



CHURCH *of the* HOLY CROSS

631 South State Street
Dover, Delaware

302 674 5787
holycrossdover.org

522 Main Street
Marydel, Maryland

410 482 7687
iccmarydel.org



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

November 27, 2022

1st Sunday of Advent

holy cross

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

School Year, Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Summer, Monday-Thursday, 9 am-1 pm

SCHOOLS OFFICE HOURS

School Year, Monday-Friday, 8 am-3:30 pm
Summer, Monday-Thursday, 9 am-1 pm

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, Vigil, 5 pm
Sunday, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 am Spanish

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

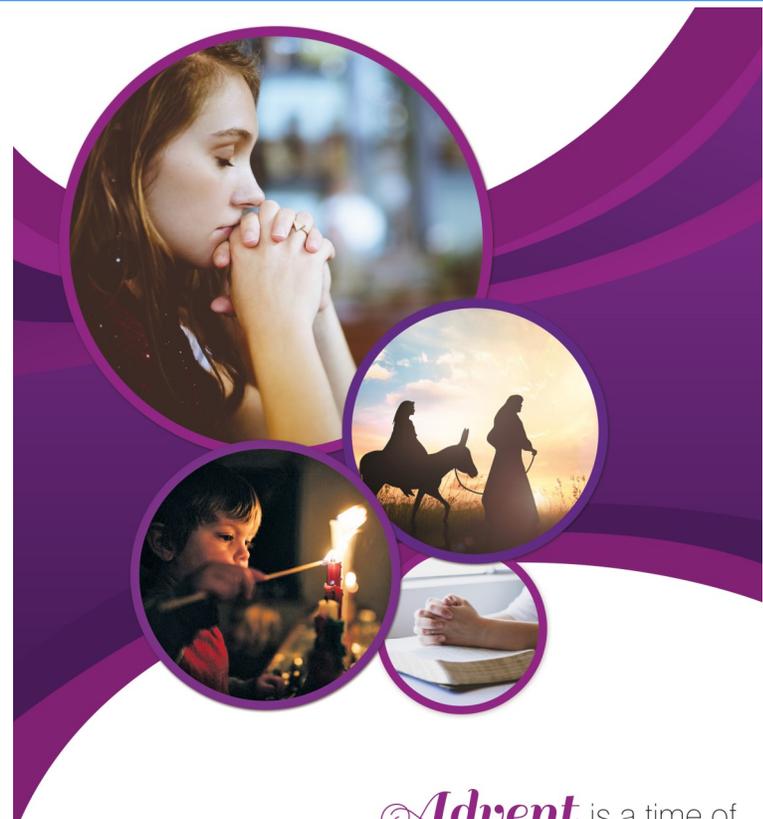
Monday-Saturday, 8 am
Federal Holidays, 9 am only (Presidents Day,
MLK Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day,
Labor Day, Columbus Day)

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Saturday, 8:30 am – 10:00 am,
Fridays in Lent, 5:30 pm

ADORATION CHAPEL HOURS

Daily, 5 am – 9 pm



Advent is a time of
Hopeful longing, Joyful expectation,
Prayerful penance and Spiritual
Preparation.

© Diocesan

icc

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9 am-5 pm
Closed Wednesday and Friday

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, 8:30, 11 am
Sunday, 1 pm, Spanish

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Thursday, 6 pm, Spanish

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Saturday, 9:30 am
Thursday, 6:30 pm

HOLY DAY SCHEDULE (HC AND ICC)

Mary, Mother of God, January 1
Assumption, August 15
All Saints' Day, November 1
Immaculate Conception, December 8
Christmas, December 25

Mass schedules for Holy Days of Obligation and other special days will be printed in the bulletin as each one draws near

RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS

The seven Sacraments of the Church were instituted by Christ to confer grace.

Sacrament of Baptism. Call the office to register for Parent Pre-Baptismal Instruction. For adults seeking to enter the Church and be Baptized, contact our Religious Education Office.

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). Children in our religious education program and school are prepared for Confession at age seven as part of First Communion preparation.

Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Children in our religious education program and school are prepared for First Communion at age seven. Adults seeking First Communion should contact our Religious Education Office. To request a visitation for Holy Communion to the Sick, contact our parish office.

