



17th
Sunday
in Ordinary Time

St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish
July 27, 2025

THE ANSWER TO PRAYER

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Luke 11:9



Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday we continue reading from chapter 18 of the Book of Genesis. Last week, we heard how Abraham and Sarah were visited by three mysterious travelers. After sharing a meal, the visitors moved on toward the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These visitors have long been interpreted either as a manifestation of the Trinity or as God accompanied by two angels. In today's reading, we find Abraham walking with them, now within sight of the doomed cities.

Just prior to this passage (verses 17–19), we're told that the Lord deliberates whether to reveal His plans to Abraham, ultimately deciding to do so because Abraham has been chosen "to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice." What follows is a remarkable and almost humorous negotiation between Abraham and God—what's sometimes called the "50-45-40-30-20-10" conversation. Abraham intercedes boldly, asking whether God would spare the city for the sake of the righteous who might dwell there.

The aim of this story isn't merely to chronicle the fate of two cities; rather, it reveals the heart of God—a judge who is both just and merciful, able to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked.

In the end, only three people are saved: Lot, Abraham's nephew, and Lot's two daughters. Lot's wife, though initially spared, looked back in defiance of the angel's command and was turned into a pillar of salt.

As Christians today, we can see in Abraham's dialogue with God a model for prayer. Abraham approaches God with reverence—but also with boldness and persistence. This parallels the Gospel we hear this Sunday, where the disciples ask Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."

When Jesus teaches them, He invites them to call God "Father." The version of the Our Father that we know best comes from Matthew's Gospel, but Luke's shorter version offers us a challenge to deepen our understanding of prayer. Jesus encourages us:

"Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

It sounds simple—but what about when we ask and don't receive? When we knock and the door seems closed?

Is it because we didn't ask boldly enough? Or because God isn't listening? Or doesn't care? These questions are painful, and they can shake our confidence in prayer.

But maybe, like Abraham, the real fruit of prayer isn't getting God to do what we want—but drawing nearer to God's own heart.

Abraham speaks, God responds. There's a movement—not just in God, but in Abraham. By the end, their wills seem more aligned—even though the city is still destroyed.

Perhaps this is one of the deeper purposes of prayer: not to hand God a list of tasks, but to allow ourselves to be formed by Him—to be shaped into His likeness, and into communion with His will.

To persevere in prayer is to embrace the mystery of God. Think of the well-loved poem "Footprints." In times of sorrow, we may feel abandoned—but later we come to see that God was carrying us all along.

If I understand the purpose of prayer as deepening my union with God, not just solving problems, then my relationship with Him becomes bolder and more trusting. When God seems silent, I am not defeated, because I still desire to love Him more. And in that spirit, I may finally have the courage to pray the most perfect words of all: "Thy will be done"—and mean it.

~Fr. Chris

Special Collection – Catholic Charities Relief Efforts Texas Floods



As you may know, devastating floods in over twenty counties in Texas have brought enormous destruction and a great loss of life. The Guadalupe River rose some 26 feet in 45 minutes and resulted in the deaths of at least 27 children and camp counselors from Camp Mystic, a girls' summer camp. Currently there are 102 still missing! This was part of a large weather system that impacted most severely Texas as well as the southwest. Recognizing the immediate and growing needs, Catholic Charities USA is seeking assistance for relief efforts in response to the floods. A special second collection will take place on the **weekend of August 9th and 10th**.

If you would like to contribute, please address your checks to Saint Matthew Parish with "Texas Flood Relief" in the memo or you may contribute online at billericacatholic.org/givenow. **100% of your donations will be sent to Catholic Charities USA.**

People are suffering in Texas and the southwest. It is anticipated that local Catholic Charities will experience a strain on their resources. We appreciate your prayers and any contribution you are able to make towards this relief effort. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Staying Comfortable at Mass This Summer



As summer continues, we keep the air conditioning set at 72° in both churches to help maintain a comfortable and consistent environment. That said, we realize that cool air can sometimes feel chilly—especially if you're seated near a vent where the breeze is strongest.

If you've found it a little too cold during Mass, here are a few simple tips that may help:

- Bring a light sweater or shawl to Mass, especially if you tend to feel the chill.
- Try sitting in a different pew. Some areas

receive more direct airflow than others, so moving just a few rows can make a big difference.

- Let an usher know if you'd like help finding a warmer spot in church.
- For those who prefer a cooler seat, the breezier pews are yours for the taking!

We're grateful for your patience and understanding as we do our best to keep everyone as comfortable as possible. Thank you for worshiping with us—rain or shine, warm or cool!

Welcome into the Church !



Congratulations and God's many blessings to the family of **Bennett Robert and Chelsea Marcoux** 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.*



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EARLY INCENTIVE DISCOUNT SIGN UP AND PAY IN FULL BY JULY 31st



Since your registration at this time may require no commitment to a specific day and time next fall, we ask that you sign up now in order for us to better serve your family. **See all the information below! Use the link or the QR code provided** <https://billericacatholic.org/2024-2024-faith-formation-registration>.

