November 8, 2026

From Father Kirby…

Happy Sunday, Team Grace! In this liturgical season of Ordinary Time, we are called to go deeper in our discipleship. *We are not in the Christmas Season* – not even close. I encourage you not to be distracted by the secular Christmas that is popping up around us. As believers, we need to stay focused on Ordinary Time and the summons of the Lord Jesus to follow him.

The month of November is the devotional month of the dead. We are invited to remember, pray, and make sacrifices for the faithful departed, especially our own beloved dead.

This Sunday, we honor and thank our veterans for their service to our nation. At the end of our Masses, we'll offer a blessing to our veterans. Our recessional hymn this Sunday and next Sunday will be a patriotic hymn in their honor. All veterans are also invited to join us for our Veteran's Appreciation Meal this afternoon at 1:00 PM.

Some things happening at the parish this week:

Last week, we distributed the preparation books for the Consecration to Jesus through Mary. I'm grateful to the donors who made the gift possible. Our donors ask us to remember Sofia Agnone in our prayers.

This month, we have two young men visiting the seminary and one young woman visiting the convent. Please remember these fellow parishioners in your prayers as they take this important step in discerning God's will. Please note: I'm not disclosing any names at this point so that we can honor the privacy of their discernment.

Currently, the parish is in need of a Director of Ministries. The position will nurture and launch ministries in the parish, as well as recruit, train, and collaborate with ministry volunteers. The position will also facilitate our Safe Environment program. The position can be heavy part-time or full-time. If you're interested in applying, please send a cover letter and your resume to me at Jeffrey.kirby@charlestondiocese.org.

Starting this Tuesday, November 10, we are extending our daily Adoration on Tuesdays. Adoration will be in the morning from 10:30 AM – 11:20 AM and then

from 12:45 PM until around 6:55 PM. Adoration will now extend throughout the entire day. I encourage all the faithful to come and adore the Lord!

This Tuesday, November 10, at 7:00 PM, we have the next session of our SOAP Work Group. Parishioners are invited to come and wrap soap and make-up removers that will be placed in areas frequented by those in human trafficking.

This Wednesday, November 11, at 10:30 AM, we have a gathering of our Eucharistic Kids! All stay-home parents and small children are invited to come for Adoration in the church and playtime in the Parish Hall.

This Wednesday evening, November 11, we have our last session of the adult Bible Study and Children's Faith Formation. Our programs go on hiatus and will resume on January 6.

This Thursday, November 12, I'll be away for a meeting of the Lancaster SC Mental Health Task Force. As such, our daily Mass that day will be at 9:30 AM (rather than 12 Noon). Please note that our parish campus doesn't open until 9:00 AM. Also, there will be no morning Confessions and no Fellowship. The Novena to Saint Josephine Bakhita will be prayed at Noon.

This Friday, the parish is honored to welcome Archbishop Susai Jesu of northern Ontario, Canada. The archbishop will be visiting for a private breakfast as part of my duties as the diocesan Director of the Propagation of the Faith.

In light of recent national events, the parish is hosting a morning gathering of young mothers this 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.*

By ancient tradition, 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.

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:

As a community announcement: on Saturday, November 21, from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, the local Catawba Nation is hosting their annual Day of the Catawba. The event is held at the Catawba Cultural Center, 1536 Tom Steven Road, Rock Hill, SC. The event offers an opportunity for the community to experience Catawba traditions through dancing, drumming, demonstrations, food, speakers, guided trail walks and Catawba vendors. The event is free and open to the public. Please note that Bishop Jacques will be at the event from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

Our Thanksgiving observance as a parish includes: the parish campus will close at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, November 24. The campus will close at 1:30 PM on Wednesday, November 25. For Thanksgiving Day, November 26, we are only open for Confessions at 10:00 AM and Mass at 11:00 AM. Please come and join your parish family for our Thanksgiving Mass!

For the coming 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 – 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.
- Starting Thursday, December 3, our Thursday daily Masses will move to 9:30 AM (rather than Noon). Morning Prayer, Adoration, and Confessions will be suspended on Thursdays. Our Fellowship will be moved to after the morning Mass.

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

This March, I'll be hosting a special Lenten pilgrimage to Rome and Malta. This will be a blessed opportunity to see the holy places and grow in our discipleship to the Lord. Please consider coming! 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
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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