

July 12, 2026

From Father Kirby...

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! The season of Ordinary Time is a great opportunity to learn and review some of the basics of our faith. For this Sunday's homily, I'm going to fulfill the promise I made awhile back and discuss what it means to be a vicar forane (dean). Rather than just presenting the one position, I'm going to use the opportunity to discuss the pastoral structure of our diocese and how the Church is run on the diocesan level.

As we enter the month of July, we begin a new fiscal and program year. Please note the needs of our new budget in this week's financial report. As we wrap up our past fiscal year, it's our intention to roll over any surplus into this year's operating budget. This is standard practice in most parishes. By mid-September, we'll issue our semi-annual financial report. Let me know if anyone has any questions or concerns.

This weekend, we have signups for the Saint Cecilia Girls Choir. All young women and girls of the parish are invited to join and serve the Lord and our parish through sacred song.

Some things happening at the parish this week:

Bishop Jacques has expressed his deep gratitude to our parish for its support of our diocesan seminarians. The Bishop sent a letter and said in part: "This remarkable gift is a profound witness to the generosity and faith of your parish community." Please find [the full letter here](#). The hard copy of the letter has been posted on our bulletin board in the hallway.

Seminarian Review: In this first of three installments on our parish seminarians, I'd like to highlight Noah Rusciollelli. Noah comes from a large family and has nine siblings. He has a twin sister, Bridget. He was homeschooled and has served our parish altar since he was eleven years old. After graduating high school, Noah learned to train service dogs and worked for a local nonprofit. About a year and half ago, Noah joined our parish staff as our Liturgy Coordinator. Noah is a skilled vocalist and enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, spending time with his dog, and wood-churning. Please pray for Noah as he prepares to leave for seminary to actively discern God's will. The parish will host a Farewell Fellowship for Noah and our other seminarians on Sunday, August 2, at 12:15 PM.

The parish is offering three one-time \$5,000 Catholic Education Grants to assist parents in sending their children to a Catholic School, a Christian School (where no Catholic equivalent is available), or a school for special needs (i.e., deaf, autistic, etc.). Any active parishioner is qualified to apply for one of the grants. Grants will be given based on financial need and involvement in parish life. If you'd like to apply, please reach out to me directly: Jeffrey.kirby@charlestdiocese.org. Inquiries will be received until July 27.

Tomorrow, Monday, July 13, our daily Mass will be at 9:15 AM (and not at Noon). I'll be at a meeting of the Lancaster SC Mental Health Task Force. There will be no Confessions in the afternoon. Our Prayers for the Poor Souls in Purgatory will be offered at 12 Noon and our afternoon Adoration will start right after the prayers.

This Tuesday evening, July 14, I'll be offsite for a meeting with the seminarians of our deanery. Father James Tweed from the Diocese of Charlotte will be visiting the parish and covering our evening Confessions from 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM. *Welcome, Father Tweed!*

This Thursday, July 16, at 10:30 AM, we'll have our next gathering of the Gianna Caregiver Support Group. If you are a practicing Catholic and are providing or managing the care of an adult loved one, this group is for you.

This Thursday, July 16, we'll have our annual Scapular Mass at Noon. The Mass will provide an opportunity for any baptized people to be invested (or devotionally reinvested) in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Free scapulars will be provided.

This coming Saturday, July 18, from 9:00 AM – 12 Noon, we'll have our next session of the Saint Joseph Men's Fellowship. All men of the parish are invited to come for prayer, formation, and fellowship. For this session, one of the officials from *HOPE in Lancaster* will talk about the work of the outreach. All men of the parish are invited!

In considering some of the responses to our efforts to find a new Business Manager, we've decided to split the position. And so, we are currently looking for a part-time Parish Bookkeeper, who will need to have all the skills of a full-charge bookkeeper. And, we are looking for a full-time Operations Manager, who will need to have skills in operations and management. If anyone is interested in applying for one of these different positions, please send your resume directly to me: Jeffrey.kirby@charlestdiocese.org.

The [calendar for the program year](#) 2026/2027 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:

I'd like to invite all young adults (ages 18-35) to Solemn Vespers, Dinner, and a Question-and-Answer session on Saturday evening, July 25. Solemn Vespers begins at 4:00 PM, with dinner and the conversation to follow afterwards. I hope many of our young adults can come so that we can discuss what it's like to be a young disciple in today's world. All are welcome!

On Sunday, August 2, around 12:15 PM, we'll have a Farewell Fellowship for our three seminarians as they prepare to head off to seminary. Please come and offer prayers, encouragement, and support to our seminarians!

Please note that the actual first Saturday in August is August 1, and so – as is our custom – we'll move our First Saturday observances to the following week, August 7-8, so that our First Friday and First Saturday are together.

On Sunday, August 9, we'll have parish-wide School Supply Drive. All parishioners are asked to bring one (or more) of the following items with them to Mass: book bags, glue sticks, and dry erase markers. Parishioners can drop off the items at the pavilion before Mass. Members of our Helping Hands Ministry will be on-site to help you.

Please note that the Solemnity of Our Lady's Assumption, August 15, is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year. Since the holy day falls on a Saturday, the US Bishops have dispensed the obligation.

Team Grace, our nation is receiving a great birthday gift from the Holy Spirit! In the coming year, as we celebrate our 250th 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: Our Grotto Ad Hoc Committee, which consists of parishioners who are skilled in different areas of construction, met and are in the processing of selecting our proposed contractor for the grotto project. Once we've selected a contractor, we'll start the diocesan process to have the contractor approved. More updates will follow.

We are now at **\$730,000** 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

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