October 25, 2026

From Father Kirby…

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! In this season of Ordinary Time, the saving Gospel of the Lord Jesus is announced again and each of us are invited to receive it again into our hearts and to declare *Jesus Christ is Lord!* Such a declaration is made by both our words and our manner of life. Is the Lord Jesus the true Lord of our lives?

This Sunday, October 25, we have Fellowship Sunday after our 11:00 AM Mass. Everyone is invited to come and share donuts and fellowship!

Some things happening at the parish this week:

Here is the Annual Financial Report of our parish. It gives a summary of our last fiscal year (which ended on June 30). The report has a new template, which should make it easier to read. If you have any questions, please reach out to Tiffanie Susinski, our Parish Comptroller, at tsusinski@charlestondiocese.org.

From Monday evening, October 26, through Thursday afternoon, October 29, the priests of the diocese are away with the Bishop on retreat. And so, there will be no Confessions or Mass on Tuesday – Thursday, October 27-29. All other events are still in effect. Please note, however, that our afternoon Novenas are moved to 12 Noon and our afternoon Adoration begins a little earlier than usual. Fellowship is suspended on Thursday, October 29. Please check the parish calendar if you have any questions.

This Tuesday, October 27, from 1:00 PM - 2:45 PM, we have a session of our Senior Game Day. All senior parishioners are invited to come and be a part of the fun!

This Wednesday, October 28, our adult Bible Study will still meet at 6:45 PM. The session will consist of a pre-recorded lesson.

Bishop Jacques will celebrate the new Votive Mass for Blessed Fulton J. Sheen this Thursday, October 29, at Noon at the Basilica of Saint Peter, 1529 Assembly St. in Columbia. It will be celebrated as the closing Mass of the annual diocesan priest retreat. The Votive Mass is open to the public, and those unable to attend in person can watch the livestream here.

This Saturday morning, October 31, from 9:00 AM – 12 Noon, we'll have our next gathering of the Saint Joseph Men's Fellowship. All men of the parish are invited to come for prayer, formation, and fellowship. Breakfast will also be available. For this session, I've been invited to give a talk on "Standing Firm and Speaking Truth: Living and Defending the Faith in a Secular World." Men, come be refreshed in faith and brotherhood!

This Saturday evening, October 31, at 4:00 PM, all young families are invited to come to Vespers and a special Trick or Treat by our Secular Franciscans. Children are encouraged to dress as saints for a blessing during Vespers. After Vespers, the Franciscans will give out candy in the Parish Hall and explain the holy lives of several different saints. All are welcome!

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:

The Solemnity of All Saints, November 1, falls on a Sunday this year.

As we near November, the devotional month of the dead, I'd like to explain some of our Catholic traditions:

- Anyone who has lost a loved one within the past liturgical year (November 2 – November 1), is invited to send in the names of their loved ones for the Reading of Names at our 7:00 PM Mass on All Souls, November 2. Please send the names to Monty Bennett, our Director of Sacred Music, at mbennett@charlestondiocese.org.
- The Book of the Dead will be placed by the baptismal font on October 31. The faithful are invited to write the names of their deceased loved ones in the book. Those written in the Book of the Dead can be from any time period (and not just the past liturgical year).
- The feast of All Souls is Monday, November 2. Our Mass schedule includes a 7:30 AM Quiet Mass in the church, a 12 Noon Mass at the Holy Angels Columbarium with the Blessing of Niches, and a 7:00 PM Mass with the Reading of Names in the church.
- Anyone attending the Noon Mass on November 2 is reminded to bring a chair or blanket to sit on.

- After the Noon Mass at the Holy Angels Columbarium on November 2, we'll have a Thanksgiving-style Meal of the Dead in the parking lot near the columbarium. All are welcome!
- By ancient tradition, the collection on All Souls and the envelopes for All Souls go directly to the pastor. This is the only time a collection goes directly to the priest. The reason for this arrangement is because the pastor will offer prayers and private Masses for the names written on the All Souls envelopes throughout the coming liturgical year. All checks should be made out to *Our Lady of Grace*. Please note that All Souls donations are not tax-deductible.

From November 4 – 8, The Wall That Heals, which is the mobile version of the Vietnam Memorial, will be at the Springdale Recreation Complex in Lancaster. I want to encourage all parishioners and families to visit the wall while it's in our area. Here is more information.

On Sunday, November 8, at 1:00 PM, the parish is hosting a countywide Veterans Appreciation Meal. The event is free. The meal will be Thanksgiving-style with turkey and all the fixings. Please invite any veterans you know to come! Here's a flyer for the event.

In light of recent national events, the parish is hosting a morning gathering of young mothers on Saturday, November 14, from 8:30 AM – 12 Noon. The event will start with breakfast and then consist of three round-table style conversations on postpartum depression, depressive mood, stress, anxiety, anger management, and any other topics that might come up. The conversations will be facilitated by a bi-lingual licensed counselor from Guadalupe Counseling. All young moms are invited! *Please note that this event is for young moms with newborns and/or small children at home.*

For the season of Advent, we're going to make the following changes to our liturgical and devotional life as a parish:

- Starting Saturday, November 28, we will have a Holy Hour of Adoration from 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM. Adoration will start with Solemn Vespers. Confessions will move to the Adoration time and be heard from 4:00 PM – 4:45 PM (and will no longer be heard at 3:00 PM). Our Saturday evening Fellowships will be suspended.

In some other news: this coming year, I'll be hosting two different pilgrimages:

In March, Pope Leo XIV is meeting with all the Missionaries of Mercy in Rome. As a Missionary of Mercy, I plan to attend this gathering. But I've decided not to go by myself! I'll be hosting a pilgrimage to Rome and Malta around these gathering. If anyone would like to come to Rome and Malta, please find the details here.

In June, I'll be taking some vacation time and going on pilgrimage to Ireland and Medjugorje. I've been wanting to go back to Ireland and offer Mass at the holy places there (especially at Knock and on one of the historic Mass Rocks), and I've always wanted to go to Medjugorje, but I didn't want to go until the Church endorsed pilgrimages there. This past year, that endorsement was given and so I look forward to visiting and offering Mass there. If you're also interested in a pilgrimage to Ireland and Medjugorje, you can find the details here.

Grotto Update: We are now at **$760,000** for Phase II. Two large gifts, however, are in transit. I hope to be able to announce these large gifts soon. Our committee has narrowed things down to one contractor and we have initiated the approval process with the diocese!

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

Our parish is blessed to have three young men in the seminary. Please remember Noah Rusciolelli, London Shirley, and Zach Savage in your prayers. The

seminarians can be reached via mail at: Saint Joseph's Seminary College, 75376 River Road, Saint Benedict, LA 70457