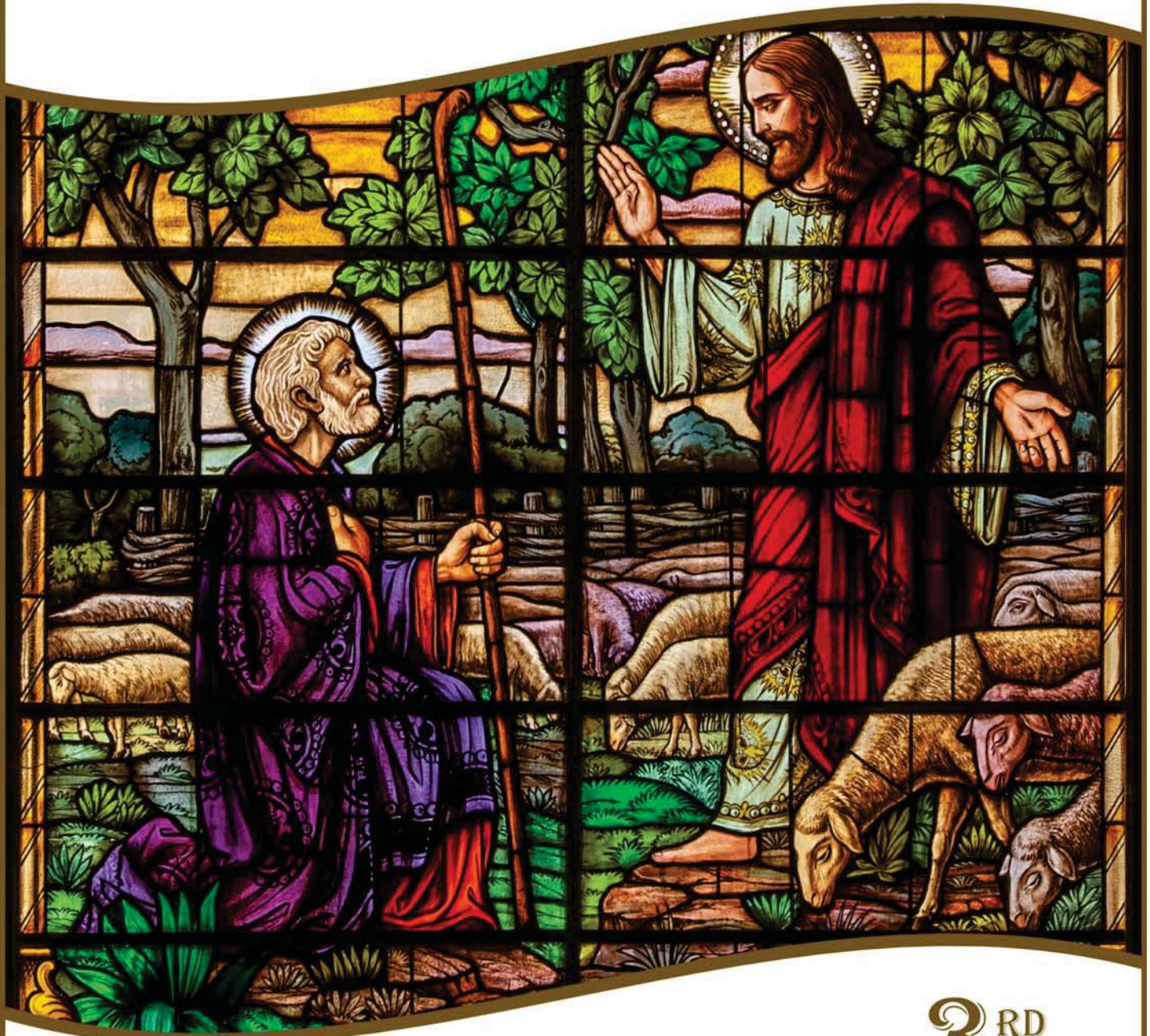


St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish
May 4, 2025



JESUS AND PETER

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." John 21:17

3RD

**SUNDAY
OF EASTER**



Dear Parishioners,

Today's Gospel is such a touching one recording another of the encounters between Jesus and His Apostles after the resurrection. Jesus had told them at the Last Supper and again through the women that He had met earlier that He would see the Apostles at the Sea of Galilee. Peter says to them all "I am going fishing." They all decide to join him. I wonder what was in their minds. Perhaps they arrived early and had some time on their hands. Perhaps it has been a long time since any of these fishermen had any time to fish. Perhaps in the upheaval that had been their lives over the past few days fishing was a nice break; they wouldn't be the first or last to find solace in casting a line into the sea. I wonder if it was also nostalgic. Remember Peter, Andrew, James and John were all called to follow the Lord when they were fishing on the sea of Galilee. Nowhere did it say that he "borrowed" or "appropriated" a boat like they did when they wanted a donkey for Jesus on Palm Sunday. I imagine that Peter went to the Sea of Galilee, right to the spot where his dad tied up his boat, the very spot where he had met Jesus for the first time and finding himself with time to spare decided to go out fishing. I wonder too if Jesus brought them back to this spot, where it all began, deliberately, so that they could reassess their own commitment to follow Jesus. They once said yes to a man they hoped was the Messiah. They now were invited to say yes again to a Messiah who is

also a man. Jesus had taught them and guided them for three years, but it would now be up to them. Once again Jesus meets them while they are fishing and invites them to follow Him, but also giving them the option to stay and return to the life they once knew.

We experience this call through the dialogue with Peter. Peter was so sure of himself when he swore he would never deny Christ, and in fact would be willing to die for Him. Instead, he does just as Jesus predicted he would... he denies Christ three times. The Navarre Commentary on Matthew writes this and quotes St. John Chrysostom: "Peter becomes so afraid that he denies his Master three times—a fall which Jesus allowed to happen in order to teach him humility. "Here we learn a great truth: that a man's resolution is not sufficient unless he relies on the help of God" (St John Chrysostom). What we hear today is Jesus allowing Peter, so sorry for his denial, to demonstrate his resolve anew. Or as St. Jose Maria Escriva would write "Jesus questions Peter, three times, as if to give him a triple chance to atone for his triple denial. Peter has learned his lesson from the bitter experience of his wretchedness. Aware of his weakness, he is deeply convinced that rash claims are pointless. Instead, he puts everything in Christ's hands. 'Lord, you know well that I love you'" (St J. Escrivá, *Friends of God*, 267)