Sacrament of Confirmation. Young people in our parish are prepared for reception of Confirmation in the ninth grade (age 14). Adults seeking Confirmation should contact our Religious Education Office.

Sacrament of Marriage. Couples planning for Marriage are to contact a parish priest or deacon one year in advance to set the wedding date and plan for pre-Cana instruction.

Sacrament of Holy Orders. If you believe you have, or someone you know has, a vocation to the Priesthood or Diaconate, please contact one of our parish priests.

Anointing of the Sick. For the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, which is administered by a Priest, a person or an immediate family member must make the request. Late night requests may not be able to be answered until the next day.

Giving Tree

The small Giving Tree you will find in the Gathering Space is filled with envelopes for you make donations to Holy Cross for our Samaritans and those in need in our parish and community.

The money collected will be used to help the Samaritan Outreach Programs and help those with financial needs.

Once you take an envelope, please place it in the Offertory Basket, mail or bring it to the Parish Office, or give it to one of our clergy.

Code Purple Tree

Our larger tree has been designated to collect some basic items to help with Code Purple in Kent County. Code Purple 's mission is to help those suffering from homelessness.

Take a tag if you can purchase and donate some socks, underwear, gloves, hats, scarves, or small toys for the children.

Return the item, unwrapped, and place it in the boxes under the tree. We will distribute these items to those helping the homeless this winter. Thank you.

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

Ending Nov. 6, 2022

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	\$18,859	\$28,000	(\$9,141)
YTD	\$496,258	\$540,500	(\$44,242)
Needs	\$860	\$1,604	(\$744)

WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending Nov. 13, 2022

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	\$4,033
Second Collection	\$303

Thank you to all advertisers in our bulletin.
We appreciate your support!
If you know of someone who would like to advertise in the bulletin, please contact Diocesan Publications at 800-233-8200.

Dear Parishioners,

The Season of Advent has arrived — and this year in 2022, we experience the longest possible Advent: 28-days. So, this year we are blessed with something that seems negative in most aspects of life: more time for waiting. Or in a more understandable phrasing: more time to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

So Patiently. *“I’ve been standin’ here waitin’ Mister Postman, so patiently / For just a card, or just a letter sayin’ he’s returnin’ home to me.”* Those words peppered the 1961 Marvelette’s hit “Please Mr. Postman” — and they are oft invoked in my Advent columns annually. And now, faster than you can say doo-wop doo-wop, Advent, the season of waiting for Christ’s birth and his second coming, is here. It is a Season in which we are called to wait, just like the singer of Please Mr. Postman: *“so patiently.”* For the Church, Advent is a very special season that prepares us spiritually, eschatologically and logistically for Christ. Spiritually, it focuses us on God coming into world in the flesh (incarnate) at Christmas in the person of Jesus Christ. Eschatologically (meaning looking towards the end-times), it prepares us for the Second Coming of Christ, when he will come not as Savior of mankind, but as its judge. Logistically, it revs up the engine of the new Church year during which we worship and celebrate our Savior, Jesus Christ — the first Sunday of Advent is our New Year’s Day.

Four Praying Weeks until Christmas. But what is Advent specifically? Let’s start with some basic background: The word Advent is from the Latin *adventus* for “coming” and is the name of the four-week period of preparation leading up to the birth of the Lord on Christmas. Advent always begins on the Sunday nearest the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle (November 30) and it continues through four consecutive Sundays until the start of the first Mass of Christmas celebrated in the evening on December 24th. With the start of that December 24th evening Mass, the Christmas Season begins... but that’s a topic for another column!

The Waiting... is the Hardest Part. The late Tom Petty, in his 1979 hit, *The Waiting*, crooned that *“The waiting is the hardest part / every day you see one more card / you take it on faith, you take it to the heart / but the waiting is the hardest part.”* Not to be, dare I say, Petty, but for us, in our world today, waiting does seem to be the hardest part — we don’t like to wait for things. We use ATMs rather than waiting at a teller’s window, we use high-speed internet, we use FedEx, we use everything and anything that makes life move faster, etc. And yet, the Church tells us that waiting is good and valuable. Thus, we have Advent: a time of

spiritual preparation to ready ourselves for the Birth of our Lord. The Catechism (CCC 524) teaches us: “When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor’s birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: ‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’”

