

Our Lady of

Grace

Catholic Parish



595 East Main Street • Avon Park, Florida 33825

Parish Office (863) 453-4757

Feast of the Holy Family

December 28, 2025

Parish Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Fr. Ronnie Sison
Pastor

Schedule of Masses

Saturday Confession

3:30 PM English
6:30 PM Spanish

Vigil Mass

4 PM English
7 PM Spanish

Sunday

8 AM and 10:30 AM

Holy Days

Vigil Mass 6:30 PM
8 & 10:30 AM

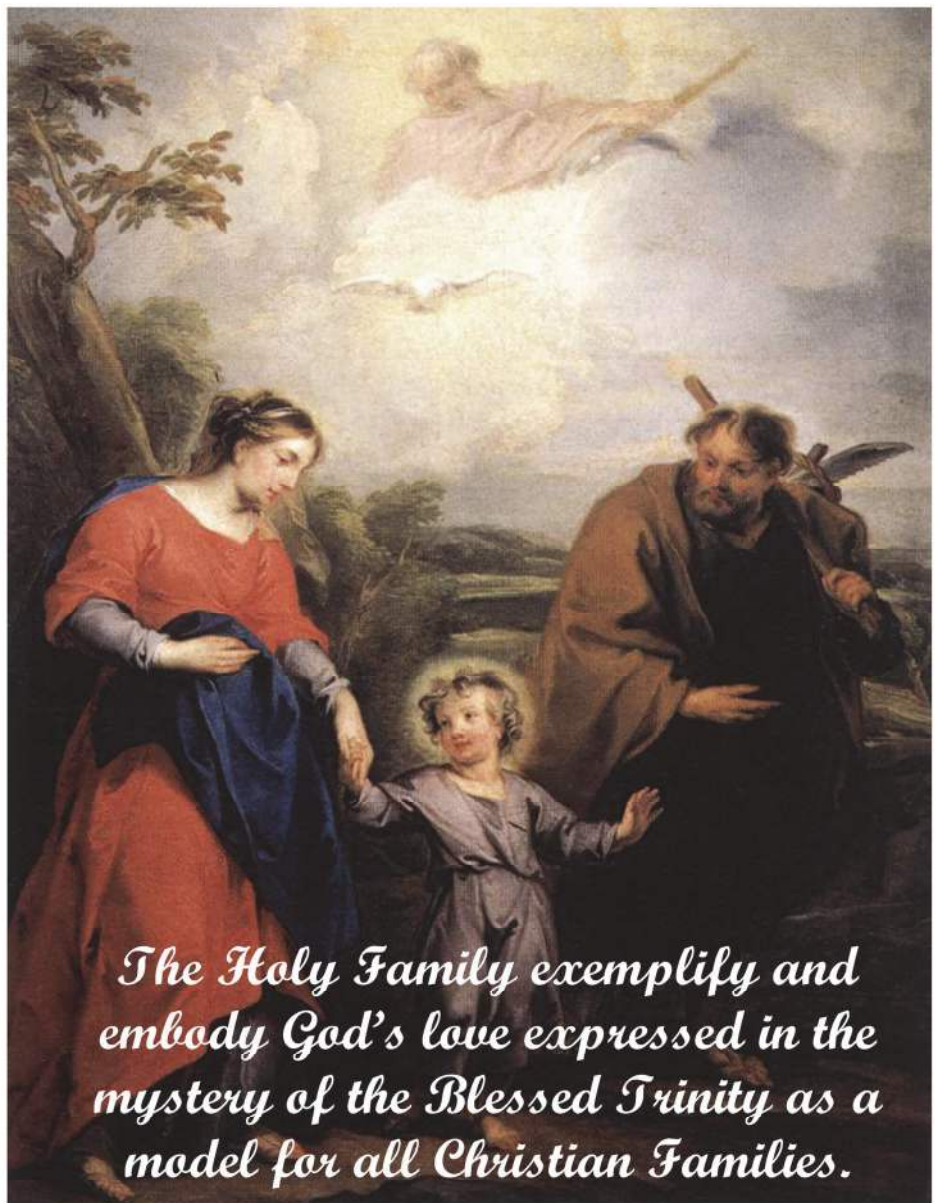
Daily Mass

Tuesday-Friday
8 AM

First Friday

Mass and Holy Hour
8 AM

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*The Holy Family exemplify and
embody God's love expressed in the
mystery of the Blessed Trinity as a
model for all Christian Families.*

