

St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish
April 19, 2026



3RD
SUNDAY OF
EASTER

THE APPEARANCE ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

Luke 24:30-31



My dear friends in Christ,

There is something deeply moving about the Gospel of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (cf. Luke 24:13–35). Two followers of Jesus are walking away from Jerusalem—away from the place where everything had seemed to fall apart. Their hopes had been shattered. “We were hoping...” they say. It is one of the saddest lines in all of Scripture.

And yet—it is precisely on that road, in that confusion, in that quiet disappointment—that the Risen Lord draws near.

They do not recognize Him.

He walks with them... listens to them... allows them to speak their sorrow. Then, gently, He begins to interpret the Scriptures, showing them how everything that had happened—yes, even the Cross—was part of God’s saving plan.

Later, they would say to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way?”

That line is worth holding onto this week.

Because the Emmaus story is not just about two disciples long ago—it is about us.

How often do we walk through life carrying burdens, disappointments, unanswered questions? How often do we fail to recognize that Christ is already walking beside us? The Lord does not wait for us to have perfect faith or clear understanding. He meets us right where we are—and He walks with us from there.

And then comes the moment of recognition. At table. “In the breaking of the bread.”

Their eyes are opened—not on the road, not even during the explanation of Scripture—but in that Eucharistic moment. The same pattern continues in every Mass: the Liturgy of the Word prepares our hearts, and in the breaking of the bread, we come to recognize the living presence of Christ.

This is especially beautiful for us as a parish in these weeks, as we prepare to celebrate First Holy Communion in the month of May. Our young people will come forward for the first time to receive the Lord in the Eucharist—the same Lord who walked with the disciples, the same Lord who revealed Himself in the breaking of the bread.

What a gift. What a mystery.

It is also fitting to reflect on how our churches themselves help us to “see” what the disciples at Emmaus came to understand. At Saint Andrew Church, the beautiful stained glass windows—depicting the saints, the Nativity, and even Saint Cecilia in the choir loft—lift our minds and hearts to the realities of heaven. At Saint Theresa Church, the windows dedicated to Our Lady and Saint Theresa, along with the striking rose window of Christ and His apostles, remind us that we are part of something much greater than ourselves. These sacred images are not merely decorative; they help us to recognize the presence of God among us.

Like the disciples, we are always learning to see more clearly.

The Emmaus story ends with urgency and joy. The two disciples, who had been walking away from Jerusalem, now turn back immediately. They return to the community. They become witnesses. That is the final movement of every true encounter with Christ: from discouragement to hope, from confusion to clarity, from isolation to mission.

My friends, this Easter Season invites each of us to walk that same path. To recognize the Lord who is already near. To listen for His voice in the Scriptures. To meet Him in the Eucharist. And then, with hearts burning within us, to go forth and share the Good News.

“Stay with us, Lord.”

And He does.

~Fr. Chris



PROJECT RISE

A DAWOODI BOHRA INITIATIVE

PROJECT RISE

Our friends in faith are again hosting a special distribution for our residents in need on **Saturday, May 2nd** at their beautiful Masjid on 246 Rangeway Road in Billerica from 10am-noon. With the way the status of the economy is, we are anticipating 250 families, if not more. This is a special distribution outside of the Community Pantry and is open to ALL in need. There is NO registration required, but an RSVP using email distrsvp@gmail.com does help to anticipate how many will be in attendance.

We are working in conjunction with the other faith communities in town and each parish has signed up for specific items. St. Matthew the Evangelist Parish is specifically asking for **bottles of glass/window cleaner**. Donation buckets will be provided at the front entrances of both churches next weekend or you can stop by the Parish Office during business hours where you may drop off your items. **All donations are due by Sunday, April 26th** so that they can be delivered on the distribution date.

In addition, on May 2nd volunteers from each faith community are welcome at 9am to help distribute these donations. In years past we have gathered around the traffic circle at the Masjid and have multiple stations to load cars for recipients. This is a Great Day of community and socialization for all. If you are interested in participating in this Distribution Day, please reach out to the Parish Office at **978-663-8816** or admin@billericacatholic.org to sign up.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Father McCormick Hall, behind St. Theresa's

Location: (church name)

August 10 - 14, 2026

The adventure will last: (VBS dates)

8:30 AM

Celebration begins at: (VBS starting time)

12:00 PM

The day's adventure ends at: (VBS ending time)

978.663.8816 x226; www.billericacatholic.org

For more information, call: (church phone number)

Family Faith Helpful Tip

There is a difference in knowing how to recite prayers and knowing how to pray. If your child is old enough to be verbal, you can start teaching them how to pray. Remember the ACTS acronym.

ACTS

Adoration
(tell Jesus how awesome He is)

Contrition
(tell Jesus the things I did wrong)

Thanksgiving
(give Him thanks for all the things I can see around me)

Supplication for others
(Who in my life needs prayer?)

