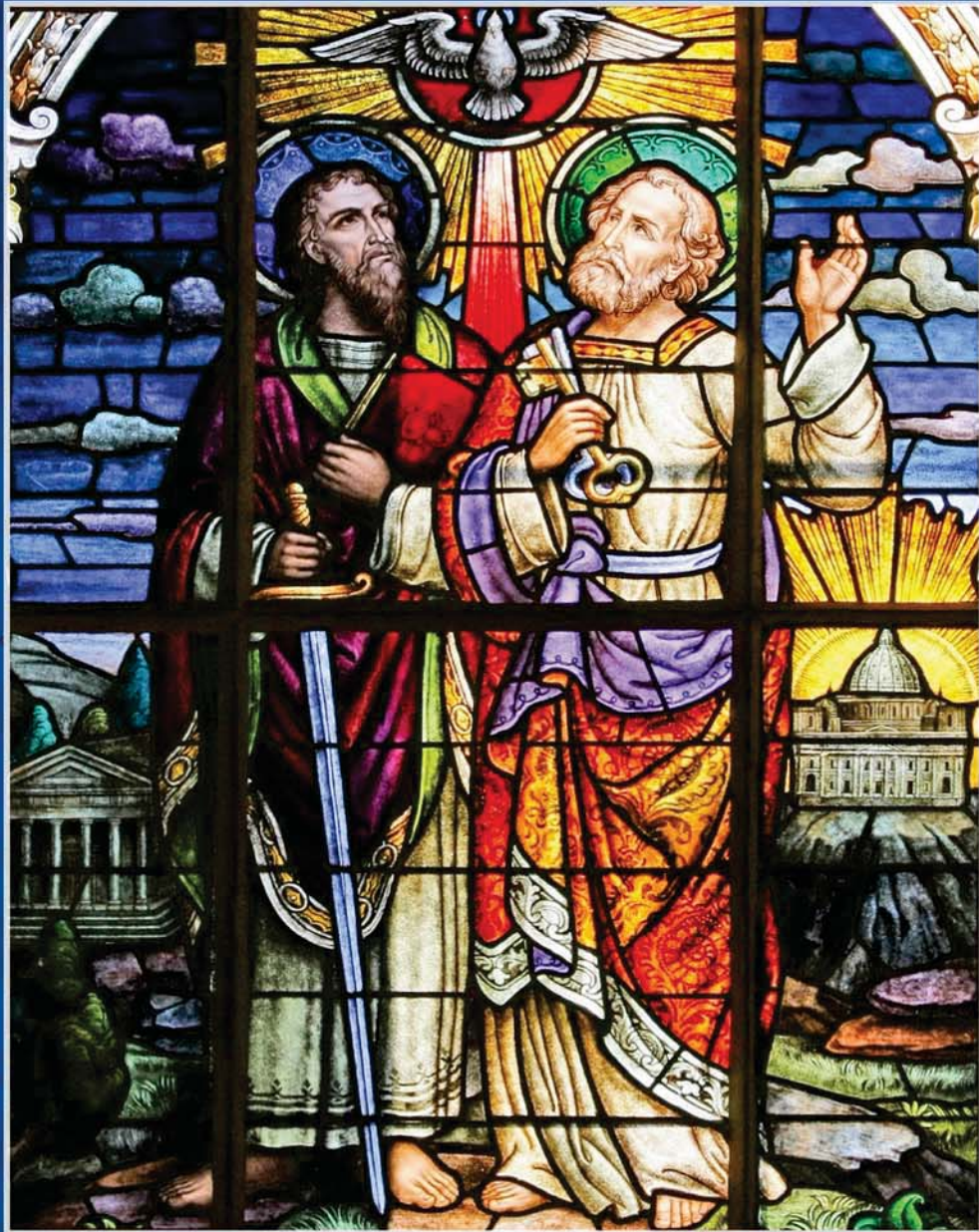


St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish
June 29, 2025



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
APOSTLES

SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES



Dear Parishioners,

This weekend the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles. The vestments worn this weekend are red, because both of these Apostles were martyrs. To understand why we celebrate this on Sunday, or why St. Peter and St. Paul “bump” Sunday Mass this weekend is to understand something called “the ranking of liturgical days.” It is one of those technical aspects of Church that matter a whole lot to liturgists and “Church Junkies”, but matter little to most people. Still, I think it is interesting and provides us an opportunity to understand something about the Church.

The Church has clearly defined guidelines about how to celebrate the Mass, which surprises no one of course, but if you were to wade into “Liturgical Arts and Sciences” your head would be spinning with words like simples, doubles, first class doubles, second class doubles, commemorations, vigils, octaves, and the list goes on and on. A much simpler way to understand Liturgical Ranking is to use the five categories of Solemnity, Feast, Memorial, Seasonal Weekday, and Ferial Weekday. A Solemnity is the highest ranking feast day. It commemorates an event in the life of Jesus or Mary or celebrates a saint important for the Church as a whole or for the local community, (for example the Feast of St. Patrick is a Solemnity in the Archdiocese of Boston because he is our Patron Saint.) The Mass of a solemnity has proper readings, and the Gloria and Creed are recited. Outside of Advent, Lent and Eastertide, if a solemnity falls on a Sunday, it is celebrated in place of the Sunday. A Feast has the rank of secondary liturgical days including lesser events in the life of Jesus, Mary or an Apostle (theologically speaking) or for major saints. An example of a Feast Day of the Lord in this category would be Epiphany. A Memorial is the commemoration of a saint of lesser importance. Many memorials are optional or only observed in specific dioceses, regions or nations. Seasonal Weekdays are a weekday in

a “strong” liturgical season (Advent, Christmas Season, Lent, Easter Season) on which no solemnity, feast, or memorial is observed, and the day would typically have specific prayers. A Ferial Weekday is a weekday in ordinary time on which no solemnity, feast or memorial is observed.

The Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul commemorates their martyrdom for the faith. It is what is known as a ‘first-class feast’ so it “bumps” Sunday. This day was a Holy Day of Obligation in the universal Church calendar, but each Bishop’s Conference can suppress the obligation as they have in the United States. This is a Holy Day of Obligation for England, Scotland, and Wales. It is a national holiday in Malta!

All of this liturgical gobbledygook matters little to most Catholics. But if you were wondering why I’m wearing red vestments this weekend, it’s not because we are doing Pentecost over! And now you know the rest of the story. The important thing about this day is not found in all the *what*, but rather in the *who*. Today’s Solemnity celebrates the martyrdom of two of the greatest Saints in Christendom. The New Testament is filled with their stories, their writings, and their spirit. The Church is filled with their wisdom and inspiration. St. Peter is the rock upon whom the Christian Church is built. St. Paul is the “Apostle to the Gentiles” who dedicated his life after his conversion to spreading the Gospel he once tried to squash. Their humanity reminds us that all saints are sinners. Their discipleship inspires us to persevere in our faithfulness to God regardless of the struggles we face, the weaknesses we have, or the mistakes we make. Saints Peter and Paul guided the Church in its earliest days. You and I help to guide it now. Take courage! Be faithful like they were! Saints Peter and Paul pray for us!

~Fr. Chris



Calling All Crafters!!!

Saint Matthew the Evangelist Parish 2025 Christmas Fair

Do you love to knit, sew or crochet while relaxing on the beach or at your favorite lake? Do you enjoy spending the evenings after work or on the weekends creating beautiful pieces? The Saint Matthew the Evangelist Christmas Fair Committee is looking for you and would love to have your inspired designs available for purchase at the annual Christmas Fair on **Saturday, December 6, 2025** at Father McCormick Hall on the Saint Theresa Church campus!!

Please reach out to Barbara Solomon at bsolomon70@verizon.net or **978-663-3653** if you have any questions or would like to chat with her further about the types of hand-made crafts that you would be interested in donating. Thank you very much in advance for your time and assistance in making this year's fair a tremendous success!!

Parish Office Closed the Week of June 30th – July 4th



The Parish Office will be closed the week of **June 30 – July 4** to allow our staff a well-deserved opportunity for rest and rejuvenation. We will reopen with our regular business hours on Monday, July 7. The clergy and staff wish you and your loved ones a safe, joyful, and festive Fourth of July holiday!

2025 Catholic Appeal

WE ONLY NEED \$2,439 TO REACH OUR GOAL!

Thank you! We are almost there! Let's reach the goal of \$75,800!

Every gift is important, no for how much it is – but what we become through the act of giving it. The Church is one of God's greatest gifts.



You've heard us mention the good the Catholic Appeal does – right here in Billerica. We are able to use many of the resources and departments at the Pastoral Center – at no charge to the parish. This have saved the parish many thousands of dollars. The Catholic Appeal funds the Central Ministries at the Pastoral Center making all of these resources available.

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 provided.

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



UPDATE- America Red Cross Blood Drive

THURSDAY, July 10th

2:00-7:00pm

at

St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish

In Fr. McCormick Hall

If you would like more information or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact Heather in the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** or heather.murphy.ccb@gmail.com. You can also go to redcrossblood.org to schedule your appointment online. Thank you in advance for giving this life saving gift.



Registration for Faith Formation 2025-2026 is now OPEN!

We are ready for your family to register for our 2025-2026 Faith Formation ministry. We ask that you sign up now in order for us to better serve your family. **Once again, we are offering an incentive for those that register early!** At this time no commitment is required to a specific day and time. See all the information below for when classes will meet.



What's the Next Step?

REGISTER! To take advantage of the EARLY REGISTRATION INCENTIVE, please **SIGN UP AND PAY IN FULL** by July 31st! Use the link or the QR code.
<https://billericacatholic.org/2024-2025-faith-formation-registration>

Registration Offerings

PRIOR to July 31st \$50 SAVINGS

1 child	\$110
2 children	\$210
3 + children	\$260 (CAP)
CONFIRMATION	\$210

AFTER August 1st

1 child	\$160
2 children	\$260
3 + children	\$310 (CAP)
CONFIRMATION	\$210

As a reminder to help make your faith formation experience smoother:

The online registration form is intuitive, asking you only the questions that provide us the information we need. No additional on-line forms! All questions are on the registration form. Sign Ups for Gatherings can be changed in "real time" as your family schedule changes. There are multiple options for making your offering - pay now, partial payments, mail offering, and asking for financial assistance.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES for Faith Formation

Whether you are a student seeking service hours, a seasoned catechist, retiree, busy parent, first-time volunteer, or someone who is still on the fence about volunteering...**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!** Essential to the success of our Faith Formation ministry is having a dedicated group of adult and young adult volunteers willing to help and nurture our faith with our youth.

If you would like to learn more about volunteering opportunities in Faith Formation or other Parish Ministries, please reach out to the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** to discover how **YOU** can **CHANGE** the lives of children, young adults and families.

Families of Faith: Learning and Living God's Love

We're excited to introduce some meaningful updates to our Faith Formation Program for the upcoming year—shaped by your helpful feedback!

Here's a preview of what's coming:

- **Grade 1: "Play and Pray"** Offered once per month on Sunday mornings, centered around the 9:30am Mass at St. Theresa. A joyful introduction to faith for our youngest learners!
- **Grade 2: "Mass and Class – First Sacraments Prep"** Meets once per month either Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon, with options centered around the 9:30am or 5:00pm Masses at St. Theresa. Families may choose the time that works best for them.
- **Grades 3–7: "Come and See Gatherings"** Monthly gatherings on either Monday or Tuesday at **4:00–5:15pm** or **5:45–7:00pm** in Fr. McCormick Hall at St. Theresa. *Weekend Mass attendance is strongly encouraged for all participants.*
- **Grades 8–9: "Teen Ministries – Confirmation Prep"** Meets once per month on Sunday evenings, centered around the 5:00pm Mass at St. Theresa.

This is just a brief overview—more details, including specific start dates and session times, will be shared soon as we finalize our plans. If you have any questions in the interim, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Parish Office at [978-663-8816](tel:978-663-8816). We look forward to another faith-filled year together!



