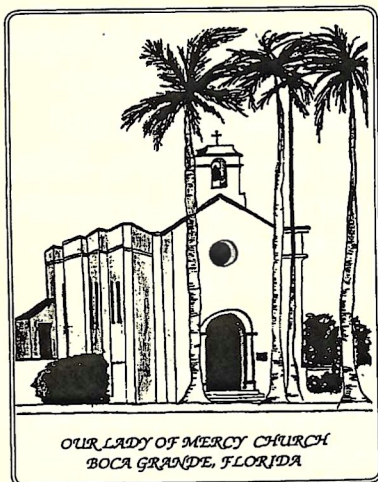




OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

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

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

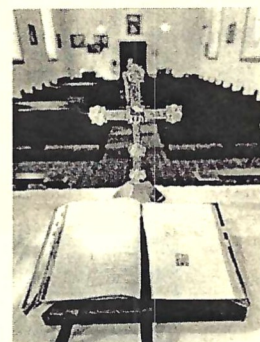
OCTOBER 26, 2025

Gospel of Luke Reflection

"Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector.'" Luke 18:10-11

What a sad prayer. Of course it wasn't even a prayer to God since the Pharisee "spoke this prayer to himself." The prayer of the tax collector, however, was a perfect model for all prayer. We read that the tax collector "stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'" Which prayer more resembles our own prayer? To honestly answer that question, let's examine both prayers.

First of all, the contrast of these two prayers is a contrast between humility and pride. The Pharisee was clearly full of pride. Pride blinds us from true self-knowledge. Saint Teresa of Ávila teaches us that the very first thing we must do on our journey to God is obtain self-knowledge through humility. Without that, we could never grow in holiness.



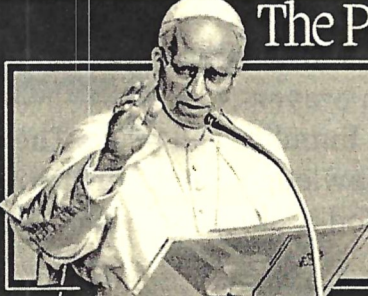
The sin of pride is obvious in the prayer of the Pharisee and, therefore, his lack of true self-knowledge is also evident. Note that even his physical posture of standing depicts pride. Throughout the Scriptures, kneeling, or even falling prostrate, is the disposition of the humble. In addition to standing, the Pharisee's prayer was a list of his own goodness. He very well may have fasted twice a week and paid tithes on his whole income. But his prayer suggests that he did this by his own effort. He did not ascribe those acts to the grace and strength of God, which means they were not true acts of charity. His prayer suggests that he doesn't need God in order to do good. This is also seen in the fact that he asks nothing of God. Instead, he simply thanks God for how good he is through his own effort. The result is that God gives him nothing, since he asked for nothing.

True prayer must begin with the humble recognition of our weakness and need for God. The tax collector expressed this humility by bowing his head to the ground, not even daring to look up to Heaven. This reveals he did not consider himself worthy of God's grace. Truth be told, he wasn't worthy of it. That's why God's grace is a mercy. It is all mercy in that He bestows that which we are not worthy to receive. And He only bestows it on those who know they are not worthy of it. The

words spoken by the tax collector are the perfect model of prayer because his words depict these truths. As a sinner, he doesn't deserve mercy but begs for God's grace as an act of God's mercy. When we pray, how do we pray? What is the disposition of our heart and for what do we pray? Begin by considering the physical position in which we pray. Though we can pray standing, sitting, kneeling or even lying down, there is something very good about kneeling or even lying prostrate if we can. It doesn't mean we have to do so the entire time we pray, but it is a good practice to kneel, bow our head or fall down prostrate before God at least for a moment each day.

When we pray, do we begin our prayer with humility? We begin the Mass by examining our conscience and confessing our sins. This is a good example of how to begin our prayer every time we pray. Humble ourselves by calling to mind our sins and weaknesses. Confess them to God and acknowledge the fact that, because of our sins, we are unworthy of God's mercy. Humility like this will help us to see ourselves as God sees us, and this will help us open ourselves to the grace we need from God to grow in holiness. Reflect, today, upon the humility found in the prayer of this tax collector. As we do, look at our own practice of prayer and discern whether we imitate this tax collector's disposition and prayer. Try to commit to physically humbling ourselves before our Lord every day. Kneel, bow our head, or fall down prostrate every day. When we do pray, beg for mercy as one who doesn't deserve anything from God. This is the humble truth on which all prayer must be based. The more we can humble ourselves this way, the more God will lift us up and pour forth His mercy upon us. Amen.

On Wednesday, November 5, we will celebrate a **Memorial Mass for Millie Murgia** at 11 am in the church. All are welcome to attend.



The Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention

NOVEMBER 2025

For the prevention of suicide

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.



Dilexi te - All are encouraged to read and embrace the first apostolic exhortation from Pope Leo XIV, *Dilexi te*, which invites all the faithful to renew their commitment and closeness to the poor. "God's love is vividly demonstrated by his protection of the weak and the poor," the Holy Father writes. Pope Leo goes further, reminding us of a simple truth: "... love for our neighbor is tangible proof of the authenticity of our love for God." The message from the Holy Father is clear: Love for our neighbor, and charity, is not optional. Rather, it is an essential element and requirement of our Catholic faith.



Catholic Mass on Veterans Day at Sarasota National Cemetery - An invitation is extended to all to attend a Catholic Mass on Veterans Day. Come to worship and also to honor USA Veterans on Tuesday, November 11, 2025 at the Sarasota National Cemetery, 9810 State Road 72, Sarasota. Opening ceremonies begin at 2:45 P.M. Ample parking and plenty of seating. View Bishop's video invitation [here](#). For additional graphics, click [here](#). Contact Rachel Powers at powers@dioceseofvenice or 941-486-4716 for more information.

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