The Spirit of Advent. The Season of Advent, by tradition, is both penitential and preparatory. It blends together a penitential spirit, very similar to Lent, and a joyful spirit of preparation for the birth of Christ on December 25th. The penitential aspect, which is primarily noted during the first two weeks of Advent, calls us to reflect on our relationship with God as we look toward judgment at the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time. This part of Advent might invoke in us a little taste of “you better watch out, you better not cry, you better be good, I’m telling you why” — but the one coming back to town isn’t Santa, it’s the Lord, as our judge. This type of reflection is part and parcel of how we get ready for Christ. Advent gives you time for doing that! The refocusing of Advent away from the Second Coming and toward the coming of Christ at Christmas kicks in very directly in the last two weeks of the season. The readings and prayers at Mass and in the Church’s Liturgy of the Hours focus our eyes on the impending birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is during this time we are called to identify how we can get our hearts and homes ready to welcome our Savior — Jesus Christ — as God becomes man on that Christmas night. The Word become flesh and dwelt among us

The Color Purple. To give us a visual on the tone of the season of Advent, the Church denotes the color purple (violet) — just as with Lent — as the color of the season. In Advent, purple serves to symbolize both the penitential spirit and the time of anxious preparation. Thus, during Advent, the color of the vestments worn by the Priest at Mass is purple or violet. There is one variant to this color designation: On the third Sunday of Advent (for that day only) the option is given for the Priest to wear rose-colored (not pink) vestments. The use of the color rose is put in play as a way of symbolizing and awaiting the joyful coming of Christ announced in the first word of

HC & ICC CLERGY

Vy. Rev. James S. Lentini , V. F.	Pastor
Msgr. Daniel McGlynn	Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Brennan Ferris	Parochial Vicar

HC CLERGY

Mr. Philip Belt	Deacon
Mr. John Harvey	Deacon
Mr. Richard Kosior	Deacon
Mr. Robert McMullen	Deacon
Mr. Vincent Pisano	Deacon

ICC CLERGY

Mr. Sherman Mitchell	Deacon
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HC STAFF

Parish Office	302 674 5787
Jane Green	Receptionist, ext. 110
Diane Belt	Assistant to the Pastor, ext. 113
Kenneth Trojan	Business Manager, ext. 119
Michele Dornberger	Records/Asst. Bus. Mgr., ext. 116
Arline Dosman	Dir. of Hispanic Ministry, ext. 118
Tammy Korosec	CRE Religious Ed, ext 122
Linda Darling	Youth Ministry, ext. 123
Justin Wurzel	Maintenance Director
Len Dornberger	Cemetery Administrator, ext. 135
Michael Perza	Dir. of Music Ministry, 302 698 9302

MAILING ADDRESS

Church of the Holy Cross
631 S. State St.
Dover, DE 19901

ICC STAFF

Parish Office	410 482 7687
Marilyn Dixon	Office Manager
Alicia Poppiti	DRE Religious Ed.
Susan Venezia	Bookkeeper
Arline Dosman	Dir. of Hispanic Ministry

MAILING ADDRESS

Immaculate Conception Church
P. O. Box 399
Marydel, MD 21649-0399

HOLY CROSS SCHOOL

Catholic Education Pre-K3 to Grade 8
302 674 5787
holycrossdover.org/school

Linda Pollitt	Principal, ext. 111
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MAILING ADDRESS

Holy Cross School
631 S. State St.
Dover, DE 19901

WEDNESDAY MASS TIME TO CHANGE (HC)

The Wednesday morning Mass is now held at **8:15 am**. We switched to this new time on **Wednesdays only** to allow the school children to attend the morning Mass on Wednesdays. All other weekday morning Masses will remain at 8 am.

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY

The pre-Christmas clean-up is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 11th. This includes the removal of Halloween and Thanksgiving decorative items as well as anything in violation of the cemetery's Rules and Regulations. If you wish to reclaim your decorations for reuse, please do so by then. Your assistance in disposing of decorations at home will help reduce our clean up time and costs.