To bring the moment of healing to completion Jesus once again invites Peter, "Follow me." Just like He did when it all began, three long years ago, on this same shore, standing amidst another miraculous catch of fish. "Follow me!" not because you are now and have always been perfect. "Follow me!" because you have learned from your mistakes, renounced them, and resolved anew to follow Jesus. "Follow me!" because you realize it is not *your* strength that enables you to do it, but that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. "Follow me!" because although you have not always been faithful to me, I have always been and will always be faithful to you, and I want you to follow me because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you. And Peter, his heart renewed by the love of Jesus, does follow Him. And now Jesus turns to us and gives us the same invitation... "Follow me!"

And so we pray, Lord Jesus, help me to hear Your call again today. In my weakness, be my strength. In my fear, be my peace. In my past, be my healer. And in all things, be the One I follow. Amen. ~Fr. Chris Casey



Dear Parish Family,

We have bittersweet news to share as we announce the retirement of Deb Fergus, who has been a cherished member of our Religious Education Program for eleven years. Deb has touched the lives of countless children and adults, guiding them in their journey of faith with her unwavering passion and dedication.

Additionally, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Karyn Moody, who has faithfully taught in our First Sacrament Program and has made a significant contribution to our children's spiritual growth. While Karyn will be transitioning from her teaching role, we are delighted that she will continue to be an active member of our parish family. We look forward to celebrating First Holy Communion for our children in May—a truly beautiful way to conclude Karyn's time with us in this role.

To honor their remarkable service, we invite you to a Goodbye Party in their honor on **Saturday, May 31st after the 4pm Mass at St. Theresa in Father McCormick Hall**. Let's come together to celebrate Deb and Karyn and their incredible impact on our parish community as they embark on this new chapter of their life. We are blessed to have had their dedication, and we look forward to celebrating with you!

If you would like to show your appreciation to Deb and Karyn by helping out in any way, please reach out to Heather in the Parish Office at **978-663-8816 x200** or **heather.murphy.ccb@gmail.com**.



St. Matthew Parish - Vacation Bible School 2025

Journey with God's servant, Joseph, in this year's VBS adventure!

Join us **June 23 - 27** as we discover how Joseph's faith saved God's People!
Each morning, enjoy exciting music, games, crafts, and bible stories.
Listen for God's voice, and learn to follow his Son, Jesus.

Open to **current** grade K-5 children

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APPLY WITH LINK BELOW:

<https://forms.gle/sfdxS4yBwxnkN7w67>

Details & Registration forms on our website at <https://billericacatholic.org/vbs-online-registration>

Questions? Contact **Deb Fergus** at deb.fergus@billericacatholic.org
Hope to see YOU at VBS 2025!

Donations Honoring our Loved Ones...

Every month, we will provide the opportunity to donate the Altar Bread (\$80.00), wine (\$50.00), candles (\$75.00), and missals (\$200.00) to be used in our parish that month. Please call the office if you are interested in donating one of these items as a memorial or "In Thanksgiving" for a family member or loved one.



The Month of April

Altar Bread– In Loving Memory of the Conway Family

from Lynne and Tom Conway

Wine– In Loving Memory of Richard L. Dubbs

from The Dubbs Family

Candles– In Loving Memory of Helen E. Young and John E. Smith

from the Smith Family

Missals– In Loving Memory of Altagracia De Jesus Soto Yeb

from Her Loving Family

COURAGEOUS CATHOLIC WOMEN

The Courageous Catholic Women meeting will be held on **Monday, May 12th @ 7:00pm** at **St. Andrew Church** in Fr. Wilson Hall. This month's prayers and reflections will focus on "The Women of Prayer." CCW is a women's prayer group that meets monthly to explore the Gospel, pray together, and support one another. Contact Fran Gulia at admin@billericacatholic.org or call the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** for more information.

ST. MATTHEW WOMEN'S CLUB

All are invited to the next Women's Club meeting which will be held on **Wednesday, May 14th at 7pm** during which they will be saying the rosary and crowning the Blessed Mother. This will be their last meeting of the season before their banquet celebration in June. Any snack or raffle donation would be greatly appreciated. If you would like more information about becoming a future member, contact Dottie at admin@billericacatholic.org or call the Parish Office at **978-663-8816**.

2025 Catholic Appeal... Forward in Faith

The Catholic Appeal continues and we are inching closer to our parish goal! A reminder, if we reach our goal, a percentage of those funds will be returned back to the parish. **Currently, we are pleased to share that we have raised \$49,640 (65%) of our 2025 parish goal of \$75,800.**

The Catholic Appeal supports many ministries at work here at Saint Matthew the Evangelist Parish. Some examples include the Pro-Life ministry; Faith Formation of Children; Youth Ministry; Parish Services; and Divine Worship (the OCIA program). The outpouring of support from so many helps sustain the important ministries that make our parish a vibrant place to worship. Saint Matthew has relied on the resources at Central Ministries many times, with their knowledge and assistance being invaluable to our parish. **If you have not had a chance to do so, please consider making your gift to the Appeal today by picking up an envelope in your pew, at the back of the church or make an on-line donation at www.bostoncatholicappeal.org, or using the QR code to the right.**



On behalf of Father Chris, Archbishop Henning and all who benefit from your generosity, thank you.

We are Hiring!



St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish is seeking a Director of Faith Formation. The Director of Faith Formation (DFF) manages program content, staff, and works with the Finance and Operations Director on faith formation budgets.

This is a full-time position with benefits. Responsibilities include planning of the Faith Formation year, review and determine curriculum, sacramental preparation and Vacation Bible School. For more information or to express interest please contact Chris Kilburn, Director of Finance and Operations at **978-663-8816** or at billericacatholic.org.

Pray the Rosary with the Legion of Mary at St. Theresa



All are invited to join members of the Our Lady of Hope Praesidium of the Legion of Mary as they lead us in the recitation of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary on **May 11th at 9am at St. Theresa**. The rosary will be followed by the 9:30am Mass where we will celebrate the Crowning the Blessed Mother.

"Parishioners who pray the rosary and receive the Eucharist together will unite and strengthen our Parish."

Crowning of the Blessed Mother

The crowning of the Blessed Mother will take place on **Sunday, May 11th at the 9:30am Mass at St. Theresa and the 11:00am Mass at St. Andrew**. We joyfully invite all children of our parish to take part in this cherished tradition. Children will have the special opportunity to walk in procession, present flowers to Mary, and participate in the crowning ceremony as a meaningful way for our young parishioners to grow in love and devotion to our Heavenly Mother. Please reach out to the Parish Office by Thursday, May 8th at **978-663-8816** or heather.murphy.ccb@gmail.com if your child would like to participate.



COME AND HAVE FUN AT FAMILY GAME NIGHT FRIDAY, MAY 16

NEW START TIME- 6:00PM-9:00PM

Location: Fr. Wilson Hall at St. Andrew Church

***All are invited – Families, Singles, Seniors, Teenager
We can't wait to see you and have fun!***

If you have not been to one of the Game Night's yet – we have so much fun! There are lots of laughs and tons of games to play! Enjoy pizza, soda, and snacks or bring your own! We hope to see you there!



Easter Joy with the Knights of Columbus!

A heartfelt **thank you** to everyone who joined us for our **Easter Egg Hunt**, hosted by the **Knights of Columbus**! The event was a beautiful celebration of community and joy, with dozens of parish children racing to find eggs, decorating cookies, and enjoying a day full of laughter and springtime fun.

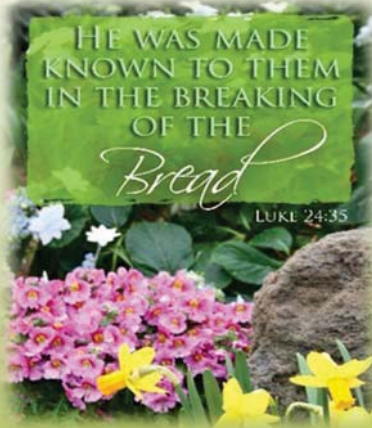
Highlights included:

- A lively **Easter Egg Hunt** with plenty of sweet surprises
- Smiling faces at the **face painting** station
- Endless giggles in the **bouncy house**
- Delicious creativity at the **cookie decorating** table

We're so grateful for the volunteers, parents, and Knights who helped bring this event to life, and to all the families who came out to celebrate the Easter season with us.







Reflection Question of the Week ~ 3rd Sunday of Easter

Listen to the conviction of St. Paul and St. Peter in today's readings. In the first reading, St. Paul is ordered "to stop teaching in that name." That meant he was to stop teaching about Jesus. But St. Paul gives a clear response, "We must obey God rather than men." He was willing to face trial and suffering rather than stop speaking about Jesus. The scene in the gospel is often referred to as "breakfast with Jesus." St. Peter, having denied Jesus three times, is given three opportunities in today's gospel to express his conviction to following Jesus. In this intimate conversation we can hear the strength of that love in each response, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." How will you express your conviction about being a follower of Jesus Christ, if asked? Take some time in quiet prayer to speak from your heart with Christ.

- How can we show our love for Jesus through our actions?
- How has your relationship with Jesus changed over time?
- What steps can we take to deepen our friendship with Jesus?



Intentions for the week of May 3rd-May 9th

Fr. Henry Ronan and Fr. James DeAdder-Memorial
Francis-Memorial
Elizabeth Rane-Memorial
Margaret O'Neil-17th Anniversary
Charlotte Gearin-Birthday Memorial
Altagracia De Jesus Soto Yeb-1st Anniversary
Erin Fell-Memorial
Raymond and Claire Routhier-Memorial
Christopher Pomerleau-Birthday Memorial
Mark R. Kelley-Memorial

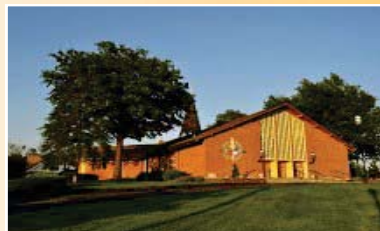
Intentions for the week of May 10th-May 16th

Rita Kelly, Steven Kane and Henry Murphy-Memorial
Richard L. Dubbs-10th Anniversary
William T. Giles-41st Anniversary
Cynara Ferrao-Memorial
Maria LaRocca-Memorial
Jerry and Betty Cohen-Anniversary
Michael Spinale-3rd Anniversary
Robert Donadio-Memorial
Barbara Connolly-3rd Anniversary
Joseph Santolucito-7th Anniversary
Maria Sousa-Memorial



Online Giving QR Code

Use the QR code to the left, to make a secure, one-time or recurring contribution from your bank account to our parish. Online Giving provides many advantages to you and the parish. Thank you for your continued support. **St. Matthew the Evangelist receives approximately 40% of contributions through online giving!**



St. Andrew Church

45 Talbot Avenue

N. Billerica, MA 01862

Sun. Mass 8:00am & 11:00am

Daily Mass Tues. & Fri. at 12:05pm

Rosary led by Legion of Mary: Friday at 11:30am

St. Theresa Church

466 Boston Road

Billerica, MA 01821

Sat. Mass 4:00pm

Sun. Mass 9:30am & 5:00pm

Daily Mass M, W, & Th at 9:00am

Confession Sat @ 2:00 pm

Pastoral Team

Rev. Christopher Casey, *Pastor*

Ext. 224

Fr. Jean Sassou, *Parochial Vicar*

Ext. 223

Deacon Al Shanahan, *Deacon*

Resident Clergy:

Fr. Romain Rurangirwa

Fr. Theophilus Okpara

St. Vincent de Paul Society: 978-408-8278

Office Team

Christine Kilburn, *Director of Finance & Operations*

Ext. 243

Karen Dubbs, *Office Manager*

Ext. 300

Heather Murphy, *Pastoral Ministry & Project Coordinator*

Ext. 200

Dino Bastianelli, *Facilities Manager*

Ext. 332

Youth Faith Formation Staff

Karyn Moody, *Coordinator for Grades 1-4*

Ext. 444

**Deb Fergus, *Senior Coordinator for Faith Formation
and Coordinator for Grades 5-8***

Ext. 442

Alanna Fava, *Confirmation & Teen Ministries*

Ext. 445

Dustin Batista, *Pastoral Minister & Teen Ministries*

Ext. 448

Knights of Columbus

Dan Quattrocchi, *Membership Director*

kofc3963@yahoo.com

St. Matthew Parish Office

One Grace Avenue

Billerica, MA 01821

978.663.8816

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 10am-3pm

Music Ministry

Mrs. Laura Rosa, *Director and Organist*

Maria Coughlan, *Cantor*

Rebecca Murphy, *Cantor*

Michelle Roy, *Cantor*



For questions about St. Matthew Parish or information on any of the following topics, please contact the person listed below:

New to the Parish, Mass Intentions, Baptisms, Adult Confirmation, RCIA or the CORI process?

Please Call the Parish Office at 978-663-8816, Mon-Wed. from 10am-1pm or email admin@billericacatholic.org

Funerals

If you have recently experienced the loss of a loved one, please contact the office at **978-663-8816** so that we can walk with you through this difficult journey.

Weddings

Congratulations on your engagement! Please call 978-663-8816 or email admin@billericacatholic.org to schedule an appointment at least 6 months before your wedding.

Homebound and Sick

Do you know of someone who is homebound and would appreciate a visit from a priest? If you know someone in the parish who would like a visit to receive the Eucharist, please call the office at **978-663-8816** to arrange a visit.

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"Jesus Wept." John 11:35



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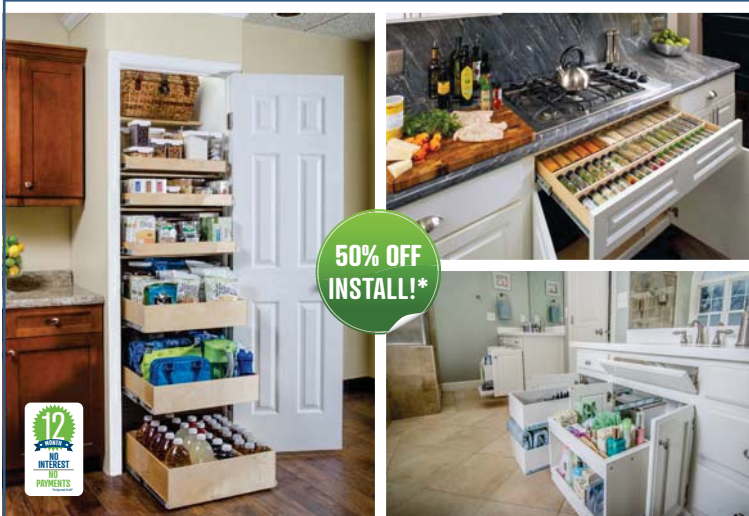


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- Fr. Richard Clancy

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