



# **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:	<a href="http://ourladyofmercy.church">ourladyofmercy.church</a>
OnlineGiving:	<a href="https://ourladyofmercy.church">https://ourladyofmercy.church</a>

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## **SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE**

**NOVEMBER 26, 2023**

### **ALL SOULS INTENTION ENVELOPES**

During the month of November, the church remembers those loved ones who have gone before us in death marked with the sign of faith. The All-Souls envelopes are available in your envelope packets and on the table at the entrance to the church. List the names of family and friends you would like to have remembered by the priest at all the Masses in November. The envelopes can be put in the collection basket or dropped off at the parish office. May the angels lead our loved ones into paradise.

### **A FEW THOUGHTS FROM THE PASTOR...**

There will be **no adoration and benediction on Tuesday November 28 at 10 am** due to the annual Diocese of Venice priest convocation. However, on Tuesday November 28 and Wednesday November 29 there will be adoration from 2:00 pm until 4:00 pm each day. It is hoped that you will be able to join the priests in prayer before our Lord on these two days. Regular adoration time will return on Tuesday December 5.

Thank you to everyone who assisted in any way in making the anniversary/birthday/farewell party for Father Carosella such a wonderful success. The sharing of stories brought laughter, joy, and love from all those who attended. We give thanks to God for Father Carosella being a good and holy priest these past six decades and pray for his continued good health for many years to come. *Father Anthony*

The First Sunday of Advent begins at the vigil Mass on Saturday December 2. As a gift to parishioners, a copy of the book *Beautiful Eucharist* by Matthew Kelly will be available for each to read during the four weeks of advent. Please take and enjoy this magnificent book of reflections on the life-giving presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

### **RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS**

Today, men and women of Religious Communities past the age of seventy outnumber younger religious by nearly three to one. For most of their lives, elderly religious worked tirelessly during their days of active ministry, helping the neediest among us, often for minimal pay. Today, they need our help. Religious communities find it increasingly difficult to provide for their needs, due to rising health care costs, decreasing income and diminishing retirement savings.

Each year, the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) provides support through the annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious by providing financial assistance to religious communities for medications, nursing care and much more. Additionally, they support educational programming, services and resources that enable religious communities to evaluate and prepare for long-term retirement needs.

Parishes throughout the Diocese of Venice will conduct the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious the **weekend of December 9 and 10, 2023**. Your support provides day to day care of elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. Thank you for your generosity towards these men and women who have given their lives to serve our Lord, the Church and Her Faithful.

I take this opportunity to extend to each of you the assurances of my continued consideration, as well as my prayers for you and your family. Have a Blessed Advent Season.

Sincerely yours in Christ, Frank J. Dewane  
Bishop of the Diocese of Venice in Florida

### **NOVEMBER 30: SAINT ANDREW THE APOSTLE—FEAST**

c. 5/10–c. 60/80

Patron Saint of boatmen, butchers, farm workers, fish dealers, fishermen, happy marriages, maidens, miners, paralytics, pregnant women, ropemakers, sailmakers, sailors, singers, spinsters, textile workers, water carriers, and women who wish to become mothers. Invoked against cramps, convulsions, dysentery, fever, gout, neck pain, paralysis, sore throats, and whooping cough.

Saint Andrew, one of the Twelve Apostles, was most likely born in Bethsaida, just north of the Sea of Galilee, in what is today the Golan Heights. As a young man, he and his brother, Peter, worked as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. John's Gospel reveals that Andrew was a disciple of Saint John the Baptist prior to his encounter with Jesus. This shows that Andrew was searching and took his faith seriously. As is recorded in John 1:35–42, Andrew and another disciple were listening to John preach in the desert. As they listened to him, the Baptist saw Jesus in the distance and prophetically exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God." After Andrew and the other disciple inquired of Jesus where He was staying, Jesus invited them to follow Him by saying, "Come, and you will see." They then spent the rest of the day with Jesus. Andrew is, therefore, the first of the Apostles to be called and to respond to that call. For that reason, the Greek Church calls Andrew the "*Protokletos*," meaning, "the first called."

Shortly after this encounter, Andrew becomes an apostle to his brother, Simon Peter. He tells Simon, "We have found the Messiah." This statement says much about Andrew's interior spiritual sensibilities. First, he clearly understood that John the Baptist's ministry was special. Andrew followed John the Baptist, discerning that he was a prophet. When John points Andrew to Jesus, Andrew immediately follows Him, engages Him, and believes in Him. It's clearly an act of supernatural revelation that enabled Andrew to profess his faith in Jesus as the Messiah within a day of meeting Him. And the fact that he wanted his brother to share in this discovery shows that this grace was overflowing.

The Gospels of Matthew and Mark present Jesus' first encounter with Andrew and Peter a bit differently, although those passages are not contradictory. "As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Then they abandoned their nets and followed him" (Mark 1:16–18). It's possible that after Andrew's and Peter's first encounters with Jesus, they allowed their discovery of the Messiah to sprout within their hearts, continued their work as fishermen, and awaited Jesus' definitive call.

In this passage, Jesus gives that definitive call, and the brothers do not hesitate to abandon their trade to become His full-time disciples.

Peter and Andrew appear to have been living in Capernaum at that time, a small fishing village on the north end of the Sea of Galilee. “On leaving the synagogue he entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John” (Mark 1:29). Upon entering the house of Simon and Andrew, Jesus cured Simon’s mother-in-law of a fever. That house in Capernaum then became a base of operation for Jesus’ ministry throughout Galilee.

In Mark 13:3–4, Andrew is among the Apostles who privately asked what Jesus meant when He predicted the destruction of the Temple. Jesus answered by giving a discourse about coming persecutions and the end of time. John Chapter 6 begins with Jesus going up a mountain north of the Sea of Galilee with a large crowd following. He asks Philip where they can get enough food for everyone. Philip responds, “Two hundred days’ wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little [bit]” (John 6:7). Andrew, however, responds with a spark of faith, stating, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?” (John 6:9). It appears that this little faith, which flows with a small amount of hope that the five barley loaves and two fish might be of use, is enough for Jesus to perform the miracle of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.

In John 12:20–22, Andrew and Philip mediate a request from the Greeks to Jesus. The Greeks wanted to see Jesus, so Philip and Andrew—who probably knew Greek—were the ones to present this request to the Lord. This is a prefiguration of their role in mediating the Word of God to the world, including the Gentiles. Andrew’s familiarity with the Greek language and culture is also evidenced by the fact that his name is of Greek origin, not Hebrew.

Other than these passages, Andrew is only mentioned a few other times in the New Testament, including in the listing of the Apostles (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14). The Acts of the Apostles relates that Andrew was among those who, after Jesus’ Ascension, went into Jerusalem, entered an upper room in a home, and “devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers” (Acts 1:14). Andrew was then involved with picking Matthias as Judas’ replacement and was present in that same upper room during Pentecost. Peter’s activity after Pentecost is well documented in Acts, and it can be presumed that his brother Andrew was also active.

Though Andrew’s missionary work after Pentecost is not recorded in the New Testament, later traditions emerged from the late second or early third century. According to those traditions, Andrew traveled to Scythia, a region that today makes up part of Ukraine, southern Russia, and parts of Kazakhstan. He is also believed to have founded the Church in Byzantium, which became known as Constantinople when Emperor Constantine made it the capital of the Roman Empire. Today it is the city of Istanbul, Turkey. Byzantium-Constantinople became the central Church for the East, the Greeks. Many have seen it as significant that Peter founded the Church of Rome in the West, and his brother founded the Church in the East, revealing the unity of East and West. In addition to other legends that Andrew preached in Asia Minor and the Black Sea region, his life is said to have ended in the city of Patras, Greece, where he was crucified on an X-shaped cross. Peter is believed to have requested to be crucified upside-down because he did not deem himself worthy of dying on a cross like Jesus. Andrew is said to have requested the X-shaped cross for the same reason.

According to that tradition, which comes to us in a second-century document called *Acts of Andrew*, Proconsul Ægeates was visiting the city of Patras, where Andrew was preaching. Ægeates sought to put an end to the new Christian religion and to convince Christians to honor the Roman gods and offer sacrifice to them.

When Andrew heard of this, he ran to meet Ægeates, telling him that the Son of God “came on account of the salvation of men.” Of the Roman gods he said, “...these idols are not only not gods, but also most shameful demons, and hostile to the human race...” Ægeates was outraged but carried out a long dialogue in which he inquired about Jesus’ death on the Cross, suggesting that Jesus’ death was foolish and was because of Jesus’ false doctrine.

Andrew, however, proclaimed to him the true mystery of the Cross in which Christ embraced it freely so that He could win the salvation of those who would believe in Him. By the end of their conversation, Ægeates ordered Andrew’s crucifixion. Saint Andrew did not see Christ’s Cross as an instrument of torture and death but as a glorious means of eternal salvation. He saw his own suffering and death as a sharing not only in Christ’s sufferings but also in Christ’s redemption. Thus, he ran to that cross and embraced it wholeheartedly.

As we honor this Apostle of Christ, ponder not only the legends about his final days but especially his initial conversion. Like Saint Andrew, we must always be searching, as he was searching when he followed John the Baptist. Like Saint Andrew, we must also recognize Christ as the Messiah every time He comes to us by grace. Our response to Him must be immediate and wholehearted, ready to go wherever He leads.

### **OUR ANNUAL SHOE BOX**

As is our custom each year, we have placed a shoe box on the table in the rear of the church for donations for Christmas gifts to the children of the migrant families of St. Paul’s Parish of Arcadia. Please make checks out to: Catholic Charities of DeSoto County. Do not make check out to Our Lady of Mercy. Thank you for your generous support.

### **FOOD PANTRY**

As the holiday seasons are quickly approaching, please remember the food pantry at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Grove City. They are always in need of non-perishable (and unopened) food items. Please place donated items in the plastic bin under the table inside the church. To give you some helpful hints, they are in need of canned vegetables, pasta sauce, pasta, (very much in need of pasta) and mac and cheese. Thank you for your support.

### **PRAYER FOR PEACE**

Lord of all, in this time of strife and suffering, we come before you with heavy hearts, seeking your divine intervention. We lift up to you the victims of the Holy Land conflict, asking for your mercy and healing touch.

Prince of Peace, grant solace to those who are in pain, strength to those who are weary and hope to those who are in despair. Let your guiding light shine upon all, that they may find a path to reconciliation and understanding.

Mary, Mother of Mercy, wrap your mantle of love around those who are suffering, and intercede for them before your Son. May your gentle compassion be a source of comfort and consolation. We implore you, O God, to inspire leaders and all involved to seek avenues of peace and dialogue. Soften hearts that are hardened by hatred and division and instill in them a desire for unity and harmony.

St. Francis of Assisi, patron of peace, pray for us. Help us to be instruments of your peace in this troubled world. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.