Christmas decorations (such as wreaths, poinsettias, blankets, etc.) are permitted from December 1st until March 1st. As always, thank you for your understanding and cooperation in maintaining our sacred grounds. For more information, contact Len Dornberger at 674-5787 x135

NEW PARISHIONERS (HC)

We welcome our newly registered parishioners:

- Jason, Erika, Emma and Alexander Holcomb
- Megan and Ryan MacCormac

NEWLY BAPTIZED (HC)

Congratulations to our newest baptized members:

- Amelia Zoé Rios
- Noah Ismael Betancourt Robles
- Carly Alejandra Landry Robles
- Kendrix Isaiah Julian
- Jacob Anthony Estrada Rodriguez
- Harper Brielle Scott

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DEC 4)

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 11:1-10

SECOND READING: ROMANS 15:4-9

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 3:1-12

COMPASSION STREET

People's Community Center, Rev. Paul Mast, and unhoused men and women in Dover present Compassion Street. It is an hour of song and testimony about homelessness in Dover. This takes place on Saturday, December 3, at People's Church of Dover, 46 South Bradford Dover. For more information, call 302-674-4177.

SAMARITANS

Thank you to all who contributed a turkey and/or other food items for our Thanksgiving baskets. Your generosity helped us to feed many throughout our community.

It's time to start again asking for help with food items for our Christmas baskets. We are also collecting hams for these baskets. Items can be left inside the door by the Samaritan doorway. There is a freezer there to put the meat into.

SODALITY (HC)

The next Sodality meeting will take place on Sunday, December 13, at 12:30 pm on the second floor of the Early Learning Center. New members are always welcome. Stop by to see what we have to offer.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Learn tools to revitalize romance and deepen communication in your marriage!! Get away for an intimate weekend – no group sharing required. We would love more couples to attend the next weekend. For information or to register, visit our website <http://www.wvme.org> or call Tony and Linda Massino at 302-648-2228.

NEW YORK TENORS ARE COMING TO WILMINGTON!

The Diocese of Wilmington will present The Magic of Christmas with the world-famous New York Tenors at 4 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 11, at Salesianum High School in Wilmington. Event proceeds will support the work of Catholic Charities.

The public is invited to experience memorable music, moments and magic through the vocal artistry of the New York Tenors, Andy Cooney, Daniel Rodriguez and Christopher Macchio, as they take audiences on a truly entertaining holiday journey.

A meet-and-greet with Wilmington's Bishop William E. Koenig and the New York Tenors will be held after the show. For show tickets, sponsorship information, and meet-and-greet tickets, con-

MASS INTENTIONS NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

28 MONDAY

HC 8:00 am Charles A. & Therese M. Stump

29 TUESDAY

HC 8:00 am Bridget McGlynn

30 WEDNESDAY

HC 8:15 am Louis Costa, Sr.

1 THURSDAY

HC 8:00 am Gregory Pike
ICC 6:00 pm For the People

2 FRIDAY

HC 8:00 am Joseph Hlafka, Jr.

3 SATURDAY

HC 8 am Theresa Dupuis
HC 5 pm Joe Miozza

4 SUNDAY

HC 7:30 am Carmen Campanicki
ICC 8:30 am Ann & Louis Adam
HC 9:30 am William Molinski
ICC 11 am Alexis DeFrancesco
HC 11:30 am Elena B. Rodriguez
ICC 1 pm For the People

(LI—LIVING INTENTION
DM—DECEASED MEMBERS)

tact Andrea Rotsch at 302-573-3120 or arotsch@cdow.org. Tickets may be purchased online at WilmingtonDiocese.simpletix.com.

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

"Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come." (Mt. 24:42) This scripture alludes to end times. We don't know for sure when we or our beloved will die but try not to end any day with anger against your spouse. Forgive before you sleep

SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass will be held on World Marriage Sunday, February 12, 2023, at 1 pm at Saint Margaret of Scotland Church in Newark, Delaware. The Mass coincides with National Marriage Week, February 7 through 12. For more information, please contact the Office for Marriage and Family Life 302-295-0657 or egaus@cdow.org

HOLY CROSS DEC.3/4, 2022

	EMHC		SERVERS
5:00 PM	J. Bieker D. MacLeish	M. MacLeish J. Salamone	A. Torbert B. Torbert C. Torbert
LECTORS			
J. Davis H. Walker			
7:30 AM	C. Brown J. Chandler	P. Sheldon M. Thompson	B. Gyamfi E. Gyamfi S. Shevock
LECTORS			
R. Pritchett			
9:30 AM	T. Arndt N. West	B. Whitworth R. Wiley	K. Fernandez J. Novack J. Novack
LECTORS			
C. Petka M. Sherlock			
11:30 AM	T. Hernandez E. Patzoriza	M. Richard	K. Espinosa C. Geronimo
LECTORS			
A. Luna			

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM	M. Dixon		
LECTORS			
D. Smith			
11:00 AM	G. Taraila		
LECTORS			
K. DeFrancesco			
1:00 PM	To be determined		

If you missed the training and would like to still help with being an EMHC to the sick and homebound or at Mass, please call the Parish Office so we can start preparing for another training session.

