



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

December 21/December 25

4th Sunday Advent/Christmas Issue

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, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 8 am
Wednesday – 8:15 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

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



*For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests.
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:5

HOLY DAY SCHEDULE (HC AND ICC)

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

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.

Holy Cross Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve – Wed, Dec 24, 2025

4:00 pm in Church / 4:00 pm in Hall

6:30 pm Mass

9:00 pm Spanish Mass

Midnight Mass

Christmas Day – Thurs, Dec 25, 2025

8:00 am Mass and 10:00 am Mass

New Year's Eve – Wed, Dec 31, 2025

Solemnity of Mary

5:00 pm Mass

7:00 pm Spanish Mass

New Year's Day – Thurs, Jan 1, 2026

8:00 am Mass and 10:00 am Mass

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Immaculate Conception Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve – Wed, Dec 24, 2025

5:00 pm Mass

7:00 pm Spanish Mass

Midnight Mass

Christmas Day – Thurs, Dec 25, 2025

9:00 am Mass

New Year's Eve – Wed, Dec 31, 2025

Solemnity of Mary

5:30 pm Mass and 7:00 pm Spanish Mass

New Year's Day – Thurs, Jan 1, 2026

9:00 am Mass

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

Ending December 14, 2025

| OFFERTORY TYPE | RECEIVED | BUDGETED/ NEEDED | DIFFERENCE |
|----------------|-----------|------------------|------------|
| Regular | \$23,724 | \$26,972 | (\$3,248) |
| YTD | \$624,377 | \$636,914 | (\$12,537) |
| Needs | \$1,173 | \$1,738 | (\$565) |

WEEKLY OFFERING (ICC)

Ending December 14, 2025

| OFFERTORY TYPE | RECEIVED |
|----------------|----------|
| Regular | \$3,598 |
| Second | \$1,108 |

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,

This Pastor's Column is being written in advance of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, but it will be present in the bulletin that will be seen during Christmas Masses at Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception Parishes. Thus, this bulletin focuses on the Nativity of the Lord: Christmas.

Some 13 years ago, back in the year 2012, there were two major movies out in the theatres at the same time, and both involved the life of our nation's sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln. But, suffice it to say, these two movies about Honest Abe told two quite radically different stories.

Abraham Lincoln, A Movie. The first was a movie by director Stephen Spielberg called "*Lincoln*" – it was a biography of President Lincoln. This movie focused on Lincoln's final months in office. The film showed him leading a nation divided by war and explained that he was pursuing a course of action designed to end the war, unite the country, and abolish slavery. The film showed us a Lincoln with the moral courage and fierce determination to succeed; it showed us a Lincoln whose choices during this critical moment will change the fate of our nation. It was a powerful movie, about a great man.

Abraham Lincoln, A Much Different Movie. Then there was the second movie, the other Lincoln movie, in theatres just a few months before Spielberg's "*Lincoln*." This other movie showed Abraham Lincoln – weapons in hand – battling the Confederate forces in dramatic Indiana Jones-style fight scenes. It also showed that the reason that he opposed the Confederacy was that... well... it was because it was actually full of vampires. That movie was titled "*Abraham Lincoln, Vampire Hunter*." I feel safe in saying it is not biographical in any sense except perhaps for those taking far too many psychotropic drugs while reading Bram Stoker's "*Dracula*."

Distorting Lincoln, Distorting Christmas. The movie "*Lincoln*" told us about who Lincoln was and why he was important; "*Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter*," while cute and, I will admit, entertaining, is a distortion of a great man and a key moment in history. In this regard, I think that in our world today, the way many people understand Christmas becomes more distorted as time goes on.

