



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 24, 2023

Fourth 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

Christ is Born



*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

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.

Christmas Schedule at Holy Cross

December 24

4:00 pm 6:30 pm

9:00 pm (Hispanic) Midnight

December 25

8:00 am 10:00 am

Christmas Schedule at ICC

December 24

5:00 pm 7:00 pm (Hispanic)

Midnight

December 25

9:00 am

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December 30 at Holy Cross

5:00 pm

December 31 at Holy Cross

7:30, 9:30, & 11:30 am Spanish

Solemnity of Mary at Holy Cross

5:00 pm 7:00 pm (Hispanic)

January 1, 2024 at Holy Cross

8:00 am 10:00 am

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December 31 at ICC

8:30 & 11:00 am, and 1:00 pm (Hispanic)

Solemnity of Mary at ICC

5:30 pm 7:00 pm (Hispanic)

No Masses on January 1, 2024 at ICC

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

Ending December 10, 2023

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	\$25,483	\$27,440	(\$1,905)
YTD	\$617,540	\$644,980	(\$27,388)
Needs	\$1,874	\$1,712	\$162

WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending December 10, 2023

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	\$4,193
Second Collection	\$385
Holy Day	\$1,686

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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,

So many songs are written about remembering the past. Bruce Springsteen sang of those *"Glory Days."* The Beatles sang of *"Yesterday."* And Barbra Streisand, hitting a high score on the schmaltz-o-meter sang of *"The Way We Were,"* noting that "Memories light the corners of [our] minds." And they do.

Lighting the Corners of our Minds. Christmas songs of this holy season also yield memories from the past; memories of that first Christmas in Bethlehem all those years ago. And these different Christmas songs sing of different aspects of the life of Christ coming into the world. These hymns and carols "light the corners of [our] minds" and bring into focus the grand beginnings of the greatest event in human history: God becoming man, the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

- **"Away in a Manger"** evokes memories of that scene in that stable on that first Christmas, where in a manger, *"the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head"* and could be seen "asleep in the hay."
- **"O Little Town of Bethlehem"** brings to minds that small town in Judea which lies still as *"the silent stars goes by."* It gives us the image of a little town on whose *"dark streets shineth / the everlasting light"* as *"Christ is born of Mary"* causing praises to be sung *"to God the King / and peace to men on earth."*
- **"The First Noel"** reminds us of the Shepherd *"in fields where they lay keeping their sheep"* – it was there that they saw a star *"shining in the East"* ...a star that demarcated for them the site of the birth of Christ.
- **"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"** reminds us of the glorious benefit to mankind of God's coming in the flesh: *"to save us all from Satan's fire when we have gone astray."*
- **"O Holy Night,"** perhaps the most theologically grounded of all Christmas hymns, reminds us of the night weary world that rejoiced – *"the night of our dear Savior's birth."* This hymn tells us all about *"night when Christ was born"* – that *"night Divine."*
- **"O Come All Ye Faithful"** reminds us to come to Christ in that stable in that manger in Bethlehem: to *"come and behold him, Born the King of angels;"* to come to him *"joyful and triumphant"* as you adore *"adore him, Christ the Lord."*

- **"Silent Night"** of course reminds us of the Sacred evening of the birth of Christ on that *"Silent night"* that *"holy night"* – and it imbues in us the image of the *"Virgin Mother and Child."* And tells us that that child was *"Jesus, Lord, at thy birth."*

These are just a few of the many Christmas hymns and carols that light those corners of our minds, and give us different views, and different focuses regarding Christ coming into the world on that first Christmas.

The Ghost of Christmas Past. Likewise, we have our memories of our own Christmases gone by, bound up in family and faith, that light the corners of our minds. We may not sing about them, but we remember them well. And each one of us likely remembers one Christmas more than any other. I remember the year our oven broke on Christmas Day, and much like the family in *"A Christmas Story,"* we went out and had Chinese food for Christmas dinner. I remember the year my grandmother had everyone – and I mean everyone – over for Christmas dinner in her small apartment; wall to wall people, eating wall to wall food. I remember the year I got a chemistry set for Christmas, a gift that cause untold damage, fire and burn-marks on me and on our home. We all remember different things about Christmas.

You Must Remember This... All of this brings me to the Gospels of Christmas. You see, our Gospel writers also have different memories of different aspects of the birth of Christ when speaking about Christmas. So, at Christmas Masses we get a mélange of different views of the Christmas story. These different aspects of Christmas are at the Christmas Vigil (Christmas Eve) Mass, Midnight Mass, the Mass at Dawn on Christmas morning, and the Mass of Christmas Day. Thus, on Christmas Eve and Day, we listen to the Gospels of Ss. Matthew, Luke and John and hear various pieces of the story of the Incarnation of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, in three different forms, to wit:

St. Matthew: Of Isaiah and Elvis. At the Christmas Vigil (i.e., Christmas Eve Masses before Midnight Mass), we hear St. Matthew relate the Christmas story beginning with the genealogy of Jesus. He lists Jesus' family tree all the way back to Abraham to relate to the

(continued on page 10)

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

RECENTLY DECEASED

Our condolences to the families of those who recently passed:

- William Pruitt
- Howard John Belanger
- Galen Purcell

May their soul and souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.

NEW PARISHIONERS

Welcome to our newly registered members:

- Genaro, Odette, David and Mary Frances Durotan
- Gerado Tapia Solano, Ana Maria Perez Mendoza, David Gonzalez, Jr. and Mariana Sofia Tapia Perez
- Andrew and Mary Ellen Stone

CHRISTMAS CRECHES

A new video, produced by the Diocese of Wilmington, presents a montage of photographs of Nativity crèches from the Catholic churches of Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore. The video, which also includes beautiful instrumental Christmas hymns as a background, is on the Diocese of Wilmington's YouTube channel – YouTube.com/DioceaseofWilm. Families are invited to watch the 12 ½ minute video together, discuss which scene they like best and why, maybe try to be the first to identify the scene from our parish. Also, the video could be played in the background of Christmas gatherings so everyone can enjoy the holy music and images. Merry Christmas!

HOLY CROSS CEMETERY

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.

HOLY FAMILY DEC 31)

FIRST READING: GENESIS 25:1-6; 21:1-3

The Lord promises Abraham and Sarah a son.
SECOND READING: HEBREWS 11:18, 11-12, 17-19

It is through faith that Abraham receives the gift of his family.

GOSPEL: LUKE 2:22-40

The child Jesus is presented to the Lord in the Temple and blessed by Simeon and Anna.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

Bishop William E. Koenig invites all couples celebrating their 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th, wedding anniversary, or any anniversary beyond 50th, to the annual Wedding Anniversary Mass being held on World Marriage Sunday, February 11, 2024, at 1:00PM at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Newark, DE. Reservations are required by February 2, 2024.

Bishop Koenig will be available for photos with interested couples beginning at 12:00 pm and again after the Mass. . Questions may be referred to the Office for Marriage and Family Life at 302-295-0657 or by emailing OMFL@cdow.org.

Registration can be completed by using the following link –
<https://cdowcym.wufoo.com/forms/k1uxe9k20m649mn/>

RETROUVAILLE:

Rediscover the love in your marriage. Tens of thousands of couples have healed their marriages through Retrouvaille (pronounced Ret-ro-vy). If you know anyone who could benefit from this program, please pass this on. Couples learn to build communication skills and to increase intimacy. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties, or crises. The next program will be held February 16 - 18, 2024 at the Family Life Center in Malvern, PA. For more information, or to register, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org or call 215-766-3944 or 800-470-2230. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

“On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree.” What’s the silliest, most creative, or most romantic gift your true love has given you? Be a humble human today. That’s what Jesus did by becoming human

PARENT POINTERS

Christmas is almost here. If your child is old enough to remember past Christmases, talk about favorite customs and perhaps even a snafu that might have happened. Remember and laugh together.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Merry Christmas! Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Next Saturday, December 30th, tune-in for an interview with Mr. Fritz Jones as he looks back at his 40+ years of service at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Wilmington. Catholic Forum airs on Saturday afternoons at 1:30 on Relevant Radio 640.

