



OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH

Boca Grande, Florida

Father Anthony Hewitt, JCL Pastor

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 181, Boca Grande, Florida 33921
(941) 964 - 2254

Mass_Schedule:

Monday-Friday

8:00 A.M.

Saturday Vigil

5:00 P.M.

Sunday

9:00 & 10:30 A.M.

Parish website address:

ourladyofmercy.church

OnlineGiving:

<https://ourladyofmercy.church>

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 17, 2024

LENTEN ACTIVITIES

Tuesday Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament 10:00 am

Last Stations of the Cross on Friday at 4:00 pm

Friday March 22 Individual Confession 4:30 pm- 8:00 pm in the Parish Life Center
Saturday March 23 Individual Confession 9:00 am – 12 noon in the Parish Life Center

Fifth Sunday of Lent reflection: What within us braces up our faith? Where might we need external support? Do we set aside time to seek God's law within our heart? What seeds is God bringing to life in us? In the secret recesses of our hearts, show us where you have planted your law, so that we might know what must be healed. Let your mercy wash over us, and buoy us up with your love, so that we might follow you faithfully throughout our lives.

Parish CFA goal \$105,000. (\$23,240.00 raised so far).

The **CFA** Catholic Faith Appeal Donations in action throughout the Diocese of Venice in Florida. Catholic Charities strives to create a safe and nurturing environment where individuals can regain stability and work towards a better tomorrow by providing affordable and transitional housing solutions. In addition to shelter, a wide array of support services are offered, including case management, financial assistance, and life skills development. Your gift to the 2024 CFA supplements the funding of these services.

HOLY CHRISM MASS – EPIPHANY CATHEDRAL

The Chrism Mass, which takes place during Holy Week every year, will be held at 10:30 a.m., **Tuesday, March 26** at Epiphany Cathedral, 350 Tampa Ave. W., in Venice. During this Mass, Bishop Frank J. Dewane will bless the Holy Oils which are used in the administration of the Sacraments at each parish throughout the year. Priests and Deacons celebrating 25 and 50 years of Ordination are recognized at this Mass. **Fr. Anthony, our Pastor, will be celebrating his 25th year of ordination.** All are encouraged to attend in support of our clergy and to participate in this important Holy Week celebration.

UPCOMING EVENT – SAVE-THE-DATE:

- April 12th – Barbecue – Parish Life Center

Parish Dinner – The last Parish Dinner of the season is a BBQ dinner scheduled for April 12th. All parishioners are invited. Dinner will be 5-7pm in the Parish Life Center and BBQ pulled pork and BB chicken will be provided by parishioner Charles Devlin. Water and sodas will be provided, BYOB. A \$20 donation is requested, cash or checks accepted at the door. Seating is limited to 120. Please RSVP in advance by contacting Sandy Hemm at 937-418-1881 or sandyhemm@yahoo.com. Volunteers needed for the night of the event and to provide cookies/bars. To volunteer please contact Angela Steffan at 941-855-1277 or aksteffan@gmail.com.

March 17: Saint Patrick, Bishop—Optional Memorial

c. 387–c. 460 or 493 (Actual dates are uncertain)
Patron Saint of Ireland
Invoked against snake bites

I, Patrick, a sinner, a most simple countryman, the least of all the faithful and most contemptible to many...was taken captive. I was at that time about sixteen years of age. I did not, indeed, know the true God; and I was taken into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of people...And there the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God... ~Confession of Saint Patrick

Patrick was born in Roman-ruled Britain to loving parents, perhaps as an only child. His father was a senator and a deacon, and his grandfather was a married priest. Despite his Christian upbringing and the clerical influences of his father and grandfather, Patrick struggled with his faith, stating later that when he was young, he “did not know the true God.” This testimony, and the quotes to follow, come from his own hand, preserved in his *Confessio*, Saint Patrick’s short autobiographical confession about the workings of God’s grace in his life and ministry.

At the age of sixteen, Patrick’s life took a dramatic turn for the worse; at least, that’s how it first appeared. Gaelic slave traders from Ireland arrived by ship and raided Patrick’s village. Though young women and children were often their preferred targets, a young, healthy boy could also profit them. Patrick was captured and “was taken into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of people.”

At the time of Patrick’s captivity, Ireland was a pagan country made up of more than a hundred small, family-based clans governed by local chiefs. Most clans united with other clans to form several larger kingdoms. Their religious beliefs were a mixture of polytheism, in which gods were honored and called upon, and animism, in which the natural world was believed to contain spirits who could be communicated with. Their druids (priests) engaged in demonic spells, incantations, curses, and dark magic.

It was Patrick’s conviction that, because he and his fellow slaves had drawn away from God and did not keep God’s precepts, the Lord brought down upon them the “fury of his being,” permitting them to be scattered throughout Ireland as slaves. But God’s just punishments are always inflicted upon his children for the purpose of converting their hearts, which is exactly what happened to Patrick. “And there the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who had regard for my insignificance and pitied my youth and ignorance.”

