

**May 17, 2026**

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

*Happy Easter, Team Grace!* This Sunday, we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord Jesus. The Lord takes our human nature – body and soul – into eternity with him. In him, our nature is glorified and shares in the majesty of God. This is the inheritance won for us: if we love him, then we shall one day share in his glory.

Earlier this Sunday morning, May 17, my pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City begins! Please know of my prayers for you and your intentions.

While I'm away this Sunday, Father David Rivera of the Diocese of Camden, NJ, will offer our Sunday morning Masses. *Welcome back, Father Rivera!*

Thank you to everyone who signed up to give blood this Sunday. Your generosity will literally save lives!

Next Sunday, May 24, is Pentecost. All the baptized are encouraged to **wear red**. The color symbolizes that we have received the fire of the Holy Spirit. Join us for a Birthday Celebration of the Church after the 11:00 AM Mass (around 12:15 PM).

Some things happening at the parish this week:

As we near the end of an academic year and many people begin their summer travels, I want to remind everyone of our grave obligation to attend Sunday Mass. As you travel, I recommend using one of the many digital services that indicate local Mass times, such as [Catholic Mass Times](#). *As you travel, be sure to make it to Sunday Mass!*

This Monday – Thursday, May 18-21, Father Bob Morey, a retired priest of our diocese, will cover our weekday Masses and afternoon Confessions.

Please note that Confessions will only be heard in the afternoon this week (after our daily Mass). There will be no morning or evening Confessions this week.

For this week only, May 18-21, our parish campus will close at 5:00 PM. All evening events are suspended (this includes our Monday evening Alcoholics Anonymous).

Our next Prayer Outreach at the local abortion facility is this coming Saturday, May 23, at 8:30 AM. All parishioners are invited to come for this peaceful, prayerful protest against the horror of abortion. The facility is located at 3220 Latrobe Drive, Charlotte, NC.

The [calendar for the program year 2025/2026](#) is now 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 25, our nation will pause and observe Memorial Day. It is a solemn day of remembrance for all Americans. For Memorial Day, Confessions will be heard from 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM, Mass is at 11:00 AM, and then a Memorial Procession to the Holy Angels Columbarium and a Blessing of the Memorial Wreath will follow Mass. After the blessing, we'll have a Patriotic Fellowship at the columbarium. All are welcome!

On Tuesday evening, May 26, at 7:00 PM, we have the next session of our SOAP Work Group. All parishioners are invited to come and label soap and makeup removers, which will be placed in areas frequented by those stuck in human trafficking.

As a reminder, on Saturday, May 30, we'll welcome the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage to our parish and have Mass and an indoor Eucharistic Procession starting at 10:30 AM. The Mass and Procession will be followed by lunch and fellowship. We are expecting about 800 people and so it is essential that you register for the event. [Please register here](#). Please arrange to carpool as best you can.

I'm happy to announce that our friends at EWTN will be airing our Mass on May 30 on its network. It will run live on EWTN's television channel.

Team Grace, our nation is receiving a great birthday gift from the Holy Spirit! In the coming year, as we celebrate our 250<sup>th</sup> birthday as a nation, Venerable Fulton Sheen will be beatified on American soil in late September! Fulton Sheen was (and is) a noted preacher and teacher of our Faith. We need his message today!

Our Bishop has asked our parish to take the lead and organize the diocesan pilgrimage to Saint Louis for the Beatification Mass! In response to this summons,

we have [this pilgrimage](#) planned. Everyone is invited! I hope many of you can come on the pilgrimage!

*Grotto Update:* We have been evaluating several contractors. The list started with over 20 and moved to about 8. We are now seriously looking at two contractors. Once our contractor is selected, they will go through the diocesan approval process. Wesley Dry, our Director of Buildings and Grounds, is heading up this effort. He has a committee of parishioners who are skilled in different areas of construction assisting him. It's our hope to have a contractor selected by July and then begin the diocesan process as soon as possible. More updates will follow.

We are now at **\$710,000** for Phase II. Phase Two of Mary's Grotto will enlarge the size of the Grotto, extend its height, and add a large patio area with an outdoor altar in front of the Grotto. As we move forward, I ask for your continued support of our "Capital Projects." I would like for us to have additional funds in case we exceed the original cost projections of Mary's Grotto. If we don't use the collected funds, we'll roll the funds over to some of our other capital projects.

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)!

In Christ,

Father Jeffrey Kirby

Very Rev. Jeffrey F. Kirby, STD, VF  
Pastor/Dean of Rock Hill Deanery  
[www.frkirby.com](http://www.frkirby.com)