



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH  
BOCA GRANDE, FLORIDA

# **OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH**

## **Boca Grande, Florida**

Father Anthony Hewitt, Pastor

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 181, Boca Grande, Florida 33921

(941) 964 - 2254

### 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](http://ourladyofmercy.church)

OnlineGiving

[https://dioceseofvenice.org/ways-to-give/parish-](https://dioceseofvenice.org/ways-to-give/parish-donations-online/)

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**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**SEPTEMBER 3, 2023**

## **SUFFERING**

The word 'suffer' comes from two Latin words, 'sub' (under) and 'ferre' (to bear). There is a sense of supporting something from underneath. It is an active vigorous word. It lets you imagine some human being who has taken up his or her burden of pain and is bravely carrying it along.

There are related words that seem to look at the matter from a different side – *from the outside*. The Latin origins of these words tell the story: 'depression' ('to weigh down'), 'grief' (from 'gravis' meaning 'heavy'), 'affliction' ('to be struck down') .... These words seem to look at human life not from the point of view of the sufferer but from the point of view of the burdens that bear down on us. They suggest weakness and defeat on the part of the sufferer.

If it were only about words, how easy it would be! But it is about us. We have two ways of living with suffering: we can take it on our shoulders and try to walk with it; or we can just sit down under it and feel like victims. No one pretends that either way is easy. If it were easy, it wouldn't be suffering. Our instinct is to run away from suffering, and when we cannot escape from it, to treat it as an enemy that has defeated us; then we are in danger of giving way to complaining and self-pity. This is the harder way in the end: harder for ourselves and for everyone around us. The wisdom of the Gospel tells us to face our suffering, not to treat it like an enemy but like a friend, to learn from it, to let it draw us away from self-centered thoughts and feelings, and ultimately to see it as a sharing in the Passion of Christ.

There is a striking phrase in John's gospel, "You will have sorrow, but your sorrow *will turn into joy*" (16:20). He did not say "Your sorrow will be replaced by joy." Your joy will somehow be born out of the heart of your sorrow. Then it will be able to endure; it will not see sorrow as a threat and an enemy. It will not be at the mercy of sorrowful circumstances. Sorrow itself will give birth to a strange deep kind of joy. A great meditation teacher was weeping at the death of her daughter. Someone expressed surprise that such a person would weep. "Yes, I weep," she said, "but every tear is a jewel." Her suffering was real suffering, yet it did not lead her into desolation, but into greater depth.

"The word of the Lord has meant for me insult, derision, all day long," said Jeremiah (today's first reading). For Jesus it meant crucifixion. But neither of them turned back, neither of them was silenced.

Jeremiah said, "There seemed to be a fire burning in my heart." Jesus said, "I came to bring fire to the earth" (Luke 12:49).

It was that inner urgency that drove them forward in the teeth of great suffering. It was inner but it was also a call from beyond. We are inclined to see these as opposites How could it be both? In experience that is just how it is.

There is a clear expression of it in the *Confessions* of St Patrick (another man who suffered for the word of God). "I saw God praying within me, and I was as it were, inside my own body, and I heard Him above me - that is, above my inner self."

Jesus did not turn back from death; he went through the heart of it, and it was transformed into resurrection. "Your Son the royal path of suffering trod," says the hymn. Our faith does not hold us back from life or life's sorrows, but it enables them to be a royal path to God. (W.H. Auden)

### **ANNUAL COLLECTION FOR CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA**

The Catholic University of America is unique among universities in the United States. As the national university of the Catholic Church, founded by the Bishops of this country, the University provides an education based in Catholic intellectual tradition and Catholic values, to over 5,700 students. Its motto - "God Is My Light" - has guided the University in educating students who go on to serve the Church and the nation and to transform the world. In addition to its academic curriculum, the Catholic University offers training initiatives that help Dioceses and Parishes in responding to the most pressing needs of the Faithful.

A few examples of how the University is serving the Church include a master's program in Ecclesial Administration and Management, as well as a credentialing program that prepares recent graduates to serve as campus ministers. The Diocese of Venice, along with Dioceses across the United States, will take up a collection for the Catholic University of America the **weekend of September 9 and 10, 2023**. These funds will assist with scholarships to financially needy students to ensure that a Catholic University education remains affordable to students who seek a faith-based higher education.

May God Bless you for your generosity and thank you for your support of the Catholic University of America. This opportunity is taken to extend to you the assurances of my continued consideration, as well as my prayers for you and your family.,

### **PRAYER FOR SAFETY IN HURRICANE SEASON**

O God, Master of this passing world,  
hear the humble voices of your children.

The Sea of Galilee obeyed Your order  
and returned to its former quietude.

You are still the Master of land and sea.  
We live in the shadow of a danger  
over which we have no control:  
the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant,  
can awake from its seeming lethargy, overstep  
its conventional boundaries, invade our land,  
and spread chaos and disaster.

During this hurricane season we turn to You,  
O loving Father. Spare us from past tragedies  
whose memories are still so vivid  
and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with

passing of time.

O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our beloved Mother  
we ask you to plead with your Son on our  
behalf,  
so that spared from the calamities common to  
this area  
and animated with a true spirit of gratitude,  
we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son  
to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where a  
stormless eternity awaits us. Amen.

[Composed by Most Rev. Maurice Schexnayder  
(1895-1981).

Second Bishop of Lafayette (1956-1973),  
following Hurricane Audrey in 1957