While in captivity, Patrick was made a swineherd for one of the clans and spent much of his time in the forests, enduring the snow, ice, and rain. But his time alone, experiencing the suffering and loneliness of captivity, greatly benefited his soul. At first, Patrick didn't know God. Then, he began to think about God. Then he began to speak to God. Within six years, he was praying a hundred prayers every day and a hundred prayers every night. As a result, Patrick testified that "the Spirit was burning in me at that time." After receiving chastisements from God for his lack of faith, Patrick's heart was changed and filled with gratitude for all that God had done in his soul. He realized that his only "way to repay Him is to exalt Him and confess His wonders before every nation under heaven."

Once Patrick had converted, God's plan for his life changed. While asleep one night, Patrick heard a voice say to him, "Soon you will depart for your home country," and shortly afterward, "Behold, your ship is ready." By an intuition of grace, Patrick knew what he had to do. He escaped and ran 200 miles (about 184 modern miles). God directed him on the way and led him to a ship where Patrick convinced the captain to let him board. Three days later, they were back in Britain on a remote shore. Patrick and some pagans disembarked from the ship and began a twenty-eight-day journey through the wilderness to find civilization. On the journey, the pagans mocked Patrick's faith, but when they ran out of food, Patrick prayed, and God miraculously provided them with a herd of pigs. The pagans were impressed, and Patrick won their respect. This was the first of many times that God used Patrick to change hardened hearts. Then, Patrick was reunited with his parents at last.

Back in Britain, Patrick continued to pray, study Scripture, and learn the Catholic faith. His prayer led him into deep union with God. He had dreams and visions, including a vision in which he heard the voice of the Irish say to him, "We beg you, holy youth, that you shall come and shall walk again among us." Patrick knew that he had to return, not as a slave, but as a missionary. Despite opposition from his family, Patrick was determined to answer God's call.

Since Patrick had learned much about Irish culture and language, he was an ideal candidate for missionary work. After years of study, probably in France, he was ordained a bishop and sent by the Church back to Ireland to convert the pagans, his captors, to Christ. And that he did. It was by the courageous witness of his character, aided perhaps by miraculous signs and unwavering faith, that one of the kings converted. After being successful in one kingdom, Bishop Patrick moved to another. When he arrived in a new territory, he always sought to convert the local king and chiefs first. Once they were open to the Gospel, the people followed.

During the fewer than thirty years that Patrick evangelized the people of Ireland, he endured many hardships, including another short captivity, the constant danger of being killed, and staunch opposition from the druid spiritual leaders. But he also converted countless pagans, baptized, and confirmed "so many thousands," built churches, established religious life, ordained native clergy, and changed pagan Ireland as a whole into one of the greatest Catholic nations on earth.

Saint Patrick's influence on Ireland was so profound that many later biographers have attributed numerous legends to him. Though most of these legends cannot be verified, the stories highlight the remarkable spiritual transformation of a hostile pagan nation by the faith and courage of one man. God humbled Patrick, changed his heart, set him on fire, and then used that fire to purify many thousands of people. In the centuries that followed, those converts went forth to the ends of the earth, bringing the same Gospel to others that Patrick first preached to them.

As we honor Saint Patrick, seek to imitate him by joining him in his initial humiliation. See your sins and pray that God purifies you by any means necessary. Convert your heart. Increase your daily prayer. Allow your heart to become inflamed by God's Spirit. Say "Yes" to Him when He calls and go where He sends you. Like Saint Patrick, God wants to send you on a mission, but He cannot do so until you fully convert your heart to His.

JOB OPENING AT OUR LADY OF MERCY

Our Lady of Mercy is looking to hire a part-time experienced individual with an accounting background as Accounting Assistant. This position serves an Accounting Assistant under the direction of the Pastor. This position will handle various aspects of recordkeeping and administrative work both financial and non-financial. A degree in Accounting or Business is preferred and / or possess comparable experience of at least 5 yrs.

You can visit the Diocese's website: dioceseofvenice.org > click the "employment" tab at very bottom of page and that takes you out to the career site. Click on "City" Boca Grande. The website will give you full details of overview, description, and requirements.

You may also send resume, and cover letter with salary objective to Rev Anthony Hewitt at anthony.hewitt@olomcc.org and reference "Accounting Assistant" or mail directly to Rev. Anthony Hewitt, Post Office Box 181, Boca Grande, FL 3392.

GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION

March 11, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Good Friday, the Catholic Church gathers to remember the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as we await His resurrection on Easter Sunday. At the same time our thoughts turn to the Holy Lands where the life, death and resurrection of Jesus took place.

Every year on Good Friday, a collection is taken in Catholic Churches throughout the world to help Christians in the Holy Land. In this difficult time of war, we are called to stand in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land, and in doing so we become instruments of peace to this troubled part of the world. This special Collection assists in sustaining Christianity in the Holy Land. Funds help minister to the Faithful in parishes, provide formation and education, build homes, provide senior care facilities, create jobs, and feed the hungry. The sacred shrines in the Holy Land are maintained with this help so pilgrims can follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

The Holy Land Collection in the Diocese of Venice will be held on **Good Friday, March 29, 2024**. In these times of crisis, your support is necessary to meet the basic needs of the People of God still living in this Land and to maintain a Christian presence where the Church has Her roots. May God bless you for your consideration and generosity!

This opportunity is taken to extend to you my continued consideration as well as my prayers. Have a Blessed Holy Week!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida