

Dear Parishioners,

As you know occasionally I make verbal announcements at Mass, and place notices in the bulletin about some of the various scams that impact our parish. **Please note that I will NEVER request any parishioner to donate things like Apple Gift Cards, iTunes Cards, other Gift Cards, etc. through emails or online.** Nor will I ever email parishioners to say that either me or Fr. Infanti are in an emergency and need you to send money or gift cards. Additionally, I will never request parishioners to send gift cards because I am out of town and need help. **I have asked our IT Ministry to show examples (SEE BELOW) of some of the types of SCAMS (Phishing Schemes) that have circulated online.** I am emailing you today to make you aware of some of the types of fake solicitation requests that have been reported. By the way... A general “phishing” message is a fake email or text sent to many people to **trick them into sharing private data like passwords or bank numbers.**

Here are some Common Signs that indicate Fake emails,

- **Urgent tone:** It says you must act right now or face bad results.
- **Fake sender:** The email address or phone number looks strange or misspelled.
- **Bad links:** It asks you to click a link to fix an account problem or claim a prize.

Here are some things to do to Stay Safe

- **Do not click:** Never touch links or open files in weird or suspicious messages.
- **Check the source:** Look at the real sender details instead of trusting the display name.
- **Delete it:** Clear the message from your inbox right away

Below is a real example that happened to someone from St Andrew’s parish. This is a good example of the display name not representing the real email address. The display name says “Msgr. Louis Marucci” but the real address is from marystrength10@gmail.com. My email address is Msgrmarucci@churchofstandrews.org, this can be verified by looking at an email from me and ALSO looking at the actual email address. The scammer in this case was trying to get gift cards from the parishioner. I have replaced the parishioner’s name with x’s: This is what the Fake message looked like:

BEGINNING OF SCAM MESSAGE:

Subject: Staff Support

From: **Msgr. Louis Marucci** <marystrength10@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 2, 2026 at 7:59 AM

To: <xxxx@gmail.com>

Good morning xxxx, are you available at the moment?

Many Blessings

Father Louis A. Marucci

The parishioner responded to the Scammer and wrote:

From: **xxxx** <xxxx@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 2, 2026 at 4:26 PM

To: Msgr. Louis Marucci <marystrength10@gmail.com>

I am sorry Msgr I just saw this email, xxxx

NOTE...the Scammer sent a second email to the Parishioner.

On Wed, Sep 2, 2026 at 7:59 AM Msgr. Louis Marucci <marystrength10@gmail.com> wrote:

Good morning xxxx, are you available at the moment?

Many Blessings

Father Louis A. Marucci

When the parishioner responded to the Fake Email, the scammer sent the following message. (Note this is NOT from me, but from the scammer).

From: **Msgr. Louis Marucci** <marystrength10@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 2, 2026 at 4:56 PM

To: xxxx <xxxx@gmail.com>

Thank you xxxx, I should have called your Cell but I'm out of town for a brief meeting and I got less access for calls. I'm reaching out to request your assistance with providing gift cards on behalf of the church. I have been working on providing incentives for the staff this month and I'm aiming at motivating them to keep up the good work. Thought it would be a good way to start the new month.

Many Blessings

END OF SCAM MESSAGE:

Note the following points:

1. This is **NOT** my email address, although it displays my name.
2. Notice that **the second message from scammer is exactly the same**
3. The response email says I should have called your cell but instead says I am busy so **please give gift cards**

Fortunately, the parishioner noticed the points above and directly. The Parishioner knew immediately that it was a scam attempt.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY SOLICITATION FROM THE PARISH WILL BE IDENTIFIED IN THE PARISH BULLETIN OR THROUGH VERBAL ANNOUNCEMENTS. IF SOMETHING APPEARS TO BE SUSPICIOUS, NEVER RESPOND....SIMPLY CALL THE PARISH TO VERIFY BEFORE RESPONDING.