Highlights for next year include:

Play and Pray (Grade 1) will be offered once per month on Sunday mornings centered around the 9:30AM Mass at St. Theresa.

Mass and Class- First Sacrament Prep (Grade 2) will meet once per month on Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon. Options will be centered around the 9:30am or 5:00 pm Mass at St. Theresa. Choose the option that works best for your family.

Gatherings (Grades 3 – 7) meet monthly 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.

Teen Ministries – Confirmation Prep (Grades 8 – 9) will meet once per month on Sunday evenings, centered around the 5:00pm Mass at St. Theresa.

The **online registration form** is intuitive, asking you only the questions that provide us the information we need and there are multiple options for making your offering - pay now, partial payments, mail offering, and asking for financial assistance.

Registration Offerings

PRIOR to July 31st **\$50 SAVINGS**

1 child	\$110
2 children	\$210
3 + children	\$260 (CAP)
CONFIRMATION	\$160

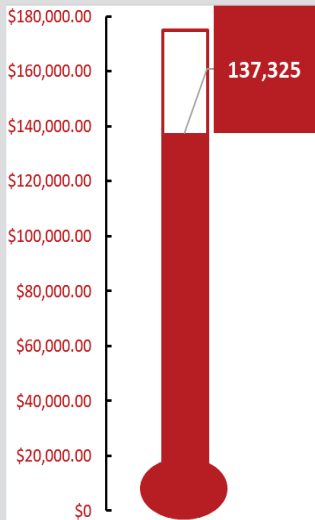
AFTER August 1st

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

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!**



Our **2024-2025 Grand Annual Campaign** continues. Thank You to all who have contributed and continue to contribute.

To date we have received just over \$137,000 – putting us on the path reach our goal of \$175,000! We are about 78% of the way there! THANK YOU! LET’S REACH OUR GOAL!!

As you know, the Grand Annual campaign supplements our weekly Offertory and is vital in keeping St. Matthew financially stable. We are grateful for and inspired by your significant offerings to St. Matthew the Evangelist and your self-sacrifice of making consistent contributions.

Realizing that each family has different financial circumstances, we are blessed and grateful for each contribution made. We have kindly asked each family for a donation of \$1,300 if possible. This could be broken down to approximately \$108.34 per month or \$25 per week. This is the equivalent of foregoing one small luxury each week and choosing a more budget-friendly option. Many have stepped up to meet the request – THANK YOU! Others continue to contribute monthly, weekly, and in a way that is best for their family. THANK YOU!

You may place your Grand Annual donation envelope in the offertory basket, mail it to the parish office, use the monthly Grand Annual envelope in the weekly envelopes, use the QR code to donate online at billericacatholic.org/givenow. Let’s work together to reach our goal of \$175,000 this year! Thank you for your generosity and the support of our parish !



OFFERTORY REPORT

We are pleased to present to you a report on revenue and expenses. This includes offertory (received weekly at Masses, by mail, and online giving), as well as other revenue received throughout the month.

The 2025 FISCAL YEAR ended on June 30th. During the next couple of months, we will review the year and begin to prepare the Annual Financial Report which will be presented to parishioners in the Fall of 2025.

Thank you for all you do through your time, treasure and talent to support our parish!

	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025
Total Offertory (by month)	66,479	46,034	51,869	60,192
Grand Annual Stewardship Campaign (by month)	9,310	4,636	6,916	4,082
Other Revenue Received (by month)	18,375	12,837	20,155	8,478
Total Revenue	94,164	63,507	79,140	72,752
Expenses	90,045	86,100	88,423	52,584
NET INCOME (LOSS)	4,119	(22,593)	(9,483)	20,168

Please note, the Net Loss in April and May 2025 were funded through the cash reserves from prior months.

Bank Operating Account Balance 6.30.2025 \$27,757

Jubilee Year 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

What does hope mean?



Hope is a virtue, meaning a good habit where we become used to acting hopefully in a balanced manner, not foolishly optimistic but rooted in trust in Jesus. It is a theological virtue, meaning we need God's grace to allow us live hope in the manner of children of God.

"Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1817). You learn more about the Jubilee and being signs of hope here: bit.ly/JubileeOfHope.



Silver Rose Program

Join thousands of Catholics across North America in asking for Our Lady of Guadalupe's intercession through the Silver Rose program.

In 1960, the Columbian Squires, a youth organization of the Knights of Columbus, came up with the idea of running a rose to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Monterrey, Mexico, to honor Our Lady. The rose was chosen to commemorate Saint Juan Diego and the miracle of the roses.

Today, eight roses travel along different North American routes that include Canada, the United States and Mexico. Every stop the Silver Rose makes throughout the pilgrimage is a rosary-centered occasion to pray for respect for life, the spiritual renewal of each nation, and the advancement of the message of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Your participation in the Silver Rose program, especially your prayers and pledge for life, are a crucial part of our mission to defend and support life in every stage and condition. The **Knights of Columbus** will be holding this special event on **Saturday, August 10th at 8:45 AM at St. Theresa Church, before the 9:30AM Mass followed by Coffee and Donuts in Father McCormack Hall. Please join us in prayer and fellowship!**

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patroness of the unborn, the Americas, and the Knights of Columbus.



