

July 5, 2026

From Father Kirby...

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! As we celebrate our 250th birthday as a nation, we pray with grateful hearts: *God Bless America!* May we remain faithful to our founding principles and seek to glorify God as a people and a nation.

Since July 4 falls on a Saturday, our parish will observe the holiday on Monday, July 6. There is no public Mass. All events are suspended. *Happy Independence Day!*

The nine-day preparation for investiture (or devotional re-investiture) in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel begins this Wednesday, July 8. There are many resources to make this preparation, including a book I wrote for Sophia Press, [*A Journey to Mount Carmel: A Nine-Day Preparation for Investiture in the Brown Scapular of Our Lady*](#). Copies of my book are available for purchase in the narthex this weekend.

Some things happening at the parish this week:

This Tuesday, July 7, at 5:00 PM, we have one of our periodic Saint Paula Dinners for Widows. Two of our parish seminarians will talk with the group. All widows of the parish are invited!

This Wednesday and Thursday, July 8-9, Father Peter Ruscioelli will offer our daily Noon Masses and hear Confessions after Mass on Wednesday. *Welcome back, Father Ruscioelli!* While our guest priest is here, I'll be on-site working on some diocesan projects.

Please note that there are no morning Confessions this Wednesday and Thursday, July 8-9. Confessions will still be heard after Mass on Wednesday and also in the evening on Wednesday.

The parish has a full-time employment/ministry opportunity. We are currently looking for a Business Manager with bookkeeping and operational skills. Here's the [profile of the position](#). If anyone is interested in applying, please send your resume directly to me: Jeffrey.kirby@charlestandiocese.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:

On 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.

On 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.

On 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.

On 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!

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.

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: Currently, 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 the end of next month and then start the diocesan process as soon as possible. More updates will follow.

We are now at **\$725,000** 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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