Lectors are also needed. Call the Parish Office if interested in this ministry. Thank you.

Altar servers are always needed, too. Call the Parish Office and we can start our list for the next training session.

We appreciate all those who volunteer to help out in these various ministries!!

ADORATION CHAPEL (HC)

Can you spare an hour to spend with Jesus? Our Adoration Chapel is open from 5 am to 9 pm Monday through Sunday. We have openings where you can spend quality time with Our Lord. Call Joann Pate today at 674-4496 to reserve a time for you.

SUNDAY	6 am, 4 pm, 5pm, 6 pm, 8 pm
MONDAY	5 am
TUESDAY	6 am, 12 Noon, 8 pm
FRIDAY	1 pm
SATURDAY	12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm, 7 pm, 8 pm

SWITCH TO eGIVING (HC)

Looking for a good stewardship habit? Try eGiving – it streamlines your generosity and lets you do even more to help Church of the Holy Cross grow our ministries that share the Good News of God’s love. You can make the switch today!

Signing up is easy from your computer, smartphone or tablet, and you can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Sign up today by visiting Faith.Direct/DE251. ‘Enroll’ to (Text-to-Give Number).

Thank you for your continued support of our parish family.

FOOTPRINTS

The Footprints Ministry, the Diocesan Miscarriage Ministry, offers resources for families on their journey after the loss of their unborn child, whether it was very recently or many years ago. We aid mothers, fathers, couples, and families with support, education, and compassion by providing books, guidance, and resources on the website www.cdo.org.

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT FUND

Aging religious need your help. Senior Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have offered their lives in service to others—educating the young, comforting the sick, seeking justice for the oppressed. Today, many are frail, elderly, and in need of assistance. Your gift to the Retirement Fund for Religious helps to furnish medications, nursing care, and other necessities. Please give generously to the second collection on December 3 & 4. For information, visit the following: cdow.org/ReligiousRetirementFund or RetiredReligious.org.

- El Foro Cristiano todos los viernes de 6:00 – 8:00 de la tarde en el salón Mateo/Marcos. hasta el 2 de junio tendremos la formación es para toda la familia. Este año el curso será sobre Signos, símbolos, sacramentos y sacramentales.
- Ministerio de Arte y Ambientación invita a que te unas a ellos. Dios nos ha dado a cada uno talentos para que lo usemos a la su mayor gloria y para el bien común, donar tu tiempo y ayudar a tu parroquia es algo gratificante y descubrirás todos los talentos que el Señor te ha dado, compartirás momentos agradables, aprenderás del otro y enseñaras a otros, es importante recordar y necesario que sigas el horario y directrices del Ministerio de Arte y Ambientación que es para decorar, limpiar, y ambientar nuestro templo para las celebraciones litúrgicas. Anótese con la Sra. Arline Dosman.
- Si usted desea colaborar con algo o desea participar con las celebraciones en honor a la virgen de Guadalupe anótese o hable con las Sras., Marta Espinosa, Mireya Rodríguez, Lina Mejía o llame a la oficina parroquial.
- El domingo, 11 de diciembre de 10 de la noche en adelante tendremos las mañanitas y el Santo Rosario Infantil. El lunes, 12 la santa Misa a las 7:00 de la noche, seguida por la procesión al gimnasio donde tendremos la cena y serenatas a nuestra virgen de Guadalupe. Póngalo en su calendario y celebremos a nuestra Madre.
- Si usted desea tomar una Posada por favor de anotarse con las Sra. Fabiola Cebrero-Gómez o Cristina Cebrero-Guzmán. Se les pide que se unan por

vecindario para tomar una Posada o por familias. Las Posadas son del 16 al 23 de diciembre.

- Si usted está interesado en participar y compartir sus talentos como lector, ministerio de música, ujier, ministros Extraordinario de la Comunión, Arte y Ambientación, dar Clases Pre - bautismales. Por favor hable con los coordinadores de los ministerios o llame a la oficina al 302-674-5787 ext. 118

ICC- EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

- Las Clases de Educación Religiosa son los domingos por la mañana, continúan hasta el 7 de mayo, de 9:40 a 10:50 a.m. Póngase en contacto con Alicia Poppiti @ 410-482-8939 o dre@iccmaydel.org para obtener más información. Las inscripciones ya están disponibles.
- No habrá Clases de Educación Religiosa el 27 de noviembre de 2022 debido a las festividades de Acción de Gracias.
- PRIMERA RECONCILIACION: 5 Sesión para niños es el martes 29 de noviembre, a las 6:30pm en el salón, la clase termina a las 7:30pm. Se su hijo no está inscrito por favor comuníquese con la Sra. Alicia Poppiti
- CONFIRMACION DE JOVENES: Tercera Sesión es hoy domingo, 18 de diciembre. a las 2:30pm en el salón.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next class is 12/4/22 at 3:00—5:00 pm. Interested in enrolling a student in Religious Education? Registration forms available at <https://holycrossdover.org/teaching-the-faith/christian-formation/k-8-formation> If you have any questions contact Tammy Korosec Early L either 302-674-5787 x122 or tkorosec@holycrossdover.org *****

LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)

Next class December 4 at 10:30 am in the Matthew/Mark Room in the Early Learning Center. Interested in enrolling a student in LAFF? Contact Tammy Korosec.

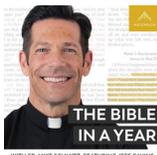
ADULT FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES (HC)

Date Change

Advent is right around the corner! Holy Cross is offering the class Advent: Preparing for Christ Cycle A. Classes will be held on Tuesdays at 9:00am or 7:00pm beginning **November 22nd** in the Matthew/Mark Room in the Parish Office. The class is free, there will not be a workbook provided.

THE BIBLE IN A YEAR (ONLINE)

In English: Father Mike Schmitz



<https://media.ascensionpress.com/all-bible-in-a-year-episodes>

In Spanish: Fray Sergio Serrano



<https://ascensionpress.com/pages/bi-y-espanol-registration>

CONFIRMATION AT HOLY CROSS

Confirmation Class -

Our next class takes place on Sunday, December 11 and Wednesday, December 14.

Youth Group -

All junior and senior high teens are invited to youth group. November 26 from 3-4:30 pm in the School

Cafeteria - we will be making tie blankets for the children at Shepherds Place. Please bring fabric scissors if you have them.

December 3 - Cookie Baking

From 9 am to noon. Please come help bake cookies for the Samaritan Food Baskets for Christmas. Bring a friend - we have many dozen to bake - all hand welcome and needed. Cleared adults are welcome to come assist.

MOUNT 2000: This retreat for high school teens will take place Feb. 3-5 at Mt. St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, MD. Please join us for a great weekend put on by the seminarians at Mount. Cost is \$100 per person if you register by October 31. Please contact Linda Darling for the link to register. ldarling@holycrossdover.org

Catholic Heart Work Camp: We will be traveling to Drexel Hill, PA this coming June 25-30, 2023. First Come-First Going. Please let Linda Darling know your desire to attend to reserve your spot. 12th grade welcome to join us next summer.

SRE AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Religious Education classes run Sunday mornings until May 7th, 9:40 am-10:50 am. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact Alicia Poppiti @410-482-8939 or dre@iccmmarydel.org for more information. Also, If you have any difficulty with affording RE, please call Alicia Poppiti, and the office can assist you.

NO SRE CLASSES: There will not be classes for Religious Education on Sunday, November 27th due to Thanksgiving Holiday. Classes will resume on December 4th.

First Reconciliation Immaculate Conception: Session 5 for children is on Tuesday, November 29th beginning promptly at 6:30pm in the Church Hall, class ends at 7:30pm.

Youth Confirmation for Immaculate Conception:

Third Session is Sunday, December 18, at 2:30-5pm in the Parish hall. If your youth is not registered, please contact Alicia Poppiti, 410-482-8939.

Many years ago, God revealed to me my vocation in life. I had other ideas, God's will always prevails. Many years later I still feel I am living and fulfilling God's will for my life. Every school year begins a new season of thanksgiving. A new season of gratitude.