MASS INTENTIONS DECEMBER

25 MONDAY

HC 8:00 am For the People
 ICC 9:00 am For the People
 HC 10 am For the People

26 TUESDAY

HC 8:00 am Hans Crews

27 WEDNESDAY

HC 8:15 am Bill and Angie McNamee

28 THURSDAY

HC 8:00 am LI Kenneth and Althen Frank
 ICC 6:00 pm For the People

29 FRIDAY

HC 8:00 am LI Edwin and Nina Frank

30 SATURDAY

HC 8:00 am Ellen G. Laskowski
 HC 5:00 pm John M. Sclesky

31 SUNDAY

HC 7:30 am LI Staff of Holy Cross
 ICC 8:30 am Marge Messner
 HC 9:30 am LI Florence Deighton
 ICC 11:00 am Teresa Crenshaw
 HC 11:30 am For the People
 ICC 1:00 pm For the People

THE SANCTUARY LAMP IN THE CHAPEL FOR 12/24-12/30 IS ROY KAISER

THE SANCTUARY LAMP IN THE CHURCH FOR 12/24-12/30 IS FOR LI EMANUELA FRANCOIS

The Clergy and Staff of Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception,



wish you and yours a most happy and blessed Christmas.

DEC. 30/31, 2023

EMHC

SERVERS

5:00 PM J. Bieker M. Sirolli L. Curley
C. Bugglin N. Sirolli S. Murawski

LECTORS

L. Christiansen
D. Dixon

7:30 AM C. Brown M. Thompson A. Costa
T. Dinan A. Wyllie E. Costa
M. Costa

LECTORS

M Jacobs

9:30 AM S. Lascano L. Olmstead C. Imhof
D. McGinnis M Sossich G. Maddalena
W. Shuron

LECTORS

S. Ford
C. Parks

11:30 AM C. Garcia A. Luna TBD
B. Guzman

LECTORS

TBD

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

TBD

8:30 AM

LECTORS

B. Thompson

TBF

11:00 AM

LECTORS

L. Soule

1:00 PM TBD

If you or someone from your family is going to be in one of our local rehabilitation facilities or nursing homes, our Extra-Ordinary ministers of Holy Communion serve all of these facilities. If you are going to be in one of these facilities, even for a short time, please be sure to register yourself as a Catholic so that you will be on their list for our ministers to bring you the Eucharist on the weekend. All the facilities are very cooperative and will gladly add the name to the list for our ministers each week.

If you are in the hospital make sure you are on their Catholic list so we can have our ministers bring you communion daily. You must inform the hospital to put you on the Catholic list otherwise we do not know you are there.

PRAYERS REQUESTED

Please keep Msgr. Dan McGlynn in your prayers as he is recuperating from surgery for a broken femur. He sends his regards for a joyous Christmas to all and blessed New Year. Thank you for remembering him in the weeks ahead.



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. Call John Murphy at 302-233-1779 or email him at jkm2015@verizon.net to schedule.



This is the year of the Eucharistic Revival. What better time is there to select an open hour in our Adoration Chapel and spend some time with Jesus weekly. Please consider taking some time each week out of your busy schedule to sit in silence and prayer before Our Lord. Call today to reserve your hour. You will be so blessed and glad you did.

SUNDAY 7 am, 4 pm, 5pm

MONDAY 5 pm

WEDNESDAY 7 am, 4 pm, 5 pm

THURSDAY 4 pm

FRIDAY 6 am

SATURDAY 5 am, 9 am, 10 am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm

PURSE BINGO

Mark your calendars! Our annual purse bingo to raise money to assist our teens attending Catholic Heart Work Camp this summer will take place on Saturday, March 9. Tickets will go on sale after Christmas - \$35 per ticket. Please plan on joining us for a fun evening.