Of Saviors and Snow Flakes. Our understanding of why Christmas is important has gone more along the lines of "*Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter*" than along the lines of the more accurate biography "*Lincoln*." We have taken the truth of the birth of a Savior, Jesus Christ, and the importance of that event, and we have laid snowflakes, snowmen, reindeer, and sleigh bells across it. We have added Santa, candy canes, wrapping paper, bows,

and holly. In short, similar to what "*Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter*" did to the story of Lincoln, all of these secular trappings – many of which are beautiful – have likewise overtaken, or overshadowed the truth of what Christmas is.

Mall I Want for Christmas is You? A number of years ago, I received a video from a friend of mine. He forwards me – I don't know – a million emails a day. These emails are usually accompanied by the message, "I thought you'd like this." He sends me some pictures, some urban legends, or some videos. Sometimes they are interesting, sometimes annoying, and most times they simply trigger my finger to hit the delete button. However, this one video he forwarded came with the admonition, "Here is what Christmas is really all about." And it was a very lovely, very heartwarming video of people singing Christmas songs at a shopping mall – and religious hymns at that. It was very nice. But as nice as what was shown in that video was, the abject truth is that singing hymns at a shopping mall is certainly not "What Christmas is all about."

Setting the Bar Low. If we think that that is what Christmas is all about, then we are short-changing God. We are setting the bar low. We do that sometimes. We set that bar really low. Like when a singer back in the 1980s had a song called "Heaven is a Place on Earth" – that sets the bar low. Setting the bar low – don't we sometimes do that with God? Don't we sometimes try to limit the creative power of God and what he has to offer? Just like that 1980s song, which reckoned Heaven to be some place on earth, diminishes God's kingdom, and just as Lincoln being portrayed as a Vampire Hunter diminishes the truth of a great President, the contemporary secularization of Christmas diminishes what Christmas is and who this day is about.

Meanwhile, in the Roman Empire. So, what is this Day About? Well, at Christmas, our churches are beautifully adorned because 2,000 years ago, one special child was born in one particular place in one tiny province of one large empire that no longer exists. And yet from this history-changing moment – the birth of our Savior, which the world missed – began a new way of faith and a new way of life that would change our world forever

(continued on page 10)

HC & ICC CLERGY

Vy. Rev. James S. Lentini , V. F. Pastor
 Rev. John Enemuo Parochial Vicar
 Rev. John Hynes In Residence

HC CLERGY

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

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
 Sharon Seelig Records Office, 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
 Maryland, MD 21649-0399

HOLY CROSS SCHOOL

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

Mallory O'Mara Principal, ext. 111

MAILING ADDRESS

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

DEC 25—CHRISTMAS DAY

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 52:7-10

God's messenger promises a future of peace and joy because our God reigns!

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 1:1-6

Jesus' birth among us means that, through him, God speaks directly to us without the need of prophetic intermediaries.

GOSPEL: JOHN 1:1-18

God's Word was spoken within humanity, sharing our experiences and speaking our language.

DEC 28 - HOLY FAMILY

FIRST READING: SIRACH 3:2-6, 12-14

Children are encouraged to honor and care for their parents.

SECOND READING: COLOSSIANS 3:12-21

Paul encourages us to actively live lives of love.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 2:13-15, 19-23

Guided by God through dreams, Joseph leads his family firstly to Egypt to keep them safe from Herod and then back to Israel to make their permanent home.

RECEPTIONIST POSITION

Holy Cross Parish is looking for a Full Time Receptionist. Seeking an enthusiastic candidate

Help Wanted

eager to work as the first point of contact for visitors. Your role is crucial in creating a positive and professional first impression. Responsibilities include answering and routing incoming calls, maintain confidentiality and manage sensitive information with discretion, receive and distribute mail, packages, and deliveries, provide support to others in the office; assist with clerical tasks, miscellaneous office tasks as requested; scheduling baptismal prep classes and securing dates for baptisms; recording sacramental information into appropriate records; prepare and set up weekly Mass binders ; Experience with Microsoft Word, Publisher, and Excel and have strong organizational and multitasking abilities.

Please send your resume to secretary@holycrossdover.org.

SAMARITAN'S FOOD PANTRY

Thank you to all who have contributed hams, turkeys, and non perishable items to the Food Pantry. We can always use

canned goods such as soups, vegetables, instant potatoes, jello, peanut butter/jelly, etc.

Thanks to all who contributed paper bags to aid in our packing of the food. Right now we have an ample supply so please hold off on bringing in more bags at this time. Thank you.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Tune-in this week for the annual Catholic Forum Christmas show featuring Bishop Koenig’s Christmas message to the people of the Diocese of Wilmington and an exclusive report from Rome with EWTN’s Boglarka Sztancs! The Catholic Forum podcast on Apple, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Amazon Music podcasts and YouTube.com/DiocesefofWilm debuts every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.; and on Relevant Radio 640 every Saturday afternoon at 1:30. More information is available at cdow.org/CatholicForum and [Facebook.com/CatholicForum](https://www.facebook.com/CatholicForum).

CEMETERY NEWS

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.

RACHEL MINISTRY

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is hosting a Weekend of Hope & Healing retreat offering a beautiful opportunity to any woman or man who has struggled with the emotional or spiritual pain of an abortion. Information can be found on the CDOW website.

Date: March 20-22, 2026
 Confidential Location: Ocean City, MD area, disclosed after registration
 Suggested donation: \$250/person, \$400/couple (scholarships available)
 For confidential inquiries and registration, please contact Project Rachel Ministry:
 Call (410) 625-8491
 Text (410) 299-9345
Projectrachel@archbalt.org

**MASS INTENTION
 DECEMBER**

22 MONDAY

HC 8:00 am Edward Rezac

23 TUESDAY

HC 8:00 am Paul Janiga

24 WEDNESDAY

HC 8:15 am Norma Jean White
 HC All Christmas Eve Masses For the People
 ICC All Christmas Eve Masses For the People

25 THURSDAY

HC & ICC Christmas Masses for the People

26 FRIDAY

HC 8:00 am Winfrey Family

27 SATURDAY

HC 8:00 am Ramona Ruley
 HC 5:00 pm John M. Sclesky

28 SUNDAY

HC 7:30 am Hans Crews
 ICC 8:30 am William F. & Ann R. Sullivan
 HC 9:30 am Kenneth & Althea Frank (LI)
 ICC 11:00 am Deacon Sherman Mitchell
 HC 11:30 am Sergio Perez
 ICC 1:00 pm For the People

*Dec 21 – Dec 27 Sanctuary Candle in Church is for the intention of parishioners of Holy Cross.
 Dec 21 - Dec 27 Sanctuary Candle in the Adoration Chapel is Thomas Steward and Joseph Panichi.*

**Blessed Christmas to All
 From the Holy Cross and
 Immaculate Conception
 Clergy and Staff!!**



DECEMBER 27/28, 2025

EMHC

SERVERS

5:00 PM

M. Sirolli
N. Sirolli

C. Bugglin
M. Casey

N. Klaus
Z. Klaus

LECTORS

M. Phillips
H. Showell

7:30 AM

R. Pritchett
T. Svienty

W. Thomas
M. Thompson

J. Shevock
S. Shevock

LECTORS

J. Davis

9:30 AM

T. Arndt
D. Banach

K. Boyer
S. Cordie

B. Torbert
C. Torbert

LECTORS

J. Pierce
M. Sherlock

11:30 AM

T. Hernandez
E. Pastoriza

M. Richard

TBD

LECTORS

TBD

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM

B. Lawson

LECTORS

G. Godfrey

11:00 AM

M. Soule

LECTORS

K. Perez



HELP WANTED—WE NEED YOU

We are looking for more volunteers to help us bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound of our parish. Call the Holy Cross Parish Office if interested in this ministry.

We can always use more volunteers to help at Mass as an Altar Server, Extra-Ordinary Minister of Communion, or a Lector. If interested please contact the Parish Office at 3020-674-5787.

ADORATION CHAPEL

"To entrust our struggles to Jesus, we have to spend time with Him in prayer. We have to have a relationship with Him. In quiet, we can speak honestly with Him about what is in our hearts. During Eucharistic adoration you can look at Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. You know that He looks at you and He looks at you with love. He often speaks to us gently, in stillness."

Pope Leo XIV, November 21, 2025

Come, signup for Adoration and make this the best Advent ever. You may just decide to make this a weekly commitment after Advent. You don't need a time if you cannot make a commitment. Please feel free to come in and sit with our Lord, when you can.

Contact John Murphy 302-233-1779

or jkm2015@verizon.net for any of the times available listed below:

Sunday: 7-8am, 5-6pm, 6-7 pm, 7-8 pm, 8-9pm

Monday: 9-10 am

Wednesday: 5-6 pm, 8-9 pm

Thursday: 8-9 pm

Saturday: 5-6 am, 12-1pm, 1-2pm, 7-8 pm, 8-9pm

LAST CHANCE FOR YEAR-END GIFTS

If you are planning to make a year-end gift to the church, we must have it to the Parish Office no later than Noon on December 30 or postmarked by December 31 in order to count for this year's donations. Thank you for thinking of the church. We appreciate your kindness and generosity.

REDISCOVER THE LOVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE (2026 PROGRAMS)

In 2026, the programs will be held February 6-8, July 31 - August 2, and October 21-23, at the Malvern Retreat Center in Malvern, PA. For more information, or to register, visit MarriageHeldDelVal.org or call 215-766-3944. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

Tens of thousands of couples have healed their marriages through Retrouvaille (pronounced Retro-vy). If you know anyone who could benefit from this program, please pass this on. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties, or crises.

- **Cuarto Domingo de Adviento:** hoy se celebra el cuarto domingo de Adviento, según el calendario litúrgico. Esta fecha corresponde a la víspera de Navidad y es un momento de preparación espiritual para las fiestas. Alegrémonos, porque el Señor está cerca de nosotros y viene a traernos la salvación. La espera llega a su fin, por eso hoy encenderemos la cuarta y última vela de nuestra corona. Que este símbolo nos recuerde la proximidad de la venida del Señor Jesús. ¡Dios hecho Niño viene a reconciliar los corazones y estamos alegres! ¡Crece la esperanza!
- **Agradecimiento:** Un agradecimiento muy especial al grupo de Arte y Ambientación por mantener nuestro Templo, la casa del Señor hermoso y digno, a todos ministerios por su colaboración en la liturgia, los Lectores, ministerio de Música, Hospitalidad, ujieres, nuestros servidores del Altar, ministros EMC, Jóvenes, catequistas. y a la Junta Directiva por su arduo trabajo en todas las distintas actividades y proyectos a través del año que esa energía y ese deseo de ser servidores continúe en los años venideros, muchas gracias y que el Señor derrame abundantes bendiciones y se haga extensivo a su familia.
- **NOCHEBUENA:** Nuestra Santa Misa de Nochebuena será el miércoles 24, de Diciembre: 8:45 PM, Holy Cross,
- **Reflexión del Jubileo** Peregrinos de la Esperanza “ el Jubileo busca inspirar a las personas a reflexionar sobre la misericordia, la solidaridad y la construcción de un mundo más justo, a través de peregrinaciones, oraciones y acciones concretas que promuevan la unidad y el servicio a los demás. un simple acto simbólico, es un llamado a la conversión, a orientar la vida hacia lo que realmente tiene sentido. Estamos viviendo tiempos difíciles, pero como cristianos católicos no olvidemos que somos gente de Fe y de Esperanza. Que estas fiestas navideñas brille para cada uno de nosotros la luz de la esperanza que nació en un pesebre en Belén. El niño Jesús es nuestra Luz y nuestra esperanza, él vino a sacarnos de la oscuridad a la luz .
- **Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo 2026.** En nombre de los que laboramos en la parroquia y del Ministerio Hispano les deseamos una Feliz Navidad y un Prospero Año Nuevo lleno de esperanza deseando que la paz, el amor y la alegría inunden los corazones, sirviendo para superar dificultades y encontrar fuerza en la unión familiar y los buenos momentos, recordando que cada día es una nueva oportunidad para construir un mañana mejor, iluminado por la magia de la fe, la bondad, el amor y la esperanza.
- **Maria Madre de Dios.** El 31 de diciembre es día de precepto, como católicos tenemos la obligación de asistir a la santa Misa en conmemoración a nuestra madre La virgen María como “María Madre de Dios” La misa es a las 7:00 PM . Después como comunidad parroquial despedamos el Año 2025 y demos la bienvenida al Nuevo Año 2026 con nuevas esperanzas. De 8:30 PM – 12:30 AM en el Salón de Eventos de nuestra parroquia. Traiga su platillo favorito para compartir y hagamos un banquete lleno de Sabor y alegría. Venga y reciba el Año Nuevo con su familia parroquial
- **Foro Cristiano:** Tendremos un receso por las fiestas navideñas y nos volveremos a ver nuevamente en el Foro Cristiano el 9 de enero 2026.
- **Se Necesitan ministros:** Si usted está interesado en participar y compartir sus talentos como Catequista, Lector, ministerio de Música, Hospitalidad,, ministros EMC, Arte y Ambientación. Por favor hable con los coordinadores de los ministerios o llame a la oficina al 302-674-5787 ext. 118
- **APOSTOLADO DE LAS SIETE HERMANAS EN LA SANTA CRUZ**
- Al fortalecer al sacerdote, fortaleces a toda la Iglesia... (P. Gerald Fitzgerald, SP) Únase al Apostolado de las Siete Hermanas en Holy Cross para ofrecer: Una hora santa, Por un sacerdote; Cada semana, Un corazón de oración. Contacto: Delizabeth Díaz-Martínez correo electrónico 7sistersapostolate2023@gmail.com

ICC

Misa de Nochebuena a las 7:00PM. Los que laboramos en la oficina Parroquial queremos extenderles una bendecida y Feliz Navidad que Jesús nazca en cada uno de sus corazones y que el Nuevo año sea de mucha Paz, Salud, amor y prosperidad.

Educación Religiosa: Clases Dominicales el 21 de diciembre Primera en el Salón de evento 9:40- 10:50

Confirmación Prep:

Sesión #4- Domingo, Enero 18 2026, 3-5:30 pm, Salón de evento

OCIA: Domingos 5:30 PM -7:15 PM en La Oficina Parroquial, Llámanos y aprenda nuestra Fe.

RELIGIOUS ED AT HOLY CROSS

"Merry Christmas! May the Holy Child, Jesus, fill your hearts with His divine joy and peace this season. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men' (Luke 2:14). Thank you for sharing this faith journey with our Religious Ed program!"

Next Class: January 6th (K-4th Grade) and January 7th (5th Grade and Sacramental Prep)

All Classes in the Elementary Building from 6:00pm-7:30pm (please arrive between 5:45pm and 5:50pm so classes may begin on time.

If you still need to register, or have any questions please contact Tammy Korosec at tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122.

LAFF (LIVING AS A FAMILY OF FAITH CATECHESIS)

Next class: January 4th

We gather after 9:30am Mass in the Matthew/Mark room. Class will begin at 11:00am and will last until approximately 1:00pm.

Contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122 for further information.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS

Next class: January 6th – Foundations of Faith session 11

"Foundations of Faith: A Journey Through the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the ultimate way for your parish or small group to encounter the wisdom of the Catechism and deepen your understanding of the Catholic Faith.