Holy Week - Part 1

The Weeping Tree



Monday-Christm Mass at the Cathedral in Boston



Holy Thursday



Oil of the Sick



Oil of the Catechumen



Sacred Chrism

Foot Washing Ceremony



Eucharistic Prayer



Presentation of the Gifts



Procession to the place or repose



Father Chris, Father Jean, Father Romain,
Father Theo, Deacon Al, Kevin Roy, Joe Roy, Joe Ryan

Single Mothers Retreat

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Retiro "Experimenta la libertad en Cristo"



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Be sure to register using the QR code provided.

We are also looking for a few generous volunteers to assist with this event—especially to help with childcare during the day. This is a beautiful opportunity to support mothers in need of encouragement and renewal. If you are available or would like more information, please reach out to Claudia at 617-798-5795.

Requirements:

Must have completed CORI background check

Must be VIRTUS (Protecting God's Children) certified

Single Mothers' Retreat

Know a single mom who could use a day of peace, encouragement, and renewal?

A beautiful retreat is being offered on Saturday, May 2 at St. Mary's Parish in Waltham, led by the Sisters of Life.

This special day includes:

- Prayer, reflection, and inspiring talks
- Fellowship with other mothers
- Free childcare and lunch
- English & Spanish translation available
- Completely FREE — but space is limited!



2026 Catholic Appeal ~ Together We Are One

This year's Catholic Appeal theme, *Together We Are One*, is a reminder of our communion in the Lord Jesus Christ and our call to be united as the Body of Christ. Our diverse and complex Archdiocese is a family of faith with a shared mission to spread the Gospel.



One of the most meaningful ways that we deepen the impact of our Archdiocese's schools, parishes, and ministries is by supporting the Catholic Appeal. Your participation carry Christ's love into our communities and spread hope. 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 by using the QR code.

On behalf of Fr. Chris, Archbishop Henning and all who benefit from your generosity, Thank you!

Women's Club Bake Sale



The St. Matthew Women's Club will host a Bake Sale on **April 25th and 26th** in **Fr. McCormick Hall** following the **4:00pm, 8:00am, and 9:30am Masses**.

All proceeds from the Bake Sale will be donated to **Fr. Jean's Church in Dobinga**. Every cookie, cake, and loaf purchased helps lay another brick in building God's house in Dobinga. Thank you in advance for your kindness and support.

Knights of Columbus Raffle

The Knights of Columbus will be selling raffle tickets for their annual raffle after all the Masses next weekend. **The Grand prize is \$10,000!** Don't forget to get your tickets and hopefully one of our parishioners will be the big winner!

K of C - ASK ME

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to benefit the
Massachusetts State Council, Knights of Columbus

\$20,000 Cash Prizes

\$10,000 Grand Prize • (1)-\$3,000 Prize
(1)-\$2,000 Prize • (1)-\$1,000 Prize
(8)-\$500 Prizes

Risk Factors for Heart Disease: Don't Underestimate Stress

from the Desk of Nurse Betsy



Stress and Heart Disease: What's the Link?

Stress causes all sorts of minor physical discomfort—think sweaty hands and an upset stomach. But it can also raise your risk of serious heart problems, says Johns Hopkins cardiologist [Michael Blaha, M.D., M.P.H.](#), who frequently offers his patients advice on how to keep stress from threatening their heart health.

Perhaps the most surprising part of the connection is that stress can pop up in many different scenarios—from relationships to “good” jobs to sporting events. And all can take a toll on your heart health.

Stress can increase inflammation in your body, which in turn is linked to factors that can harm your heart, such as [high blood pressure](#) and lower “good” HDL cholesterol, Blaha says. But chronic stress can also affect your heart in a more indirect way. When you're worried, you tend to sleep poorly. You're also less likely to exercise, make healthy food choices, or watch your weight, Blaha says. All of these lifestyle changes can put your heart health at risk.

How to Protect Your Heart

“Too often, people consider their stress as almost separate from their health,” Blaha says. If you're struggling with any kind of stress, recognize that it can have harmful consequences. These steps can help you protect your heart during stressful times:

Get professional advice. Discuss your stress levels with your health care provider. This is especially important if you have other risk factors for heart disease, such as obesity or high blood pressure, Blaha says. Sometimes, just talking with your doctor can convince you to change your lifestyle.

Let stress motivate you. Turn stress into a *reason* to exercise instead of using it as an excuse to avoid physical activity, Blaha recommends. “When you have a stressful day, taking a break to walk with friends over lunch can take your mind away from the grind,” he notes.

Source : Johns Hopkins cardiologist [Michael Blaha, M.D., M.P.H.](#),

Is your child (Grade 4+) curious about our faith?

Was your child baptized, but has not received formal faith formation or
First Eucharist preparation?

This summer, we are offering small group faith formation for children who are older (current Grade 4+), but have not received First Eucharist and want to be fully initiated into the Catholic faith. Weekly sessions include the child and a trusted adult and encourage families to listen to stories from the Bible, talk about what was shared, pray, and finally, act out what you learned through fun and meaningful activities. The materials can be adapted for children of all ages. There is also a sacramental preparation component for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

Coming Summer 2026

Contact:

admin@billericacatholic.org
for more information.

