

# Sixth Sunday of Easter

*"Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him." (Jn 14: 23)*



*St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish  
May 25, 2025*



Dear Parishioners,

This weekend's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles recounts a pivotal moment in the life of the early Church: what many consider the first Church Council—the Council of Jerusalem. It was here that the Church began to define its universal mission more clearly, discerning how Gentile converts were to be welcomed into the community of faith.

Fr. William Kurz, SJ, of Marquette University, offers a beautifully concise summary of this council's importance in his commentary on Acts, part of the Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture series:

"The Council of Jerusalem is unquestionably a climactic moment in the history of the Church, for in it the Church's message is decisively extended to all nations. The council reaches conclusions on two related concerns: first, how Gentiles can be saved by Christ; second, how they are to relate to their Jewish-Christian brothers and sisters. The meeting provides today's Church with a helpful model for resolving controversies and discerning God's will as new questions arise... Salvation is by faith in Jesus rather than through the law... James... confirms [Peter's] teaching with the authority of Scripture... and decrees a pastoral application: Gentiles should not be required to be circumcised, but should follow certain practices to maintain unity in the community." (Kurz, Acts of the Apostles, pp. 232–233)

This moment in Church history reminds us that we are never left alone to figure out how to build the Church or share the Gospel. The Apostles believed, as we do, that their decisions were guided by the Holy Spirit. We continue to trust that the Holy Spirit directs the Church through her bishops and, in a particular way, through the ecumenical councils of the Church—twenty-one in number, from Nicaea I in 325 to Vatican II in the 1960s.

Though the Council of Jerusalem predates the formal structure of the Papacy and is not officially counted among the ecumenical councils, its inspired conclusions were embraced with authority by the whole Church. It reveals a model for discernment: listening, dialogue, witness, Scripture, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This same Holy Spirit is promised in this Sunday's Gospel from John 14, where Jesus tells His disciples:

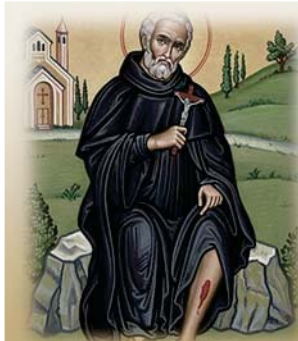
"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth... You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

We live in what the Church calls the Age of the Holy Spirit. Through the gifts we received in Baptism and Confirmation, we share in the ongoing mission of Christ. The Spirit empowers us to bear witness to Jesus—the Way, the Truth, and the Life—in a world searching for meaning and light.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to renew in us the courage and clarity of the Apostles, so that through our lives, the Light of Christ may shine ever more brightly in our parish and our community. Come, Holy Spirit!

In Christ,

*Fr. Chris Casey*



## Healing Mass in Honor of St. Peregrine Patron Saint of Cancer Patients

On **Wednesday, May 28th**, a liturgy will be celebrated at **6:30PM** in honor of St. Peregrine at the Immaculate Conception Church on East Merrimack Street in Lowell. St. Peregrine is the patron saint of cancer patients. During this Mass, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be offered to those who wish to partake of this sacrament of God's healing. All are invited to come and pray. **UPDATE: Fr. Chris has had a change in schedule and will no longer be concelebrating this Mass.**





## Office Closed For Memorial Day Holiday

The Parish Office will be closed for the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. The office will reopen on Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. The clergy and staff wish all a happy and safe Memorial Day 2025!

## St. Matthew's Choir – Summer Break Announcement

St. Matthew's Choir will be taking a much-needed and well-deserved break for the summer. Their final Mass before the break will be on **Sunday, June 8th at the 11:00 AM Mass**. The choir will return in **mid-September**. We are always looking for new members to join us—no prior experience necessary, just a love for music and community! Call the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** for more information. Happy Summer from all of us at St. Matthew's Choir!



### Ascension Thursday Mass Schedule

**Thursday, May 29**

9:00 am St. Theresa

12:05pm St. Andrew

6pm St. Theresa

Ascension Thursday, celebrated 40 days after Easter, commemorates the bodily ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven in the presence of His apostles. It marks the end of His earthly ministry and the fulfillment of His promise to send the Holy Spirit. This solemn holy day reminds us of Christ's glory and His continued presence with us as our risen Lord. Let us reflect on His command to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth, as we await His return in glory.



## 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 contact Chris Kilburn, Director of Finance and Operations at **978-663-8816** or at [billericacatholic.org](http://billericacatholic.org).



## Goodbye in Honor of Deb Fergus and Karyn Moody

You are invited to a Goodbye Party in honor of Deb Fergus and Karyn Moody on **Saturday, May 31st after the 4pm Mass at St. Theresa in Father McCormick Hall**. Let's come together to celebrate their incredible impact on our parish community as they embark on this next chapter of their life. We are blessed to have had their dedication, and we look forward to celebrating with you all! 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** or [heather.murphy.ccb@gmail.com](mailto:heather.murphy.ccb@gmail.com).