This is a free class; however, the workbook set associated with this program is available for a cost of \$40 (workbook and catechism chart)

Deacon Bob's Adult Ed Class is every Tuesday at either 9:00am or 7:00pm in the Matthew/Mark room of the Parish Office, 2nd Floor, Building C

If you have any questions or would like to order the workbook set, please contact Tammy Korosec at tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302)674-5787 X 122.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Confirmation Retreat— Reminder to parents, retreat will be at Holy Cross on January 10.

Confirmation Class:

Our next class takes place on Sunday, January 11 from 5-6:30 pm in the Parish Hall OR Wednesday, January 14 from 6-7:30 pm in the Matthew/Mark room of the ELC building.

Youth Group:

Our next youth group meeting will be Sunday, January 14 from 6:45-8 pm in the Luke room of the ELC building 2nd floor. All high school teens are welcome.

CHECK OUT THESE LINKS:

- <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/luke-in-50-days-announcement>
- <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/riy-signup>
- <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/catechisminayear>



In English:

Father Mike Schmitz

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



In Spanish:

Fray Sergio Serrano

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



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ICC

OCIA:

Monday nights in Parish Office from 5:30-7:15pm, Please call and join us.

NO SRE Sunday, December 28th, classes resume on January 4th

Confirmation Prep:

Session #4- Sunday, January 18th, 3-5:30pm in Parish Hall

First Communion Prep:

Parent meeting- Tuesday, January 6th, 7pm, parish hall OR Sunday, January 11th, 2:30pm in Parish Hall

Session #1: January 13th at 6:30pm-7:30pm in Parish

Dear Parishioners,

This past week, we joyfully celebrated the Third Week of Advent and our final week together as a school community before Christmas break and the beginning of the new year. As we continued our Advent journey, our days were filled with prayer, celebration, and meaningful moments that truly reflected the spirit of the season.

The week was full of special events that brought excitement, joy, and a deep sense of community to our campus. On Monday, we began the week with two meaningful celebrations. During junior high lunch, students who earned the first ever Committed Crusader Award for Trimester One gathered together in the conference room of the junior high building for a celebratory lunch. These students received their awards following Mass the previous week. This award recognizes students who consistently live out the mission of our school through their character, positive attitude, and the impact they have on those around them. It was a joy to spend time with these students, celebrate their accomplishments, and affirm the values they model each day. We are incredibly proud of them.

Later that afternoon, we hosted our first Military Kids Club Christmas celebration. Our students with military family members gathered together with our school counselor and myself for a time of fellowship, pizza, snacks, and Christmas cheer. During the first portion of the meeting, students prepared care packages to be sent overseas to those deployed during the holiday season. This meaningful act of service allowed students to give back while honoring the sacrifices made by their families. Each student also received a special ornament to hang on their Christmas tree as a reminder of how valued and loved they are within our school community.

On Tuesday, our junior high band and choir students delighted us with an outstanding holiday performance. With both a daytime and evening concert, students showcased their musical talents for classmates and families alike. Their performance truly helped set the tone for the Christmas season. A heartfelt thank you goes to Ms. Swartzentruber for her dedication and for guiding our students to perform with confidence and pride.

Wednesday brought a joyful celebration with our kindergarten students, who sang Christmas carols for their families. Their excitement and enthusiasm were contagious, filling the room with laughter and holiday cheer. We are grateful to Ms. Krastel, Mrs. Holzinger, and Mrs. Arndt for preparing our youngest students so beautifully for this special moment.

Thursday was a quieter day on campus, allowing time for reflection as we approached the end of the week. On Friday morning, we gathered as a school community to pray the Christmas Rosary led by our sixth grade students. At the conclusion of the Rosary, one student from each homeroom brought forward Baby Jesus from their classroom nativity for a special blessing from Father John. This sacred moment was a perfect way to begin our Christmas break, reminding us of the true reason for the season as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior.

As we enter Christmas break and continue through this final week of Advent, we pray that your homes are filled with peace, joy, and love. May this season provide time for rest, reflection, and gratitude as we celebrate the miracle of Christ's birth together.