The Feast of the Holy Family



The Feast of the Holy Family:

The Nobel award winning **Slavic writer, Ionesco**, wrote a play, *The Bald Soprano*. There is a scene in the play in which a man and a woman board a train from Manchester to London. They squeeze their way through a crowded carriage to reach their reserved seats. As luck would have it, they were sitting opposite one another. The man “breaks-the-ice” with a harmless question: *“Where do you come from?”* The woman, caught off guard, volunteered, *“Why, Manchester!”* “And, where do you live,” she was quick to inquire? *“I’m from Manchester, too,”* he replies. Now, A little

emboldened, he asks, *“Where in Manchester do you live?”* Opening up a little, she gave her street address, while asking him, *“And, where do you live in Manchester?”* To which he responds, *“I live on that same street.”* Throwing caution to the wind, he presses her, *“And where on that street do you live?”* She volunteered the street number. She presses him with the same question, *“And where do you live on that street?”* You guessed the answer – he lived at the same number – **they were husband and wife**. Ionesco, a perceptive writer, exaggerates to make a point: in the modern world, it is possible to live in the same house with someone, sleep in the same bed and, not really know that person. Frank Sinatra alludes to it in song, *“Strangers in the night.”* The Beatles, in their hit, *“Eleanor Rigby,”* express a similar refrain; *“Look at all those lonely people.”*



A paradox in the modern family is that family members can be strangers in the most intimate of settings. **Why?** There is a kind of **rugged individualism** – *“doing-your-own-thing:”* “me” not “we,” or, “us” at the center of our lives. Couple that with being ‘wired’ into our own impersonal world – Podcasts, iPhones, “chat rooms” etc. St. Paul discerns the malaise when he writes, *“If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding*

all the mysteries there are and knowing everything and if I have faith, in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing” (1Cor 13: 3). Addiction to technology – information - leads to a disconnect in relational intimacy.

The Holy Family ‘**imaged**’ God’s love. **God’s love is an ‘I-Thou’ - relational love** – *“God is love”* – which He expresses in the **Blessed Trinity**. His love becomes ‘**real**’ - human – for us through his Son: *“God so loved the world that he sent his only Son into the world ...”* (John 3: 16). God did not send a Book – the Bible. No, He sent a **Person** – His Son. The family is an ‘**I-Thou,**’ inter-personal relational school in which **love is caught and, not merely taught**. The 3 “Rs” - *reading, writing and arithmetic* – are important. The most important “R” is the 4th “R” – **experiencing love in ‘I – thou’ inter-personal family relationships**. The family is a school of relational love where love is caught & not merely taught.



A blessed new year. Fr. Ronnie and Parish Staff.



The Feast of the Holy Family – the flight into Egypt

“The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘*Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child and destroy him.*’ Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, *Out of Egypt I have called my Son* (Mt 2: 13-15, 19-23).

Question: What is your attitude toward & Treatment of Refugees and immigrants?

As “*One Nation Under God*,” is your attitude toward & treatment of *Refugees & Immigrants* influenced by Gospel teaching & values, or, by political ideology?



**Thursday, January 1st,
Feast: Mary, Mother of God
Is a Holy Day of
Obligation**

**Mass Schedule:
Wed Vigil: 4:00 P.M.
Thurs 8:00 & 10:30 A.M.
12:00 P.M. Spanish**

A Blessed New Year – Fr. Ronnie



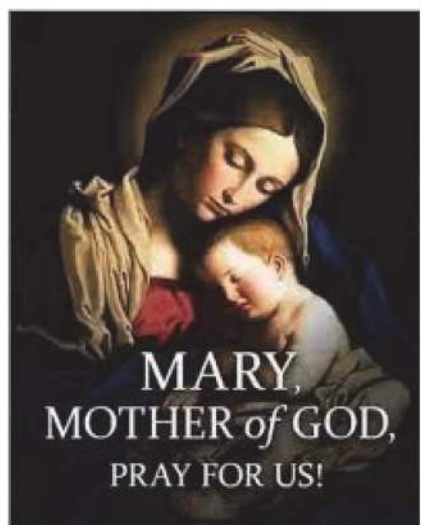
The icon of Saidet et Tallé, also known as "the Virgin of the Druze", is venerated by both the Druze and Christian communities in Lebanon.