It is during this season of giving thanks that I wish to extend a personal note of gratitude to all of our families who have chosen a Holy Cross School and a Catholic education for their children. Your wonderful children are a gift, and I am blessed each day to watch them grow in knowledge and faith, and to bear witness to all that Jesus teaches us in the Gospels when he tells us that the kingdom of heaven belongs to little children. I thank God for all their wonderful attributes and what they bring to my every day.

Trust

Innocence

A Purity of Faith

Wonder and Awe

Playfulness and humor

Creativity and imagination

Willingness to learn and grow

Willingness to discuss emotions and feelings

Joy

Eternal hope

Unconditional love

Unconditional forgiveness

Limitless energy and exuberance

An ability to see life through rose colored glasses.



the Entrance Antiphon at that Sunday's Mass: "*Rejoice*" (Latin, *Gaudete*). For this reason the Third Sunday is also called, by tradition, *Gaudete Sunday*; it is the tipping point in Advent in which the season now enters its tail-end and tilts closer to Christmas. The readings at Mass from this point onward shift their focus away from the Second Coming of Christ, towards coming of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, at Christmas.

Let there be Light! One of the great ways that the Season of Advent is made visible to the faithful is by the presence in both Churches and homes of an Advent Wreath. You will probably see this holy symbol in many places in the weeks leading up to Christmas. The Advent wreath is a circular wreath decorated by the presence of four candles, three purple and one rose-colored. On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit; on the second, third and fourth Sundays additional candles are lit (with the rose-colored candle being lit on the third Sunday of Advent – *Gaudete Sunday*).

Not a Decoration, a Symbol of the Season. Is the Advent Wreath merely just a pretty decoration for the season? No. The Advent Wreath carries a beautiful symbolism which, in the era of electric lights, is lost or muddled. You see, back in the era before electricity in homes, the Advent wreath provided – just as any candle would – light for a household. As the season of Advent progressed towards Christmas and additional candles on the wreath were lit, the wreath provided more and more light to that home. By the fourth week of Advent – with all four candles blazing – the wreath gave abundant light. This reminded the family in that home that as Christmas drew nearer, so to, did the coming of Christ, the light of world – lighting our darkness.

Of Preparation and Clappers. And so, like the Boy Scouts who are always called to be prepared, as Catholics, in Advent, we are likewise called to be spiritually ready for Jesus Christ. That preparatory aspect kicks in very directly in the final weeks of the season. The readings and prayers at Mass and in the Church's Liturgy of the Hours focus our eyes on the impending birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is during this time that we are called to identify how we can get our hearts and homes ready to welcome the Lord, as God becomes man on that Christmas night. Thus, if your idea of getting ready for Christmas is nothing more than dusting off an old plastic Christmas tree and buying Aunt Estelle a Chiapet, a Clapper, or a Buttoneer for a gift (for those who don't remember, these are some classic bad TV-advertised gift items), then you may want to pause to reflect on the meaning of Christ's coming into this world to bring salvation to us. And FYI – it is unlikely that the Chiapet, Clapper, or Buttoneer will give Aunt Estelle much Christmas joy.

We Need a Little Advent! So, how do we embrace Advent for a powerful spiritual benefit. Well, let me start by noting that each year at the end of October "all-Christmas music stations" start popping up. On those stations you will likely hear the tune "*We need a little Christmas / right this very minute.*" But looking at our world's rush into Christmas, I would say that it might be more appropriate to sing "*we need a little Advent / right this very minute.*" We need to be able to pause and to reflect. We need to pray. We need to come to the Sacraments. We need to prepare the way of the Lord. We do, we do, we really do. In our Catholic faith, these 28 days ahead allow us to keep things in proper perspective and with due preparation. Done right, and used within the context of the mind and the heart of the Church, Advent will serve to make your Christmas, and your family's Christmas, all the more fulfilling.

No Christmas before Christmas. And so, I commend you, this Advent Season, do what Catholics have done for centuries and centuries: Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Examine your conscience, and your faith life, and prepare yourself to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Use the Season of Advent well; don't celebrate Christmas before Christmas – but rather prayerfully use the sacred time of Advent to anticipate the Birth of Christ into our world! So, let us, in faith, use the wonderful gift of Advent to draw closer to the Lord as he draws closer to us.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor