

*From Father Kirby...*

**July 9, 2023**

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! The summer rolls on and Ordinary Time rolls with it. The summer oftentimes gives us small pockets of time to read and pray. Use this time to grow in your discipleship! Ordinary Time is about deepening in our relationship with the Lord Jesus and growing in our discipleship with him. What actions can you take this summer to be a better and more committed Christian?

Thank you to everyone who joined our First Friday Nocturnal Adoration this past Friday evening and Saturday morning. May the Lord bless you for your generosity of time!

I hope everyone is regularly praying the Liturgy of the Hours! The monthly installments are a reminder and an encouragement to pray and stay close to the Lord!

Some things happening at the parish that I'd like to highlight this week:

The nine-day preparation for investiture in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel began on Saturday, July 8. If you miss a day or two, you can still begin a preparation program. The nine days are flexible. The important thing is that you prepare for your investiture in some meaningful way.

Our parish Scapular Mass will be next Sunday, July 16, at our 11:00 AM Mass. Anyone who wants to be invested, or devotionally re-invested, in the Brown Scapular is invited to come!

Our Thursday columbarium Masses have now been moved in-doors. The Masses will now be celebrated in the church. We will continue, however, to have outdoor Masses on the Thursdays of Lent. Our columbarium Masses are always very spiritually fruitful and we don't want to lose them.

Please note our new [calendar for the program year 2022/2023](#) is now posted on our parish website. The calendar describes all of our events and programs for the coming year.

I'd like to encourage every household of the parish to register for [FORMED](#). This is a free digital platform with family friendly content.

Some other future events I'd like to highlight:

In honor of Saint Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of the Lord Jesus, the parish is happy to give a special blessing to all our grandparents during the weekend Masses on July 22-23.

On Sunday, July 23, at 12:30 PM, the parish will have its annual Summer Ice Cream Social. The social will be marked by games, activities, and a whole lot of ice cream! The event is free. *All are welcome!*

The parish is happy to welcome a priest of [FOCUS](#) to celebrate and preach our weekend Masses on July 29-30. FOCUS is the Church's outreach to Catholic college and university students. Many of you might remember our last visit by a FOCUS priest. It's been a little while, and so it's good to host another FOCUS priest and be reminded of the Church's extensive outreach and efforts to minister to Catholic young people in the college and university systems of our country.

While we host a FOCUS priest here at the parish, I'll be away speaking at the [Defending the Faith conference](#) at the Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Many parishioners were away last week and so I'd like to run our staff update again. Here are some updates on the staff:

We are happy to welcome Crystal Oxley as our new Pastoral Associate. Crystal comes to us from a highly successful career in Human Resources. She has vast experiences in large events planning, recruiting, and the management of resources and personnel. Crystal attended a Bible College and brings a deep understanding of discipleship and ministry with her to her position. Crystal and her family are long-time parishioners of Our Lady of Grace. *Welcome, Crystal!*

We're happy to welcome Aaron Kirby as our new Director of Communications and Public Relations. Aaron comes to us from a very successful career in marketing and sales. He's a graduate of USC- Columbia with a BA in political science. He has served in the Army National Guard and graduated from the SC Criminal Justice Academy. He served as an SC State Trooper before entering the field of marketing and sales. With this background, Aaron brings with him a heightened sense of public service and many skills and talents in the areas of marketing and sales. *Welcome, Aaron!*

*In full disclosure, Aaron is related to me. He went through the application process like every other applicant. The application process for new staff at our parish is led by the Lay Administrator and facilitated by the parish Finance Council. I am not*

*involved. In addition, in our parish's pastoral structure, I am not involved in the supervision of our directors. They answer directly to the Lay Administrator. With these safeguards in place, it is permissible to hire staff that might be related to the pastor or other current staff members.*

John Paul Rusciolelli is completing his Associate Degree in Business this month and has decided to move on and pursue some other interests. We are thankful for the service John Paul gave to our parish and we wish him the best in his future endeavors. *Thank you, John Paul!*

Some general announcements for the good of the parish:

The Bishop would like to invite all medical doctors and nurses to spend October 21 with him in prayer and formation. [All medical professionals are invited.](#)

Some of you may already know, but I now co-host *Truth Be Bold*, which is a podcast on contemporary issues facing Christian disciples. Compliments of [Good Catholic](#), the podcast is free. Recent episodes have addressed the topics of cohabitation, transgenderism, divorce, artificial intelligence, the poustinia prayer method, and many other themes. The podcast is free and can be found in any of the following places: [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcast](#), and [Good Catholic](#).

Periodically, I'm asked for resources to find a good Catholic therapist. The best resource I can recommend is [Catholic Counselors](#), which is a group of Catholic therapists who give digital therapy and life coaching. I would direct any parishioner to this group. If any parishioner needs financial assistance for counseling, the parish is happy to provide whatever assistance is needed. Please email me directly: [Jeffrey.kirby@charlestdiocese.org](mailto:Jeffrey.kirby@charlestdiocese.org).

This coming October, 2023, I'll be hosting a pilgrimage to Fatima, Spain, and Lourdes. Here's the [link to the travel agency website](#) with more information. Please note this is not a parish pilgrimage. I am taking this pilgrimage on vacation time and inviting others to join me. Other friends and supporters will come from other parts of the country and be a part of the pilgrimage.

Be sure to read and review our revised and updated [Security/Safety Protocols for Parishioners](#) and [Church/Holy Communion Pandemic Protocols](#).

More updates next week! Oremus pro invicem (let's pray for one another)!

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