Pray the Rosary with the Legion of Mary



You are warmly invited to join in the **weekly recitation of the Rosary** every **Friday at 11:30 AM** at **St. Andrew Church**, led by members of the **Legion of Mary**. You are also warmly welcome to visit one of their meetings, held **every Tuesday at 2:30 PM** in the **Parish Offices at St. Theresa**.

Come pray the Rosary, deepen your devotion to Our Blessed Mother, and discover the beautiful mission and fellowship of the Legion of Mary. All are welcome!

Our Lady of Hope, pray for us!

Anointing of the Sick



Just a reminder that the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick** is available on the **first full weekend of every month** at both churches.

The Anointing of the Sick is a beautiful sacrament of healing and strength. It brings the comforting presence of Christ to those who are seriously ill, facing surgery, growing weaker due to age, or suffering in mind, body, or spirit. Through prayer and anointing with holy oil, the Lord offers grace, peace, and courage to face life's trials, and sometimes even physical healing according to His will.

Anointings take place **after all Masses** and are offered to any parishioner in need of this special gift of grace.

If you or a loved one would like to receive the Anointing of the Sick at another time, please call the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** to make arrangements.

Serve at the Table of the Lord



Have you ever felt called to share your gifts as a **Lector** or an **Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion**?

Lectors proclaim the Word of God at Mass, helping our parish community hear and reflect on Scripture. Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist assist in distributing the Body and Blood of Christ, helping to nourish our parish family with Jesus' true presence.

We warmly invite new and returning volunteers to join these beautiful ministries. Training is provided, and all ministers must have a current CORI form on file.

If you are interested or wish to return to ministry, please contact the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** or admin@billericacatholic.org for more details.

Thank you for considering this special way to serve our parish and the Lord!

House Blessing



Whether you have just moved into a new home or live in one that has been in your family for generations, it is always fitting to pray for God's blessing over your household — asking that your home be filled with peace, love, and faith.

When we bless our homes, we entrust them to God's protection, asking Him to watch over all who live there and to guard us from all harm, both bodily and spiritual. As Jesus said to His disciples: *"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.'"* (Luke 10:5)

If you would like to have your home blessed, please contact the parish office at **978-663-8816**. We would be honored to help you invite God's peace and protection into your home.

Reflection Question of the Week ~ 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Lord, teach us
to pray.**

When you pray, say:

*Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins
for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,
and do not subject us to the final test."*

God was no stranger to Abraham. Our first reading gives us a glimpse into their relationship. Abraham's faithfulness and closeness to the God made him comfortable and free to engage in this back and forth with God. How do you react to Abraham's persistence? Such a conversation would never happen between strangers. Jesus urges us in the gospel to see the importance of prayer as a way of developing that relationship with God. He wants us to feel a special closeness to God, such that we can speak honestly and openly to God in our prayer. Developing that kind

of friendship with God takes perseverance in prayer, setting time aside each day for quiet honest heart-to-heart sharing. The fruit that is borne is lifesaving!

- Pray and say the Our Father. Really listen to the words. What do they say to you?
- How does the Our Father shape my relationship with God?
- God loves us. Take time to talk to God. We build our faith and strengthen our relationship with Him in prayer.
- When have I experienced persistence in prayer making a difference in my life?

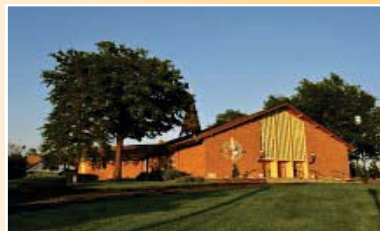


Intentions for the week of July 26th– August 1st

Paul T. Murphy-Birthday Memorial
Deceased Members of the Sargent Family
Maria Sousa-Memorial
Vitorina Sousa and Family-Memorial
Irene Bright-4th Anniversary
Agustin Perez-Memorial
Anne and Clyde MacDonald-Memorial
Dottie, Kenny and Mary Ellen MacDonald-Memorial
Carmella Casey-Memorial
Robert Harrington-Memorial
Joseph W. Sullivan-17th Anniversary
James Patrick Leyner and the Danaher and Layne Family-Memorial
Laure Gaade-4th Anniversary

Intentions for the week of August 2nd– August 8th

Danny and Margarette Coleman-Memorial
Ken Callahan-Memorial
Manuel Sousa and Family-Memorial
Dennis McCaffrey-Memorial
Americo Rodriguez-Memorial
Sister Yolande Savoie-Memorial
Poovakottu, Kuzhivelil and Jabhaz Families-Memorial
Sharon Nancy Murphy-Memorial
Carmella Casey-Memorial
Robert Harrington-Memorial



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*

Tom Mandile, *Maintenance Coordinator*

Youth Faith Formation Staff

Ann Carroll, *Director of Faith Formation*

Ext. 226

Karyn Moody, *Coordinator of Children's Ministries*

(*First Sacraments*)

Ext. 444

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, *Music 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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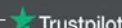
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