



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:	https://ourladyofmercy.church

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

OCTOBER 29, 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

ALL SAINTS HOLY DAY

Wednesday, November 1, is All Saints, a Holy Day of Obligation. The Mass will be at 9:00 am.

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 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

The earliest certain observance of a feast in honor of all the saints is an early fourth-century commemoration of "all the martyrs." In the early seventh century, after successive waves of invaders plundered the catacombs, Pope Boniface IV gathered up some 28 wagonloads of bones and reinterred them beneath the Pantheon, a Roman temple dedicated to all the gods. The pope rededicated the shrine as a Christian church. According to Venerable Bede, the pope intended "that the memory of all the saints might in the future be honored in the place which had formerly been dedicated to the worship not of gods but of demons" (*On the Calculation of Time*).

But the rededication of the Pantheon, like the earlier commemoration of all the martyrs, occurred in May. Many Eastern Churches still honor all the saints in the spring, either during the Easter season or immediately after Pentecost.

How the Western Church came to celebrate this feast, now recognized as a solemnity, in November is a puzzle to historians. The Anglo-Saxon theologian Alcuin observed the feast on November 1 in 800, as did his friend Arno, Bishop of Salzburg. Rome finally adopted that date in the ninth century.

This feast first honored martyrs. Later, when Christians were free to worship according to their consciences, the Church acknowledged other paths to sanctity. In the early centuries, the only criterion was popular acclaim, even when the bishop's approval became the final step in placing a commemoration on the calendar. The first papal canonization occurred in 993; the lengthy process now required to prove extraordinary sanctity took form in the last 500 years. Today's feast honors the obscure as well as the famous—the saints each of us have known.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

The Church has encouraged prayer for the dead from the earliest times as an act of Christian charity. "If we had no care for the dead," Augustine noted, "we would not be in the habit of praying for them." Yet pre-Christian rites for the deceased retained such a strong hold on the superstitious imagination that a liturgical commemoration was not observed until the early Middle Ages, when monastic communities began to mark an annual day of prayer for the departed members.

In the middle of the 11th century, Saint Odilo, abbot of Cluny, France, decreed that all Cluniac monasteries offer special prayers and sing the Office for the Dead on November 2, the day after the feast of All Saints. The custom spread from Cluny and was finally adopted throughout the Roman Church.

The theological underpinning of the feast is the acknowledgment of human frailty. Since few people achieve perfection in this life but, rather, go to the grave still scarred with traces of sinfulness, some period of purification seems necessary before a soul comes face-to-face with God. The Council of Trent affirmed this purgatory state and insisted that the prayers of the living can speed the process of purification. Superstition easily clung to the observance. Medieval popular belief held that the souls in purgatory could appear on this day in the form of witches, toads or will-o'-the-wisps. Graveside food offerings supposedly eased the rest of the dead. Observances of a more religious nature have survived. These include public processions or private visits to cemeteries and decorating graves with flowers and lights. This feast is observed with great fervor in Mexico.

Whether or not one should pray for the dead is one of the great arguments which divide Christians. Appalled by the abuse of indulgences in the Church of his day, Martin Luther rejected the concept of purgatory. Yet prayer for a loved one is, for the believer, a way of erasing any distance, even death. In prayer we stand in God's presence in the company of someone we love, even if that person has gone before us into death.

CELEBRATE FATHER CAROSELLA

All are invited to a celebration of Father Carosella's 60th ordination anniversary, 85th Birthday, and to honor 35 years of service as pastor of Our Lady of Mercy church. An Italian dinner is planned in the **Parish Life Center on November 17th at 6:00pm**. There is a \$30 charge that includes drinks. Please RSVP to Ken Parker by November 12th, kbparker@gmail.com or 813-760-8968. Volunteers needed for setup, cleanup, signing, or hostess during the event. Ken Parker will collect volunteer names at time of sign-up.