God Bless,

Mrs. O'Mara

and for the better. And so, each year at this time, we celebrate with the most solemn reverence, the Nativity of the Lord, the Birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Of Stamps and Store Windows. What is the effect of this on our world today? Well, at this time of year, hearts are moved at the very sight of the baby Jesus in his mother's arms. Even in the secular world around us, people commonly wish each other Christmas greetings, people stop and give generously to the poor, and many whisper a prayer for peace. From postage stamps to store windows, one commonly sees, though not as much as in the past, an image of the Madonna and Child, or a nativity scene, or a sacred star.

There's Something More. But, for all that, this feast, for us, has to be more than just a mother and child in a stable scene. For us as Catholics, this season has to be about more than presents and peace-and-goodwill toward men. This Christmas season, this Christmas day, must be, must be, must be about God becoming Man in order to share our human condition. This Christmas season, this Christmas day, must be, must be, must be about God who, in becoming man, didn't lower himself, but rather raised mankind up, and allowed our souls to feel their worth before God.

God In the Flesh. In the incarnation, God chose to draw us into His divinity. Christmas is about God Who takes flesh, not for show or for effect or for mere empathy, but rather he takes on human flesh in order one day to die and save us from our sins. Christmas is about our Almighty God choosing to become weak for us men and for our salvation. But most importantly, the significance of Christmas is defined by everything that will come after it in the life of this child.

God In the World. Now, in all of this, one might well ask: Why did Christ come to us as a Child? The reason would seem to be this: as human beings, we often feel weak and tiny. We feel overwhelmed by troubles, burdened by regrets, and sometimes very alone. We believe in faith that God is on his sacred throne in heaven, and then wonder why He does not act. In this regard, God can sometimes seem very, very distant and deaf to our cries. The feast of Christmas reminds us that the difficulties of life that we bear are pains that God Himself has chosen to suffer, from His lowly birth to His death on a cross, and the many other troubles and trials of his life.

Emmanuel Labor. Thus, we call Christ, our Emmanuel – that is God among us; not a distant God, untouched by the sorrows of man; but a God who was freely willing to be born as we are, to experience our difficulties and our pain. Our God is a God who loves us so much that he comes in flesh and blood to us; he comes to us born in time and subject to the cruelties of our fallen world. He is a God who chooses to suffer as man as the ultimate way to offer us His love as God, and today, Christmas Day, is the day that is the beginning of it all.

Into the Woods. We celebrate Christmas because, through Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection, we have gotten to see the Face of God in human flesh, revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. Likewise, today holds a special level of solemnity, honor, and sacredness because we know the story of all that follows. Thus, we cannot look upon the wood of the manger without, at the same time, remembering the wood of the Cross.

Eminence That is Imminent. And isn't our God a marvelous God? He knew mankind would need a Savior, and he himself made himself that Savior – not distantly but imminently. And bless the birth of Christ! Because we would not want a Savior who didn't know our weakness, we would not want a Redeemer whose skin has never felt the bite of cold or the burn of heat; we would not want our salvation to come from a Savior who didn't know joy, tears, love, and loneliness. No! We want this Christ, a child who is forgotten in a tiny stable in a small town; we want this Savior who is abandoned by His closest friends at Calvary; we want this God and redeemer who is born in obscurity and dies abandoned so that no man need ever more face suffering and death alone.

Merry Christmas. Today is important because it marks the birth of such a Savior. Today, God gives us what we want, and that small baby holds our only hope of salvation and life eternal. His Birth and life, His suffering and death, His flesh and blood -- all for us. And on this day, on this Christmas Eve, this Holy Night, the Christmas Day, this Holy Season, we celebrate its beginning, the first chapter of the New Covenant between God and man. Salvation is among us! Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her king! And let's put a bow around that and call it a Merry Christmas! Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. James Lentini, Pastor