gospels as the messianic banquet in anticipation. Taking the cup of wine he said, "I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Mt 26:29). That will be the messianic banquet. The Mass retains this meaning of the messianic banquet in anticipation.

The story in today's reading is about this. He calls it a wedding feast, which was the most joyful time in a Jew's life. But those who were called refused to come. So, he sent his servants out into the highways and byways to invite everyone they could find. "They gathered all whom they found, both good and bad." This is Jesus talking about his life's work. Many of his own people were resisting his invitation, so he was now inviting everyone, good and bad alike. This was no fiction. In real life he befriended the outcasts of society: Samaritans, tax-collectors and sinners, foreigners, pagans...and he invites even us!

What are we to make of the one who was then thrown out? He "was not wearing a wedding garment." That is to say, he had no appreciation of what he had been invited to. "Friend, why are you here?" the bridegroom asked him. Each of us has to imagine these words addressed to him or herself. It does not matter where we come from - the highways and the byways - but it does matter that we know where we are, and what we have been invited to. If we bring with us a spirit of arrogance and division, a spirit of cynicism and discouragement, it is like going to a wedding in our worst clothes. As Origen said, the man who was cast out "had not put off his old behavior."

A wedding is a celebration of love. This banquet is a love-feast. It is Christ joining himself in marriage to his Bride, the Church. St Paul took up this image. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Johann Tauler, the 14th-century confrère of Meister Eckhart, wrote about this union. "This love is so close, so interior, so secret, so tender and so ardent as to be beyond all comprehension. All the great theologians of Paris, with all their wisdom, could never express what it is. However much they wanted to speak about it they could only keep silence.... And yet any simple persons, if they have put all their trust in God and if they are humble, may feel and taste something of this love in the depths of their souls; though even such a person will never be able to grasp what it is or express it in words."

Every Tuesday at 10:00 am come spend an hour with Our Lord Jesus Christ with Exposition of the Holy Eucharist, Adoration, and Benediction.

Prayer to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist

My Lord Jesus Christ, Your Eucharistic presence teaches me how to love as you have loved me. In your great love for me you continue to give yourself, body, blood, soul, and divinity in this sacrament of your love. As I pray here in your Eucharistic presence, enkindle in me the fire of your gospel. Nourish me with your love and compassion, so that I may be your living presence to all I meet. Amen.

Prayer of Adoration

I adore you Jesus, true God, and true man, present in the holy Eucharist, kneeling before you and united in spirit with all the faithful on earth and all the saints in heaven. In gratitude for so great a blessing, I love you with all my heart, for you are worthy of all praise and adoration. Lord Jesus Christ, may I never offend you with my lack of love. May your Eucharistic presence refresh me in body and soul. Mary, Mother of the Eucharistic Lord, pray for me and obtain for me a greater love for Jesus. Amen.

Going Forth

Lord Jesus Christ, I have spent this time of adoration and prayer in your Eucharistic presence. Fill my life with love, joy, peace, and kindness. Transform me by the power of the Holy Spirit into a living image of your compassionate presence. May I go forth from this hour of adoration and prayer to be your hands, feet, and heart to all those I meet. Risen Jesus, may I be surrounded by the radiance of your love. Amen.