- **Feliz Navidad!** En nombre de nuestros, sacerdotes, diáconos. todos los que laboran en nuestras parroquias, y las Juntas directivas de La Santa Cruz y La Inmaculada Concepción queremos desearles, Feliz Nochebuena, Feliz Noche Santa, Feliz Navidad porque celebramos la Natividad del Señor. Hoy nos ha nacido un Salvador, el Rey de reyes, el Príncipe de la Paz, que nace en la pobreza, porque no hay lugar en las Posadas para Él. Nace en un pesebre de un establo junto a los animales, a los sencillos pastores porque no hay posada para Él. Hoy nace la luz y la gloria de Dios y no hay posada para Él., Pidamos al Señor que, al igual que los pastores de Belén, le demos posada en nuestros corazones y que nuestros ojos se llenen de asombro y maravilla al contemplar en el Niño Jesús al Hijo de Dios, que es todo amor y misericordia que vino a rescatarnos y, ante Él, brote de nuestros corazones la invocación: «Muéstranos, Señor, tu misericordia y danos tu salvación» (Sal 85,8).
- Agradecemos a todos los que nos dieron posada, a todos los ministerios que contribuyeron a que nuestra celebración Eucarística de este tiempo de Adviento y Navidad sea especial para que Jesús nazca en cada corazón. Un agradecimiento especial a nuestros jóvenes que son las piedras vivas de nuestra parroquia.
- **Horario de las Misa de Navidad, diciembre, 2023**
 - Inglés, 4:00,6:30pm y Medianoche. Español 9:00 pm
 - En ingles lunes 25 de diciembre, 8:00 am
- La Misa Dominical del 31 será el horario normal de las 11:30 de la mañana . Vigilia de la Solemnidad de María Madre de Dios es día de precepto y nuestra misa será el domingo 31 a las 7:00 de la noche en ambas parroquias.
- **No habrá FORO CRISTIANO hasta el viernes, 5 de enero, 2024 de 6-8pm con el padre Brennan Ferris.** El tema es: El Misterio Eucarístico” donde todo el año las clases se centrará en la EUCARISTIA y la PRESENCIA REAL en la Eucaristía Venga y fórmese para poder defender su Fe Católica, esto será un curso de formación que termina el día 2 de junio 2024

ICC

- **No habrá clases dominical el 24 ni el 31 de diciembre las clases se reanudan el domingo, 7 de enero, 2024**
- **Formación de Adultos.** Lunes 6:30 – 8:30PM Los lunes, en el salón de reuniones de la oficina parroquial. .
- **Retiro de Primera Reconciliación:** sábado, 13 de enero de 9am a 12mediodia en el salón.
- **Primera Reconciliación:** sábado, 27 de enero, al12 meridiano en la Santa Cruz, Dover
- **Para la preparación Sacramental de la Confirmación** Sesión # 4 el domingo 14, de enero de 3:00 – 5:30 en el salón.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next Class: January 7th at 3:00pm-5:00pm

Save the Date!

February 28th at 7pm in the Parish Hall
"Mark's Gospel" presented by the Reverend Joseph Morris from the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

"The one-person performance is not a "reading" or a "talk" but the entire Gospel of St. Mark memorized and performed as storytelling. It's fast paced, energetic, up close and personal."

All are welcome!

The families of all Holy Cross students LAFF, and Religious Education Students are encouraged to attend.

LAFF (LIVING AS A FAMILY OF FAITH CATECHESIS)

Next LAFF class is January 14 at 10:30 am. Come out and join us; families gathering for prayer, communion with one another, sharing our Faith Life experiences. See above for a special Lent formation opportunity.

Is your family interested in joining the Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis with Deacon Vince? Contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY (HC)

Mark your Calendars for these upcoming formation opportunities!

Tuesday offerings:

January 9th-February 6th Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession

"Forgiven explores the grace and healing offered in Confession and shows how this sacrament of mercy reveals the depth and bout of God's love.

February 13th-March 19th No Greater Love: A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion.
"Filmed on location in the Holy Land, No Greater Love is a biblical pilgrimage that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Best selling author Edward Sri guides you through the last hours of Christ's life."

Special Lent offering:

February 28th at 7pm in the Parish Hall
"Mark's Gospel" presented by the Reverend Joseph Morris from the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

"The one-person performance is not a "reading" or a "talk" but the entire Gospel of St. Mark memorized and performed as storytelling. It's fast paced, energetic, up close and personal."

For more information, please contact tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call Tammy Korosec at (302) 674-5787 X 122.

YOUTH PROGRAMS AT HOLY CROSS

Confirmation Classes: Sunday, January 6 at 3 pm and Wednesday, January 9 at 6 pm

Confirmation Retreat: For those teens unable to attend the December retreat, please put January 27 at 8 am on your calendar.

MOUNT 2000:

We have two spots open - please let Mrs. Darling know if you would like to attend - February 2-4, 2024 cost is \$100 for the weekend.

Youth Formation Group: Come be a part of a **new group** forming for high school teens. Meetings will take place on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 pm in the Luke room of the ELC building. The first meeting will be a planning meeting, so bring your thoughts. Music, faith, fellowship and food - a great place to meet some great people! **First Meeting - Tuesday, January 9 at 6:30 pm**

SRE AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

There will be NO SRE Sunday, December 24th or 31st due to the holidays. Classes will resume on Sunday, January 7th

Sacramental Preparation Classes:

First Reconciliation Retreat: Reconciliation retreat: Saturday, January 13, 9am-12noon in the hall

Sacrament of 1st Reconciliation: Saturday, January 27th, 12noon at Holy Cross, Dover

Confirmation Session #4: Sunday, January 14th, 3-5:30pm in the Parish hall.

The show made its television debut back in 2007. The title of the program was in the form of a question. Simply, "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" The premise of the show was to ask truly random questions to test the general knowledge of an adult. The questions were supposedly taken from elementary school textbooks from grades one through five and covered all areas of the curriculum from geography to math to history, grammar, and vocabulary.

In the over 120 questions I scanned online I never came across any that touched, even in the most general of ways on Religion. I suppose it's a little naïve of me to think that on a nationally broadcasted television show that the topic of religion would have been interwoven into the theme when writing these simple queries. But; there's something that remains inside of me that stills wonders, "why not?"

Each year students in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese in grades 2 through 8 take the ARK test. ARK is an acronym for Assessment of Religious Knowledge. The name of the test and the objective of the test are one and the same. Following are three sample questions taken from the fifth grade ARK test.

In the fall, Adam and Eve ate from ____.
 The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil The Tree of Power
 The Tree of Courage The Tree of Life

After death, those in friendship with God will ____.
 Return to earth in new bodies Live forever in heaven
 Become angels All of these

Which is a symbol of Baptism?

Sunlight Fire
 Water Incense

Faculty members are also required to complete the test annually, with last year being our first-time experience. Again, much like the TV program, random questions based on knowledge accumulated through life's experience and in our particular case, the classroom.

And so it happened, as part of a conversation with the representatives from the Catholic Schools Office during their school visit last week that Dr. DeAngelo mentioned that he had posed five questions on the topic of Advent to a group gathered for a meeting. He gave them a few minutes for table discussion. It gave me reason to inwardly ponder how many of the answers I would have known.

How about you? If you were asked to respond to five arbitrary, and not difficult questions on the topic of our current liturgical season, (only five)...how might you fare?

- *What are the four themes for the season of Advent for Catholics?*
 - *Why is Advent called the season of preparation?*
 - *When does Advent officially begin and end?*
- *Who was the prophet who told us to "make straight a highway for our God?"*
- *What is the significance of the white candle on the Advent wreath?*

My source for questions was our Religion textbook published by Loyola Press. The questions are not difficult, but do you know the answers?

We are encouraging our students to make room in their "inn" for Jesus. They know that their heart is their own personal inn, the temple in which Jesus resides. But he cannot live in us if we fill our hearts, our thoughts, and conduct actions that are hurtful, spiteful, or if we do not live our lives in keeping with the Ten Commandments. As those growing up and making their way in a world filled with temptation and evil, expecting them to always make the best decision, to take that higher road is asking a lot. As a child, how many of us lived in a world resembling our world today? Our expectations of them are difficult for them to fulfill. Jesus came to us once, and he will come again. The season of Advent should span the calendar. We must be ready, to make straight the highway in our hearts. This is what we should be teaching our children at home. It's what we do at school. If Jesus were to come today...would we be ready?