Church Service Center Food Collection Sunday, January 4, 2026

We ask you to bring non-perishable food to Church next weekend for the CSC. During December, **1,000 families**, representing **2,000 people** were assisted by the Church Service Center with food, clothing and, gifts for children. Thank you & God Bless You.

We take a **2nd collection** to assist with electric and water bills and with rent payment Thank you. May God bless and reward you.



Thursday, January 1st: The Feast of Mary, the Mother of God
Holy Day of Obligation: Vigil Mass: 4 P.M., Morning masses: 8 and 10:30 A.M.

When the shepherds hear God's message in today's Gospel, **"they went in haste"** to Bethlehem. Those who heard the message **"were amazed."** Mary's response to the mystery of Jesus' birth – **"She treasured these things in her heart."** Let's briefly reflect on each of these three responses.

"The shepherds went in haste" to Bethlehem, when they heard the angel's message. When **Mary** heard the angel Gabriel's message, **she "went with haste into the hill country"** to visit her cousin Elizabeth. When **Abraham** heard God's message to leave his homeland, **he acted with haste**, and went to a land that he did not know existed. When God raised up **Moses** and directed him

to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt, **"he acted with haste."**

How do we respond to God's Word? Do I put it off? In the words of **St. Augustine**, do I say, **"Lord, make me chaste, but not just yet."** Or, **"Yes," "I'll get around to getting out of bed on a Sunday morning to take my children to Mass – and teach by example."** Or, do I **"Act with haste?"**

What "amazed them?" God breaking into human history as a **vulnerable, helpless child**. In the words of **St. Thomas Aquinas**, in his famous Eucharistic hymn, **"Godhead here in hiding, whom I adore."** We have **lost a sense of "amazement," "a sense of wonder."** We do not have a sense of **"Emmanuel – God with us,"** in the Eucharist or in the Tabernacle – **"Godhead here in hiding,"** – the Transcendent God **"in hiding."** Yet, **the shepherds, Mary and Joseph were "amazed" at the "disguise of God," "here in hiding" in a helpless, vulnerable, impoverished baby Jesus.** The very normal young 15-year-old Italian teenager, **Carlo Acutis**, who was canonized a Saint by **Pope Leo XIV in Rome** recently, couldn't understand how fellow teens who line up in their thousands to purchase tickets to 'Rock concerts,' football games, or, the latest phones, did not see the same teens **"queue ...in front of the Tabernacle... So, he realized that people don't understand the importance of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist."** They have no sense of the Jesus **"in disguise"** in the Eucharist or Tabernacle. They have no sense of **"amazement,"** or **"wonder."**

"She treasured these things in her heart." Mary, while remaining a virgin, gave birth to the child Jesus, **did not fully understand God's plan;** so, she **"treasured these things in her heart" and, "pondered them."** The German Jesuit theologian **Fr. Karl Rahner**, a prominent theologian at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), stated that by the time he was twelve, he had **learned the essential core of his faith; he spent the rest of his life attempting to understand it.** That is the purpose of theology, **"faith seeking understanding."** Mary was the first theologian – **"She kept these things in her heart and pondered them."** That is why it is so important to, **not only read the word of God, but to reflect on it – to like Mary, "treasure... and ponder it."** Do we ever take one of the Gospels and read a passage from it and reflect on it? **In the 60's, many young people went East – John Lennon of Beatles fame - to learn to be quiet and "contemplate."** Father Karl Rahner, was quoted as saying, **"The devout Christian of the future will either be a "mystic," one who has experienced "something," or he/she will cease to be anything at all."** You don't need to go East. Do what Mary did, **"She treasured these words in her heart and pondered them."**

New Year's Resolution: Read the scriptures: be **"amazed:"** **"Treasure... and ponder them."**



*Y MARÍA
GUARDABA TODAS ESTAS
COSAS Y LAS MEDITABA EN
SU CORAZÓN
LUCAS 2, 19*

Cuando llamamos a María la Madre de Dios, no estamos diciendo que ella de alguna manera precedió a Dios o que sea igual a Dios. Simplemente estamos reconociendo que Jesús, su hijo humano, también es el Hijo divino de Dios.

El Evangelio de hoy registra una simple acción de María: guardar estas cosas en su corazón. Incluso en esta sencilla frase se nos da un buen ejemplo de cómo ser discípulo. Como María, tenemos que guardar o recordar lo que Dios ha hecho y reflexionar sobre lo que recordamos.

Primero, ¿cuánto recordamos lo que Dios ha hecho por nosotros? ¿Qué tan bien conocemos las historias de salvación que se encuentran en las Escrituras? ¿Recordamos las oraciones que Dios ha respondido, como nos ha guiado, el amor de Dios que otros nos han mostrado, y las veces que Dios nos ha perdonado?

Segundo, ¿cuánto reflexionamos sobre lo que Dios ha hecho? Incluso si tenemos muchos recuerdos de la bondad de Dios hacia nosotros, también debemos orar y preguntarnos cómo hemos cambiado debido a lo que Dios ha hecho. ¿Perdono las heridas más fácilmente? ¿Comparto mi fe con mi familia o amigos? ¿Apoyo a mi parroquia con mi tiempo u ofrendas? Pidamos la ayuda de Dios para imitar a María recordando y reflexionando. ___ Tom Schmidt



... unidos en respeto y amor.
Llévanos a la alegría y la paz de tu hogar eterno.
Concédenos esto por medio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo,
tu Hijo, que vive y reina contigo y el Espíritu Santo,
un solo Dios por los siglos de los siglos.
Autor Desconocido

HORARIO DE MISAS PARA LAS FIESTAS DE DICIEMBRE

Solemnidad de Santa María, Madre de Dios

31 de diciembre a las 4:00pm

Misa de Año Nuevo

1 de enero de 2026 a las 8:00 y 10:30am



PROGRAMA DE EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

Edificio McDonald

Grados Pre-K-6 Domingos

9:00 a 10:15am

Grados K-12 Miércoles

6:00 a 8:00pm

Preguntas/Información

Mayra Donan 863-453-7537

GRUPO DE ORACIÓN

Y

JUAN XXIII

Estarán en receso hasta jueves enero 8, 2026

MASS INTENTIONS**SATURDAY DECEMBER 27**

8:00 a.m. + Fr. Gerald Grogan.
 4:00 p.m. + J. Dale Pounds by Judy Pounds and Family.
 7:00 p.m. + Felix Lopez by Faina Lopez.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 28

8:00 a.m. + Penny Irilli by Frank Irilli.
 10:30 a.m. Jerry Grinkiewicz by JoMarie Grinkiewicz.

MONDAY DECEMBER 29

8:00 a.m. No Mass.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30

8:00 a.m. + Francisca Iglesia by Claribel Iglesia.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 31

8:00 a.m. + Michel Toussaint by Benita Toussaint.

4:00 p.m. English Mass.

THURSDAY JANUARY 1

8:00 a.m. Mary Ann Hill by Justine & Paul Devlin.

10:30 a.m. English Mass.

12:00 p.m. Spanish Mass.

FRIDAY JANUARY 2

8:00 a.m. Estela & Atilio Rogas by Family.

SATURDAY JANUARY 3

8:00 a.m. + John Coleman.

4:00 p.m. + William & Virginia Cook by Evelyn Seely.

7:00 p.m. Spanish Mass.

2026 MISSALS

The 2026 Missals are available in the Parish Office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Missals are \$5.00 each.

2026 ENVELOPES

Will be available the first week in January.

FOR THE SICK OF THE PARISH

Joan Morgan	Candida Reyes	Kathy Furtado
Rosa Arosemena	Andres Clavijo	Jade Jackson
Martha Clavijo	Harold Raccine	Carol Krause
Donna Skelly	Roger Brelinski	Jean Rapp
Rosemary Melinson	Cameron Prosperi	Joan Bender
Deb Perry	Martha Spung	Louise Schorsch
Donald Schorsch	Ed Carrigan	Joey Prescott
Michael Rand	Bea Pedara	Marty Worley
Sharon Ingalls	Gary Ingalls	Dennis Hood
Susan Beaudoin	Amy Slane	Jeff Babbitt
Rose Brault	Waylen James	Raffael Aversa
Jerry Grinkiewicz	Kim Nuccio	Sherry
Jeannie Stopa	Jim Stopa	Marie Burley
Rick Burley	Ron Maslyk	Kathy Reiser
Clay Gooch	Janice Vreeland	

And for those who care for the sick, for the deceased member's and benefactors of the parish, and for our loved ones.

HOLIDAY HOURS

The Parish Office will be closed on Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday December 31st thru January 2, 2026. The office will re-open on Monday, January 5, 2026.

STEWARDSHIP FAIR

How to share your talent with your Parish Community. There will be a Stewardship Fair on Sunday, January 11, 2026, from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Grogan Center. Everyone is invited to come. More details to come.

STOCKING STUFFER

Looking for that special gift? Get a ticket for the Valentine Dance. February 14, 2026, Dinner and Dance with the famous California Toe Jam Band. Tickets are \$50.00 each and available at the office or from Judy Nugent (863) 446-1841.



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Knights of Columbus

Eric Quiel
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863-414-5002

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Debora Augusta
President
(863)991-1020

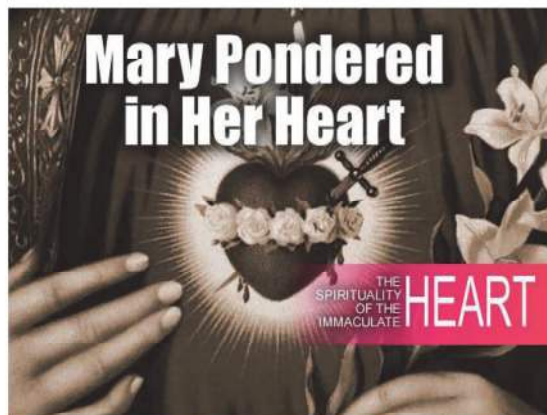
OCIA Director

Travis & Dawn Crosson
(863)453-4757

Parish Council

President

Betty Anne Lee
863-873-7176



But she [Mary] was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be -Luke 1:29.

And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart - Luke 2:19.

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was

obedient to them; and His mother kept all these things in her heart - Luke 2:51.

When we pray the Rosary, we follow the example of Our Lady. **Luke's Gospel repeats that Mary "pondered," Mary "reflected," Mary "kept all these things in her heart."** Pious tradition tells us that Mary was the one who created the **Stations of the Cross**, allowing her to walk again and again at the side of her Son during His Passion and death. **She contemplated the mysteries of the life of her Son, keeping them in her heart, in her memory, at the very center of her being.** Doing this, she becomes a model and icon of the Church.

It's the Church's task to "do this in remembrance of Me" - to offer the Passover of the Lord, the Eucharist, over and over again till the end of time. **It's the Church's task to preach the Gospel**, the same Gospel, and preserve and spread the one faith in Jesus Christ in all ages till Christ's Second Coming. **It's the Church's job to remember the events of Christ's life, to ponder them so thoroughly that we are transformed by them**, that we come to resemble them, that we become the Body of Christ to the height and depth of our being.

Christ's life has this power to transform us because He is God. As the **Catechism of the Catholic Church** teaches us:

His Paschal mystery ... is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by His death He destroyed death, and all that Christ is - all that He did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life (1085).

By 'pondering these things in our hearts' like Mary did, we shall become holy. We shall have a share in the eternal life of Christ. **This 'pondering,' this 'loving contemplation of the life of Jesus, is the spirituality of the Immaculate Heart, is how we come to 'know' Jesus.**



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