Welcome into the Church !

Congratulations and God's many blessings to the family of **Rowan John-son and Logan Matthew** who we welcomed into our Faith Community through the waters of Baptism. We wish for them a lifetime of learning about God's great and merciful love. **For more information about scheduling the sacrament of Baptism for your child, please contact the Parish Office at 978-663-8816.*



A New Crucifix for Saint Theresa Church

We are excited to share that a new 10-foot crucifix will soon grace the front of Saint Theresa Church, taking the place of the Jubilee Year emblem that has faithfully adorned our church for the past 25 years. With the beginning of a new Jubilee Year in the Church, this is the perfect moment to lift high the Cross of Christ as a visible sign of our faith, hope, and love.

This beautiful crucifix is being custom-crafted from white oak, stained to match our church doors, and will feature a reverent corpus of Jesus. We are grateful to Barry Clifford and Clifford Construction for bringing their expertise and care to this sacred project.

We would like to invite individuals or families to consider making a donation toward the cost of the crucifix (approximately \$10,000). A gift may be made in memory of a loved one, or simply as an offering of devotion. We welcome one sponsor or several, and we will consider a small commemorative plaque.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact the parish office at [978-663-8816](tel:978-663-8816).

May the Cross of Christ be our strength and our joy! ~ Fr. Chris



Sisters of the Good News Presentation from Last Week

With many of our parishioners already away for the summer months, we wanted to include the presentation the Sisters of the Good News shared last weekend at all of the Masses, for those who may not have been with us. The Sisters spoke beautifully about their mission and ministry. Their message was both inspiring and a reminder of the universal call to discipleship.

~~~~~  
Good Morning /Good Afternoon Everyone—

We are the Sisters of Good News. We came to Massachusetts from India last winter to serve at The O'Connell House. This is our first time in the United States! We first want to say a sincere thank you to Father Chris Casey, and really everyone in this parish, for giving us such a warm welcome! You've all been so generous with your time and gifts! We love our new convent, our new parish - our new home! We're looking forward to getting to know you all as we are here more often. Thank you also Fr. Casey for inviting us to speak to everyone here today about the work we are involved in...

As I mentioned, we came here to work at *The O'Connell House*—it's a new safe home in this area that serves women who have been trafficked and who may be pregnant and/or may have small children. (There are only three houses like it in the United States!) We also have a unique model called the "*Sister Care Model*"— We Sisters are Caregivers to the residents and provide 24/7 care ---we are the loving, nurturing presence in the house---like mothers, we provide the love these women so desperately need!

You may not think human trafficking affects you, but believe us it does -- it happens *everywhere*--- in our own home countries of India, in the United States, and yes, even right in *your* own neighborhoods! It crosses all races, religions and socio-economic status. It truly can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. There are currently 50 million people trafficked worldwide, the majority are women & girls, and boys are affected as well, with the average age of entry being 11 to 14! And social media is a major factor in the increase of numbers. Parents--you need to be educated about this to protect your children!

Trafficking is a very lucrative business with profits reaching over \$260 Billion dollars each year – you may wonder how that could be? It is because you can sell drugs or weapons only once, but persons can be sold over & over again.

The women come to us from all over –they are identified by hospitals, local Police, FBI, Homeland Security and other shelters – and they need a bed placement. Currently, there is a *severe* shortage of beds for trafficking victims because they need very specialized care for complex trauma (they won't receive the help they need by going to just any shelter, as good as it may be.) The O'Connell House provides a solution, where women and their children are not only offered a bed, clothes and food, but also hope & healing in a safe, secure environment. They come with nothing, and they can stay up to 2 years, a typical stay averages 18 months. We work together with the healthcare and community social services to get all the necessary therapies and services they need—we provide for all physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Ultimately helping them to

transition to the next phase, and achieving their goal of independent living. The O'Connell House helps them go from being a victim, to being a survivor---while restoring their dignity.

Let me share some positive news--- We are very happy to tell you that our first baby born from The O'Connell House just celebrated her first Birthday this past April!! Her Mom named her "Susie" -- after the social worker at the hospital recognized the signs of trafficking and reported it -- Mom credits the social worker for saving her life.

We've had a few "firsts"...We also recently watched our first 'graduate' from our program to a more independent program ---which was so rewarding! This work is difficult, but we experience great joy from watching the women grow, heal and transform into the beautiful person God made them to be.

As you leave Church today, please make sure you take a brochure about The O'Connell House. You never know when you might need to reach out to us for help, or give it to someone who does! It has information about our services, along with our website, and ways to support us.

We are so very grateful for any donation you may be able to offer. Some people have asked about checks---you can simply make checks out to *The O'Connell House* and put them in the collection basket or mail them to the Parish Office ---again, we appreciate any thing you can give---we thank you in advance.

If you're unable to give at this time, we completely understand, we simply ask you to please keep us, and our residents and their children, in your prayers. We will do the same for you.

It's been a pleasure sharing about our work with you today. Thank you again for your warm welcome to us!!

May God Bless you all!

*~Sister Vimala, Sister Sophie, Sister Savi, Sister Suneetha*

## A Blessed Morning with the Legion of Mary



This past Sunday, June 22nd, the Legion of Mary led a reverent recitation of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary at St. Theresa Church before the 9:30 AM Mass.

Following the Mass, Legion members hosted an informational table with literature about our apostolate, as well as blessed Rosary beads for parishioners to take home. Members were also available to answer questions and share about the many *Spiritual Works of Mercy* we joyfully carry out in our community.

It was a grace-filled morning, and we are deeply grateful to Our Lady for her intercession!

We warmly invite you to visit one of our meetings—we gather every Tuesday at 2:30 PM in the Parish Offices at St. Theresa. Come pray the Rosary with us and discover more about the beautiful mission of the Legion of Mary.

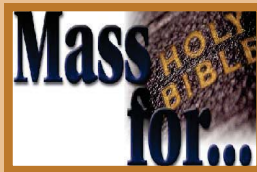
**Our Lady of Hope, pray for us!**

## Reflection Question of the Week ~ Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul



We celebrate today two great saints: St. Peter, the first Pope, and St. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. We hear in our readings that they were two distinct personalities who came from different backgrounds and were given two distinct missions. Their courageous proclamation of their faith and their unwavering devotion to Christ and his teachings is a challenge we face each day. Let us pray for that same courage and dedication so that we will be bold witnesses to Christ's love, compassion and forgiveness.

- Saints Peter and Paul helped to build the early church. Through their work and sacrifices they helped to spread the Gospel throughout the world.
- How can you show courage in living and sharing your faith with others?
- Their examples teach us to trust God, seek forgiveness and stay strong in faith.



### Intentions for the week of June 28th - July 4th

Gertrude Higgins-17th Anniversary  
Joan Lewis-Birthday Memorial  
Mina Pawlowicz-Birthday Memorial  
John Doherty-1st Anniversary  
Rafaela and Harold J. Gentner-Memorial  
Grace and Joseph Caltabiano-Memorial  
Maria Taber-Memorial  
Mary, Edward and Daniel McNulty-Memorial  
Doris Maher-Memorial  
Sister Eileen Prior-Memorial  
Laure Saade-4th Anniversary

### Intentions for the week of July 5th-July 11th

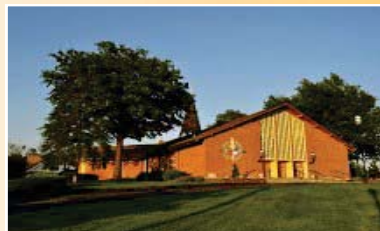
Varghese Thomas-Memorial  
Sara Orsborn Anzuoni-Birthday Memorial  
Mary Faria-Birthday Memorial  
Cynara Ferrao-Memorial  
Peg Buffum-Memorial  
Karen Kirby-Memorial  
Dianne Rollins-Birthday Memorial  
Carolyn Smith-Birthday Memorial  
Roberta Sousa-Memorial  
Maria Sousa-Memorial  
In Thanksgiving for Zach's 3rd Birthday (living)



### 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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