

**May 4, 2025**

***From Father Kirby...***

Happy Easter, Team Grace! We are still within the Easter Season and still celebrating the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Lord is Risen! He is truly Risen! Let us rejoice and give thanks! He is Risen! Alleluia!

We pray for the Cardinals of the Church as they discern and elect our new pope.

In our devotional life, May is the month in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I encourage everyone to look for some additional devotion or penance to do this month for Our Lady.

Next Sunday, May 11, we'll have our annual May Procession and Crowning of Our Lady at our 11:00 AM Mass. Things will be a little different this year since – due to weather patterns - we're moving the outdoor Crowning to May and the indoor Crowning to December. And so, the Mass on May 11 will begin as usual in the church. After the Mass, there will be a procession to the statue of Our Lady at the entrance of the campus and the crowning of the outdoor statue. After the procession and May Crowning, we'll have Fellowship near the flags. All are welcome to come and honor Our Lady!

Some things happening at the parish this week:

Every month for Nocturnal Adoration, we try to give out a free book. I evaluate the right books to give out, but then rely on donors to help make it happen. With that in mind, I'm looking for donors who can help with our books for June and July. For June, I'd like for us to give out the spiritual masterpiece, *On Loving God* by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. The donation would be \$1,300. For July, I'd like for us to give out the spiritual masterpiece, *Mirror of the Blessed Virgin* by Saint Bonaventure. The donation would be \$1,300. If anyone is interested in donating one of these books, please reach out to me at [Jeffrey.kirby@charlestandioocese.org](mailto:Jeffrey.kirby@charlestandioocese.org).

This Monday – Wednesday, May 5-7, Father Robert Morey will be back at the parish. Father Morey will celebrate our daily Masses and hear Confessions. While Father Morey is here, I'll be in Palm Springs, Florida, giving presentations to a convocation of priests on how to preach and teach on moral issues. There is no change to our parish's liturgical or devotional life while I'm away.

Please note: There will be no morning Confessions on Tuesday, May 6. Confessions will still be heard after Mass.

This Tuesday, May 6, at 5:00 PM, we'll have our next Saint Paula Dinner for Widows. During the dinner, Barbara Bancker will talk about the holy Rosary and our Rosarian ministry here at the parish. All widows are invited and encouraged to come!

Next Saturday, May 10, from 9:00 AM – 12 Noon, we'll have one of our periodic Formation Days. For this Formation Day, we'll talk about *The Biblical Roots and Spiritual Power of the Papacy*. If we have a new pope by then, we'll also go over his biography and try to learn about our new universal shepherd. All are welcome!

Thanks be to God, in the coming weeks, work will resume on our Lourdes Hill and Mary's Grotto. The diocese and Comporium have worked out some contractual items and (finally) a pivotal power box has been moved to a different location. This now clears the way for us to begin grading Lourdes Hill. In addition, the weather is improving and so we can begin to work on the gradual slopes that will give us safe and easy access to Mary's Grotto. All things considered, we should have the Lourdes Hill and Mary's Grotto completed by early July!

I'd like to invite everyone to tune into my 365-Day podcast with EWTN, [\*The Mass in Slow Motion\*](#). The daily episodes are about 3-4 minutes long. Each episode highlights one aspect of the Mass and can help us all to better know and honor the mystery and power of the Mass.

The [calendar for the program year](#) 2024/2025 is posted on our parish website. The calendar describes all our events and programs for the year. This is posted for your reference and information.

Some other events I'd like to highlight:

On Monday, May 12, at 7:00 PM, we have our monthly Stations of the Cross for those who have left the practice of the Faith. Come and walk the Stations!

On Saturday, May 17, there will be no Confessions at 3:00 PM. I'll be away giving a Day of Recollection to our sister parish in Blythewood. We will still have Solemn Vespers at 4:00 PM.

On Sunday, May 18, at 12:30 PM, we'll have a fellowship for my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday! I can't believe I'm turning 50?! But I look very forward to celebrating my 50<sup>th</sup> with the parish family!

As an aside, a priest's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday is the milestone when the Church begins to instruct him to prepare for his retirement (which usually isn't until 70 or 75 years old). When a Religious priest retires (ie, Franciscans, Jesuits, etc), he goes back to his Order's Motherhouse. When a diocesan priest retires, we're on our own. With only a small pension, we have to find housing and provide for our expenses. This is why the Church advises priests to start the beginnings of their preparation for retirement when they turn 50. And so, in answer to the inquiries of some, if you want to give a gift – and I expect nothing – please consider a monetary gift toward investments and savings for my priest retirement.

For the past couple of years, we've been following a "chief of staff" model for the parish staff. Ryan Kubic has served as the Lay Administrator in this capacity. As the parish grows and business and pastoral demands increase, a broader pastoral structure is needed. And so, we're moving to a "team model" in which different directors supervise and facilitate essential areas of the parish.

Ryan Kubic is now our Business Manager and is in charge of all financial, business, and contractual areas of the parish. MJ Wallace is now the Pastoral Associate and is responsible for the faith formation, hospitality, liturgical planning, and pastoral outreach of the parish. Monty Bennett is in charge of sacred music and assists with liturgical planning. Wesley Dry is responsible for the care and maintenance of the buildings and grounds of our parish.

It will take us some time as a parish to fully become accustomed to our new structure. As a help, please review the chart of our [Pastoral Structure](#).

As a reminder, our parish staff can be readily reached via email. [Here is the staff directory](#).

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

Email: [Jeffrey.Kirby@charlestdiocese.org](mailto:Jeffrey.Kirby@charlestdiocese.org)

Website: [www.frkirby.com](http://www.frkirby.com)

"X": @fatherkirby

Daily Reflections: [www.DailyDiscipleship.org](http://www.DailyDiscipleship.org)

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## Monthly Newsletter