As you make your drive down the road to school, or gather for dinner perhaps you might pose a couple of the questions before your children. My hope is that you would be surprised in that they know the correct answers. Then, you can determine for yourself if you are smarter than your Catholic school student!

Wishing you and yours a very blessed Christmas from all at Holy Cross School!!

people of Israel (to whom he was writing) that Jesus traces his roots all the way back to Abraham, the father of Judaism (therefore sharing the lineage of King David). These speaks to Christ's relationship to the Jewish people and kingship – two key aspects for long-awaited Messiah! Likewise, St. Matthew quotes Isaiah. Isaiah was the like the Elvis Presley of Prophets for the Jewish people (focusing on a different idea of Grace-land), he had written, "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel.*" So, when this Prophecy of Isaiah came to pass, it weighed mightily on Matthew's version of the Christmas story as it was written.

St. Matthew heard the story of Christmas – and what he remembered, was how all of this came to pass to fulfill the prophecies of the Jewish prophets, and this was therefore the Messiah of Israel, and that's what he wrote.

St. Luke: Reading Between the Linus: At Midnight Mass and early morning Masses one hears from St. Luke. He tells us the most familiar version of the Christmas story. In "*A Charlie Brown Christmas,*" Linus quotes St. Luke when he commends Charlie Brown and company: "*Fear not, for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a savior, tis Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.*" Now unlike Matthew, Luke was writing for the non-Jewish audience. Thus he isn't concerned about Jewish identity, lineage, etc. He lays the story out as a narrative of events, and there is a focus on Mary. At Midnight Mass, we hear of Mary and Joseph and going to Bethlehem to partake in the Roman Census; Mary giving birth; and angels singing Glory to God in the highest. At morning Mass, the shepherds come to see Jesus lying in the manger; they go out and glorify God because of the events of that Christmas night.

St. Luke heard the story of Christmas – and what he remembered, was that God came into the world in the flesh -- for the salvation of the world -- as the son of Mary, and that's what he wrote.

St. John: Poetry in Motion. Do you remember the old TV show "Laugh-In"? On it, a man named Henry Gibson would walk out on stage, holding a sunflower in one hand, and acclaiming "A poem, by Henry Gibson." He would then relate a poem as his way of telling a joke. It was different from what the rest of the comedians on the show did, but it was funny nonetheless. Among Gospel writers, St. John was the poet; his words weave a poetic telling of the Christmas story. I can almost hear his version of Christmas story beginning with the word "A poem, by St. John." At the last Masses of Christmas day, one hears St. John's version of the story of Christ coming into the world; he focuses on neither Mary nor Joseph, but on Jesus as the Incarnate (in the flesh) Word of God. This reading, John 1:1-18, is one of my favorite, and in part it reads thus: "*And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.*" I remember a parishioner at a former Parish who attended the Christmas day Mass and complained to me, "Why didn't today's Gospel tell the Christmas story?" I told him, "It did, but it told it poetically." He then told me what he thought of poetry... in very un-Christmasy language.

St. John heard the story of Christmas – and what he remembered, was the beauty of what God did for mankind, and that's what he wrote.

Viva la Difference. While different Gospel writers focused on different moments and different aspects of that same Christmas story, the key point is always the same: On that Christmas morning, all those years ago, **God so loved the world that he gave us our Savior.** And if, amidst the gift giving, the food, and the family-freneticism, you remember nothing else from these Christmas readings, remember that! And thank God every day for what he did for all us on that first Christmas day.

On behalf of all of the priests, deacons and staff at Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception parishes, I wish you the happiest, most joyful, and holiest Christmas. I wish you a Christmas that provides a small reflection of the ultimate "joy to the world" given to us on that first Christmas. Merry Christmas!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor