



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

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, also known as the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, commemorates three historical events: the discovery of the True Cross in 326, its initial exaltation for public veneration in 335, and the recovery of the Cross from the Persians in 628. Nowadays, this feast also celebrates the boundless impact of Christ's Cross upon all of creation.

In 326, Constantine's mother, Saint Helena, a devout Christian, embarked on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Her mission was to identify significant sites from Christ's life and establish churches at those locations. In Jerusalem, she aimed to find the True Cross and to build a church over the sites of Mount Calvary and Jesus' tomb, known as the Holy Sepulcher. Upon identifying Mount Calvary and the empty tomb, she discovered three discarded and buried crosses. After an investigation, the local bishop confirmed they were the crosses used to crucify Jesus and the two thieves. Since Helena did not know which cross was Christ's, she arranged for a sick woman to touch all three. The woman was immediately healed upon touching one of them, indicating that it was the True Cross.



Following the discovery of the True Cross, Mount Calvary, and Christ's tomb, Emperor Constantine ordered the construction of a church to encompass these sites and house the True Cross. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was erected and dedicated on September 13, 335. As the legend goes, the following day, Christ's Cross was brought outside the newly built church for the faithful to venerate. Thus, the first showing, or Exaltation of the Holy Cross, might have occurred on September 14, 335. Over the next three centuries, because liturgical celebrations were not widely centralized, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was likely celebrated annually in Jerusalem and varied in other ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

The core of our celebration is not the physical wood of the Cross or the holy sites where Jesus died and was buried. Our primary focus is the infinite love shown through the selfless and perfect

Sacrifice of the Son of God and the boundless mercy that has poured forth upon the world as a result. The Cross itself is a cruel instrument of torture and death. The fact that it is now the symbol of God's perfect love only further magnifies that love and showcases God's infinite power to use the worst for the best: to use death to bring life and to transform the greatest act of cruelty ever known into the greatest act of mercy ever bestowed upon the world.

The Cross of Christ must permeate each one of us, transforming us and making us new. First and foremost, this happens when we open ourselves to the infinite mercy of God flowing from that selfless Sacrifice. It also occurs when we allow every one of our sufferings, the injustices we endure, the crosses, hardships, and most undesirable aspects of our lives to share in the redemptive power of Christ. We do this when we embrace Jesus' commands to share in His sufferings, unite them with His own, and allow Him to bear an abundance of good fruit through us. Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:24-25). Amen.

Second Collection Next Weekend September 20-21

August 27, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the violent conflict in Gaza continues, a grave humanitarian crisis is unfolding, with many Christians and innocent people struggling to survive. With this devastating situation in mind, I write to you in appeal for our brothers and sisters in need in the midst of these destructive events.

The Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has expressed his concern with the situation, saying, "I am following with great concern the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, where the civilian population is suffering from severe hunger and remains exposed to violence and death." Our Catholic Faith calls each of us to care for those in need, and, at this time in particular, for those who are suffering in the wake of this ongoing tragedy.

Recognizing the need of those who have been so severely impacted by the conflict in the region, the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked Dioceses throughout the country to take up a special collection to assist with humanitarian aid in Gaza. Within the Diocese of Venice, the collection will be taken on the weekend of **September 20-21, 2025**

Your generosity and your prayers for the people of Gaza are deeply appreciated. May Almighty God bless you and your families. Please continue to pray for peace throughout the world, particularly in the middle east.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane

Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida

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 for sharing your Time, Talent, and Treasure!