PROJECT
NAZARETH

Community Sunday



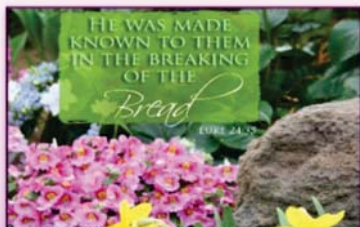
Community Sundays are a wonderful opportunity for us as a Parish Community to come together after Mass to socialize and enjoy one another's company while having a sweet treat and a nice hot cup of coffee. This month's Community Sunday gathering will be held on **Sunday, April 26th at St. Theresa after the 9:30AM Mass.** Children's activities will be available as well. Help is needed to continue with our Community Sundays. You can sign up to help by calling the Parish Office at **978-663-8816**. We look forward to seeing you there! Please note there will not be a Blood Pressure Clinic held this month.



Welcome into the Church !

Congratulations and God's many blessings to the family of **Emmett Francis and Lyla Anne** 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, contact the Parish Office at **978-663-8816**.*

Reflection Question of the Week ~ Third Sunday of Easter



In the gospel we meet two disciples on the road to Emmaus, a road that led out of Jerusalem, away from the place of Jesus' death. Their discouragement at his death led them want to walk away. But Jesus meets them where they were, listens to them and opens their minds and hearts. Then he did something familiar - "he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them" In that simple act their eyes were opened. They recognized him. This encounter with Christ changed them forever. Jesus is with us at every Mass in the scripture we hear, in the breaking of the

bread – in the Eucharist. Do we recognize him and know his presence? Like those early disciples, after receiving Christ in the Eucharist do we say, "Were not our hearts burning within us...?" Let us pray that our hearts will "burn within us" each time we receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

- Do I share my feelings openly with Jesus, even when they are negative or filled with doubt?
- How do I respond when others ask me about my faith in Jesus? Take a moment to reflect on this.

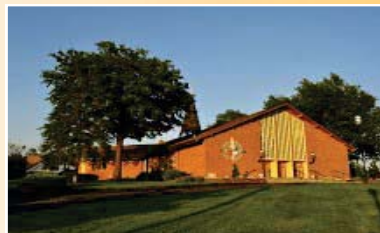


Intentions for the week of April 13th-April 19th

Joseph M. Doherty-3rd Anniversary
Kathleen A. Ruggeri-Birthday Memorial
Louis J. and Phyllis Comeau-Wedding Anniversary
The Massaro and Avellani Families-Memorial
Isabella Botte-2nd Anniversary
Anthony J. Chella-Memorial
Anne Fillis-Memorial
Pamela Schell-Memorial
Christopher and Richard Pomerleau-Memorial
Sr. Mary Eugenia-Memorial
Harold W. Blake, Jr.-1st Anniversary

Intentions for the week of April 20th-April 26th

Dorothy Rita Higgins-Memorial
Raymond and Claire Routhier-Memorial
Deceased Members of the Foppiano Family
Jane Rines-19th Anniversary
David Little-Anniversary
Deceased Members of the Little Family-Memorial
Ann Mulligan-Memorial
Rev. Thomas D'Lorenzo-Memorial
Robert C. Hartshorn-Month's Mind
Brendan Michael Sullivan-51st Anniversary
Robert O'Keeffe-Memorial
Bob Sances-Birthday 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 978-663-8816

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

Sean Reynolds, 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 of Music 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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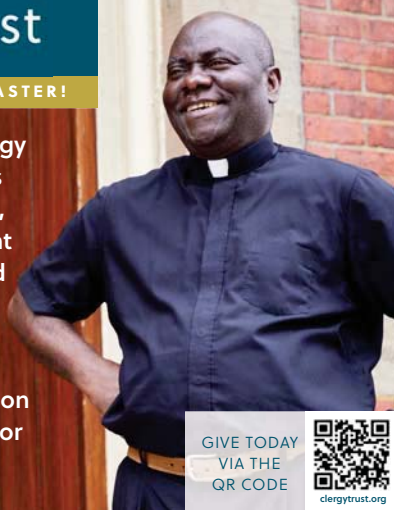


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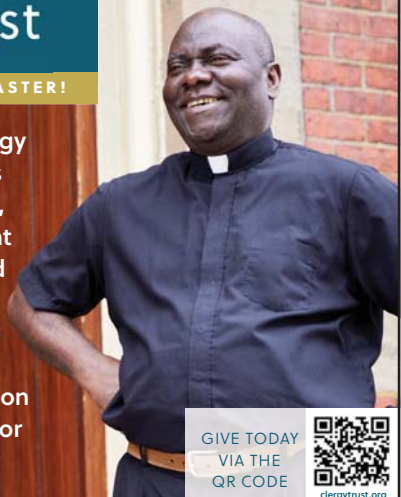



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