## Pray the Rosary with the Legion of Mary

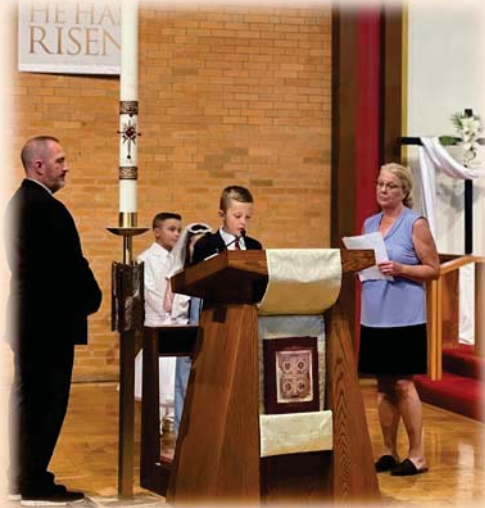
You are invited to join the Legion of Mary in praying the Rosary on **Thursday, May 29th at 5:30 PM**, before the 6:00 PM Mass of the Lord's Ascension — a Holy Day of Obligation. All are welcome to come together in prayer and reflection.

## First Communions Celebrated at St. Matthew Parish



Congratulations and God's abundant blessings to the children who received Our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion for the first time. May they grow in love for Him with all their hearts and remain faithful throughout their lives.

A heartfelt thank you to the parents and ministers who have lovingly guided the children through this important chapter of their faith journey. Your dedication and support are truly appreciated.





## A Joyful Announcement for Our Parish Family



With hearts full of gratitude and joy, we are pleased to share that the former rectory at St. Andrew Church will now be home to a community of religious sisters whose mission is both powerful and deeply compassionate. The Sisters of Good News, who minister to women and children who are survivors of human trafficking, will be taking up residence in what will now be known as The Convent of the Sisters of Good News.

Based in Lowell, the Sisters of Good News work on the front lines of one of the most urgent human rights issues of our time. Their ministry offers safe housing, support, and healing to women who have endured the unimaginable, as well as to their children who are beginning life anew.

It is a profound honor to welcome them into our parish community. Their presence brings a new and vital dimension to our call to witness the Gospel. While the work they do is serious and challenging, their faith, hope, and commitment are deeply inspiring. We anticipate the sisters will move in at the end of May.



You may see the Sisters around Billerica and at parish events—please extend a warm welcome when you meet them! In the coming weeks, we also plan to host a special evening where the Sisters will share more about their mission and how we can support their efforts. It will be a wonderful opportunity to meet these women of faith and learn firsthand about the transformative work they are doing.

Let us joyfully welcome them and prayerfully accompany them in their mission. May the Convent of the Sisters of Good News be a place of peace, prayer, and new beginnings.

**Welcome, Sisters of Good News!**

### ***2025 Catholic Appeal... Forward in Faith***

***We are pleased to share that we have raised \$63,766 (88%) of our 2025 parish goal of \$75,800.***

**WE ARE CLOSE! LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO REACH THE GOAL!**

We are blessed to have the support of parishioners such as yourself. We show our love and thanks to God by sharing our gifts. Every gift is important, not so much for how much it is, but because of what we become through the act of giving it. The Church itself is one of God's great gifts.



The Catholic Appeal supports many ministries at work here in at St. Matthew Parish. Some examples include the Pro-Life ministry; Faith Formation of Children; and Parish Services (with assistance multiple times from various resources at the Pastoral Center – property management, legal, HR, and more). 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 making an on-line donation at [www.bostoncatholicappeal.org](http://www.bostoncatholicappeal.org) , or using the QR code to the right.

***Remember-if we reach our goal, a % of the funds are returned to the parish!***



## 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

**REGISTER WITH QR CODE BELOW:**



**Current** grade 6 - high school youth invited to be Counselors

**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](mailto:deb.fergus@billericacatholic.org)

**Hope to see YOU at VBS 2025!**

## Thank You for Another Great Parish Game Night!

Our final Parish Game Night before the summer break was another fun-filled evening, full of laughter and community spirit. A big thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make it a success! We look forward to welcoming you back in the fall when we resume these joyful gatherings. Have a wonderful summer! ~*The Parish Events Committee*





## Women's Club News



At their most recent meeting, the Women's Club honored our Blessed Mother with a beautiful May Crowning Ceremony. Kelly O'Donnell had the privilege of crowning Our Lady, while Cheryl Baker, led the group in praying the rosary. Following the ceremony, members gathered for a joyful pizza party, topped off with a delicious cake in appreciation of all their hard work and dedication to our parish.

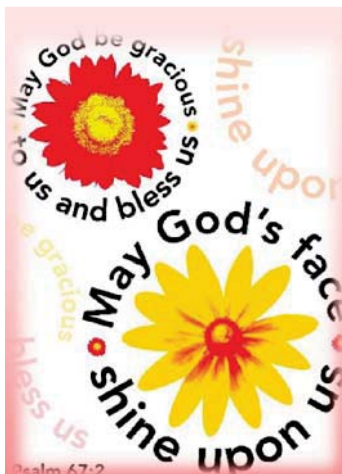
The meeting also featured a special moment as the group welcomed Ava Blodgett and Molly Fitzgerald, along with their families. Ava and Molly were introduced as this year's recipients of the Women's Club Scholarship. Each will receive a \$1,000 scholarship, which will be **formally presented during the 9:30 AM Mass at St. Theresa on Sunday, June 22nd.**



## THANK YOU from Heartbeat Pregnancy Center

It is from the bottom of our hearts that we extend a big THANK YOU to all who donated to Saint Matthew's Baby Bottle Fundraiser to benefit Heartbeat Pregnancy Help Center. Due to your extreme and abundant generosity, **\$14,907.94** was raised to help Heartbeat continue to serve needy Moms, babies and families in our community. Heartbeat is beyond grateful for your kind support and thanks each of you so very much. If you are interested in learning more or would like to get involved please contact Kathy Parsons at [Mk.Pars4@verizon.net](mailto:Mk.Pars4@verizon.net).





## Reflection Question of the Week ~ 6th Sunday of Easter

In our first reading, we hear more about the growing pains of the early Church. The Apostles were creating something new ~ communities of believers - disciples of Jesus Christ. There was confusion and discussion about who could be a disciple and differing opinions about what was essential to being a follower of Jesus. Sadly, there are even people today making the same argument, declaring who belongs and who doesn't belong, paying little heed to what the scriptures call us to. "Whoever loves me will keep my word." Today, we are clearly reminded to keep Christ's commandment and follow his word rather than succumb to any popular narratives of the day. Listen to Jesus words again, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you." Following the example of Jesus, not the example of the world is how are lead to life eternal.

- Take a moment to reflect on the presence of God in our lives. We can feel His presence in our hearts and in the world around us.
- What does it mean to you that God's presence is everywhere?
- What steps can you take to feel more connected to God's presence?



### Intentions for the week of May 24th-May 30th

Deceased Members of the Sullivan Family-Memorial

Thomas H. McQueeney, Jr.-Memorial

Vincenza, Ignatius and Louis Angileri-Memorial

Lois Spencer-Memorial

Richard Berglund and Dina Honesty-Memorial

Manuel Maura and Family-Memorial

Maria Sousa-Memorial

Isabelle Botte-1st Anniversary

Mary Dyer-Birthday Memorial

MaryBeth Walls-3rd Anniversary

Tamie Abrahamson-Memorial

### Intentions for the week of May 31st-June 6th

Deceased Members of the Caterino Family-Memorial

Jeffrey C. Keane-2nd Anniversary

Louis, Mariam and Paul Angileri-Memorial

Vitorini Sousa and Family-Memorial

Kathleen Murphy-Memorial

Dennis Hill-Memorial

Rebecca Miller-Memorial

Kay Borek-Memorial

Arthur Correa-Memorial

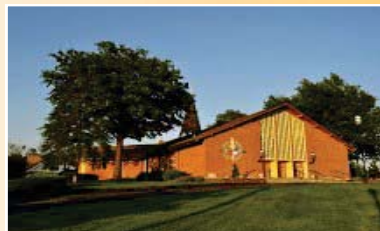
Frank and Delores Porter-Memorial



### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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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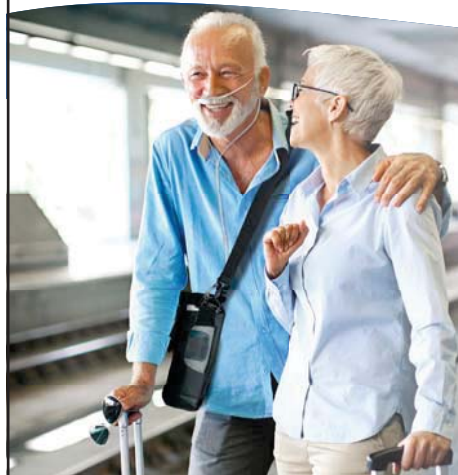
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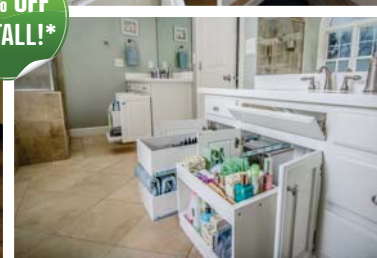
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- Fr. Richard Clancy

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