



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

OnlineGiving

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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

OCTOBER 22, 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. Prayers of Adoration may be found on the table in back of church.

Father Anthony

JESUS CAME TO SERVE

Praise some powerful person for qualities he or she does not have, and you insult them in a subtle way. Flattery has been called the politeness of contempt. But it works! Only a very rock-like person could remain unmoved when a warm gush of flattery is playing over them. Most people suspend all critical self-examination at such a moment.

The flattery of the Pharisees was more subtle. They probably knew that Jesus could not be flattered by lies, so they tried to flatter him with the truth. "We know you are afraid of no one, and that a person's rank means nothing to you!" But there was treachery in every word. They would entice him to bravado in speech, and then get him into serious trouble with the authorities for what he said. Taxation of Jews by the Romans (who were the occupying powers) was a burning issue; and the Romans had dealt summarily with Judas the Gaulonite who tried to raise resistance to it. Here then were these Pharisees trying to walk Jesus to the same fate. They brought some Herodians with them, to make it a perfect trap. If Jesus answered yes to their question, he would be branded a collaborator; if he answered no he would be in deep trouble with the Herodians, who were collaborators with the Romans. But he was ready.

What strikes you more and more in the gospels is the sheer intelligence of Jesus. His answer was full of wit and insight. It was full of significance for the future too. The notion of separation between religion and politics (or, as it came to be known, the separation of Church and State) was unknown before him. Today we see the trouble that the lack of such a distinction makes in countries with Muslim majorities, and even in countries with Muslim minorities.

This saying of his, "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar," was useful from the start: it was of great importance to the early Christians, because they were often accused of disloyalty to the state; see, for example, Acts 17:7: "These people...have broken every one of Caesar's edicts." St Paul wrote an exhortation to loyalty to the state (Romans 13:1-7, where he even says that the taxman is doing God's work!). Clearly there is a tradition of civil loyalty that goes back to Jesus himself.

But passing beyond the particular question of taxes, it is of the greatest interest to see how Jesus faced people in authority. His way is ultimately the model for how we ourselves are to face authority, as we do every day, in one way or another. It is not a pleasant thing when a policeman approaches you and says, "Documents!" It is like being asked what right you have to exist. Jesus was asked precisely this kind of question one day in the Temple. He was approached by "the chief priests, the teachers of the Law and the Jewish authorities." He was on their ground. "By what authority do you do these things...?" they demanded. (He had been teaching, which was their job.) But he was not one to bow down before authority. He put a perfect fix on them.

Jesus defied human authorities when he had to, but he was not against authority in principle. "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." People who are against authority in principle are often simply looking for authority themselves. But the ultimate words on authority are surely his: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."

PASTOR'S ANNIVERSARY

Dear people of God,

Please remember me and my brother priests who were ordained to the sacred priesthood on this day, October 22, 1999, in your prayers. Twenty-four years have gone by very quickly. With prayer and trust in our Lord the journey has been extraordinary. Two of my brother priests have sadly passed away: Fr. Ernest Fears, Fr. Dan Smith. I remember them often. Life as we all know is so very precious. May we live our lives to the fullest while serving our Lord in the vineyard for the salvation of souls. We continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life for the sacraments to be available for those who will come after us.

God bless,
Father Anthony

CHURCH ROOF UPDATE

The new roof on the church has been completed. This new metal roof will provide the church building protection from any future hurricanes to come. With the prayers and generosity of the parishioners, this building project has been accomplished in just over a year.

We continue to pray for our brothers and sisters who are still on their path to recovery and continue to rebuild their homes and their lives post Hurricane Ian.

Our Lady of Mercy, pray for us.