

CHURCH *of the* HOLY CROSS

631 South State Street
Dover, Delaware

302 674 5787
holycrossdover.org

522 Main Street
Marydel, Maryland

410 482 7687
iccmmarydel.org



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

December 25, 2022

Christmas

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

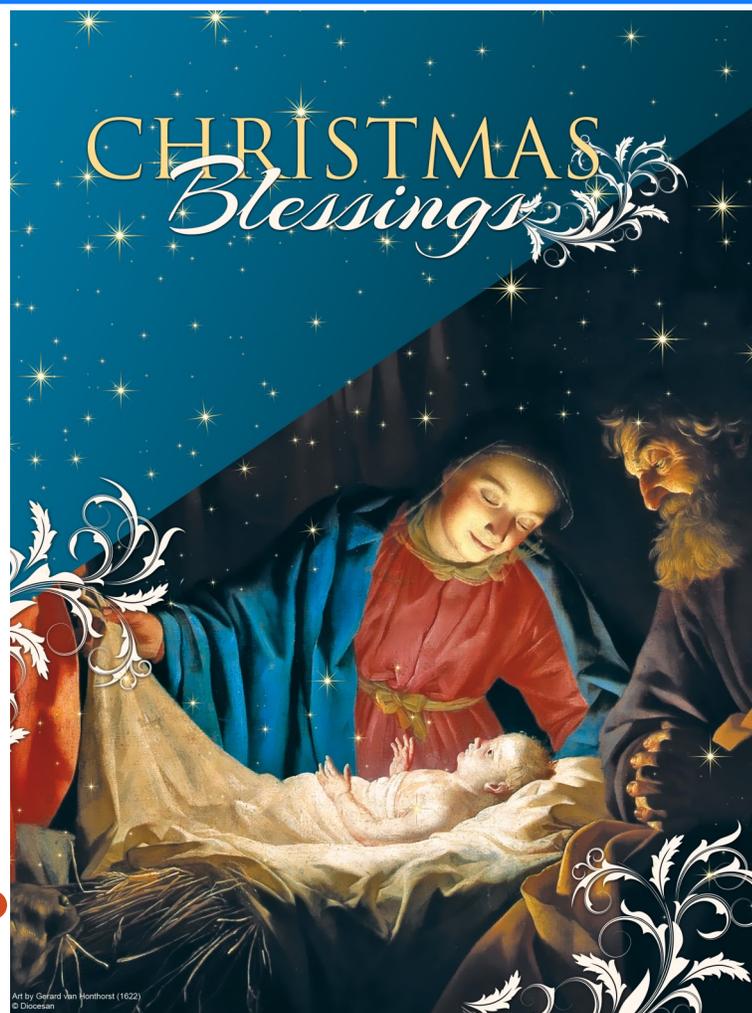
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 8 am
Wednesday – 8:15 am
Federal Holidays, 9 am only (Presidents Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day)

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

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

ADORATION CHAPEL HOURS

Daily, 5 am – 9 pm



Art by Gerard van Honthorst (1622)
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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.

Mass Schedule for Solemnity of Mary

Holy Cross

Saturday, Dec. 31

5 pm Mass

7 pm Spanish Mass

Sunday, January 1, 2023

7:30 am Mass

9:30 am Mass

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Immaculate Conception

Saturday, Dec. 31

5 pm Mass

9 pm Spanish Mass

January 1, 2023

9:00 am Mass

The Parish Offices at Holy Cross will remain closed from Dec. 22 at Noon through December 26.

We will be open only 8:30 to Noon on December 27, 28, 29, and 30. Please call the office before coming in to make sure someone is in the office.

Immaculate Conception Offices will be closed the week of Dec. 26 and reopen on Tuesday, January 3.

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

Ending December 11, 2022

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	\$25,353	\$29,200	(\$3,847)
YTD	\$612,453	\$654,900	(\$42,447)
Needs	\$1,131	\$1,604	(\$473)

WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending December 11, 2022

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	\$3,630
Second Collection	\$463

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,

I am sure, even to this day – no matter your age – you remember at least a few of the toys or games or things you received for Christmas all those many years ago, even some obscure ones. There was always that one gift you hold dear in memory. So, while I loved my Chemistry Set and my Lost in Space robot, I also have an affectionate memory a toy I got when I was six or seven years old called “Busy-Buzz-Buzz.”

This Toy Got Some Good Buzz. Busy-Buzz-Buzz was big plastic bumble bee that had different colored ink cartridges in place of his stinger. And when you held “Busy-Buzz Buzz” to a piece of paper, he buzzed, and made little loops... allowing you to write your name in multicolored swirls and designed. I’m sure no one remembers poor “Busy-Buzz-Buzz,” because like Rodney Dangerfield, he got no respect, and was dare I say, relegated to, dare I say, the “B” list of toys.

Toys of Christmas Past. But in truth, regardless of our personal preference or memories, the best-selling Christmas toy in any given year probably speaks to and tells us about the era from which the toy emanated. Let me give you a few ideas of what I mean:

- **Battleship.** In 1967, at the peak of the Vietnam War and in the midst of the cold war, the number one Christmas toy was the game Battleship. I had that game!
- **Spirograph.** In 1968, came the rise of the psychedelic flower children, and as this groovy whack-a-doo era took hold, Spirograph – a toy that made psychedelic designs – became toy of the year. I had that toy, too.
- **Lite Brite.** In 1970, in the advent with the advent of moon landings just a year earlier, the first “electrical” Christmas toy ever topped the list: Lite Brite. A black grid of holes, plastic pegs and a light bulb passed for technology. Oh, I had that toy, too.
- **Walkie Talkies.** In 1973, with the rise of CB radios for truckers, the number one Christmas toy of the year for kids were walkie talkies. I had that toy, too, but that was always more than just a toy (it was a stone-aged iPhone).
- **Pet Rock.** In 1975, at the peak of the groovy 1970s, when platform shoes got taller, ties got wider, and minds generally turned to mush, the number one Christmas toy of the year was the Pet Rock. For those too young to remember this, it was a rock, it came in box, and you treated it like a pet. If that seems too complicated, the next year the mind-

numbing game Connect Four was the top toy. By 1977, I would estimate the human brain had shrunk a few percentage points because of these toys. Shamefully, I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters, I had both of those items.

- **Simon and Rubix.** But, as physics teaches us, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. And so, in 1978 and 1980, the top Christmas toys of those years provided mental challenges, intellectual weight. In 1978 it was the memorization game called “Simon,” while in 1980 it was the Rubix Cube, which perplexed many family members hither and yon, likely causing some very un-Christmas-y language to be said. Did I have both of these toys? Oh, I think you know the answer.

A Gift in a Stable. Gifts, we relish them. And we remember them. But these gifts that we relish so much, they pass... they may get lost, they may wear out, or they may just be forgotten. However, on that first Christmas, Mary and Joseph had little – and sought little except perhaps the gift of shelter, the gift of a roof over their heads. And they got that gift in the form of a stable. And in that stable Mary gave birth to child – and when that child was born, she would likely have wanted the gift of a crib for Him, but she got the gift of a manger – a feedbox used for an animal – and filled it with straw and made a crib of sort. Her needs were filled. That manger was a good enough gift, and it was made sacred by its user. The Shepherds got the gift of angelic guidance, the Wisemen, the gift of a clear sky, Bethlehem, the gift of new child. Simple gifts, simple dreams.

Simplicity. Today we lack, at times, that simplicity of life – the lack of that acceptance seeking what is needed vs. what is wanted. And that sometimes provides a stumbling block. When I was kid growing up, my family was poor, and my friends were poor – and I mean paycheck to paycheck poor. And as little as we had we all seemed to have enough. And Christmas was a day for a gift. And thus, those gifts were remembered.

The Thrill of Hope. On Christmas day, some 2022 years ago, God saw his poor people... and gave them what money cannot buy, he gave them a special gift. He gave them the thrill 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

RECENTLY DECEASED (HC)

Condolences to the families of those who have recently died:

- Tom Dix

SOLEMNITY OF MARY (JAN 1)

FIRST READING: NUMBERS 6:22-27

We are beloved and blessed by God our Father.

SECOND READING: GALATIANS 4:4-7

As adopted children of God our Father, we are sisters and brothers in Christ.

GOSPEL: LUKE 2:16-21

Following the angelic announcement of his birth, the shepherds come to visit the infant Jesus. Mary treasures all these events in her heart.

YEAR END GIVING

If you wish to donate a monetary gift to Holy Cross before the end of the year, please be sure to have it into the office by Friday, December 30, at Noon. Offices will be closed after that time until January 3, 2023. Anything received after that date will be credited to the 2023 year.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Merry Christmas! Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Next Saturday, December 31st, tune-in to hear an interview with Jeremy Christiansen, author of the new book, "From the Susquehanna to the Tiber: A Memoir of Conversion from Mormonism to the Roman Catholic Church." Catholic Forum airs on Saturday afternoons at 1:30 on Relevant Radio 640.

LET US
ADORE HIM
Christ the Lord

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.wwme.org> or call Tony and Linda Massino at 302-648-2228.

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

The wait is over. Presumably the family has gathered, gifts shared, food eaten together. What remains? To carry the Spirit of Christmas beyond one day, ponder what new might be born into your marriage. If your nerves have been frazzled during the run up to Christmas, relax, slow down, forgive any hurts that may linger.

PARENT POINTERS

Hopefully you've received a nice Christmas present or two. Identify one current possession that you no longer need and donate it to someone who does need it.

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

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,

MASS INTENTIONS DECEMBER/JANUARY

26 MONDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Hans Crews
27 TUESDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Karen Bergmann
28 WEDNESDAY	
HC 8:15 am	Evelyn Maido Burac
29 THURSDAY	
HC 8:00 am	John M. Sclesky
ICC 7:00 pm	For the People
30 FRIDAY	
HC 8:00 am	(LI) Dr. and Mrs. Robert Scacheri
31 SATURDAY	
HC 8 am	James E. Brown
ICC 5:00 pm	For the People
HC 7:00 pm	For the People
ICC 9:00 pm	For the People
1 SUNDAY	
HC 7:30 am	For the People
ICC 9:00 am	For the People
HC 9:30 am	For the People

(LI—LIVING INTENTION
DM—DECEASED MEMBERS)

smartphone or tablet, and you can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. Go to Holy Cross website: holycrossdover.org and click on the Give Online button at the top of the page.

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.cdow.org.

HOLY CROSS DEC. 31/JAN. 1

		EMHC	SERVERS
NEW YEAR'S EVE DEC 31	TBD		TBD
LECTORS			
TBD			
7:30 AM	TBD		TBD
LECTORS			
TBD			
9:30 AM	TBD		TBD
LECTORS			
TBD			
11:30 AM	No Mass at this time This week-end		
LECTORS			

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

NEW YEAR'S EVE	TBD		
LECTORS			
NEW YEAR'S DAY	TBD		
LECTORS			
1:00 PM	None today		

Thank you to all who help with our various ministries at Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception. We are truly grateful for your service to your parishes.

We are always in need of more Lectors, Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Communion, and Altar Servers.

Please call your parish offices if you would be interested in joining in with those who already serve.

ADORATION CHAPEL (HO)

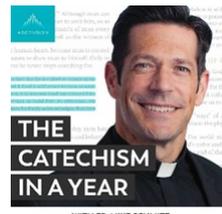
Can you spare an hour to spend with Jesus? Our Adoration Chapel is open from 5 am to 9 pm Monday through Sunday We have openings where you can spend quality time with Our Lord. Call Joann Pate today at 674-4496 to reserve a time for you.

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



ADULT EDUCATION

The Catechism in a Year



With Fr. Mike Schmitz
Coming Jan. 1, 2023

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>

- Los que laboramos en las parroquias de Holy Cross y la Inmaculada Concepción queremos desearles a usted y su familia una Santa y buena Navidad, que el Año Nuevo nos llene del de Esperanza, salud y bienestar.
- Que este año podamos invitar a Jesús el cumpleaños a festejar en nuestros corazones. Recordemos este glorioso día donde nos ha nacido el Salvador. La Navidad NO ES LA CELEBRACION DE UNA FECHA, SINO LA CELEBRACION DE UN HECHO, el nacimiento del Salvador, evento que cambia el matiz de la historia de la salvación. Recordemos que Jesús, el Emmanuel es el motivo de la Navidad. Un tiempo de estar en familia, de amor, de unidad y de paz, de agradecimiento por lo que tenemos y recordando a los necesitados, los que necesitan pan, familia, amor, paz o simplemente una sonrisa.
- Los candidatos a la Confirmación, por favor de llenar todos los requisitos antes del Retiro de Confirmación que es el 28 de enero. Llame o visite la oficina de Educación Religiosa.
- Gracias a todos los que ayudaron con todas las actividades en nuestra parroquia en especial al Ministerio de Arte y ambientación.

ICC- EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

- Retiro para la Primera Reconciliación: es el sábado 7 de enero, 2023 de 9:00 AM - 12 mediodía en el Salón Parroquial. Esto es solo para los niños
- CONFIRMACION DE JOVENES: Tercera Sesión es hoy domingo, 18 de diciembre. a las 2:30 – 5:00 pm en el salón.
- Cuarta Sesión es Domingo, 15 de enero, a las 2:30-5pm en el Salón Parroquial.
- Retiro de Confirmación es el 28 de enero en Holy Cross, Dover .



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next Class 1/8/2023

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 either 302-674-5787 x122 or tkorosec@holycrossdover.org

LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)

Next class **January 8, 2023 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)

"The Eucharist in Scripture" with Scott Hahn
"In *The Eucharist in Scripture*, discover God's plan as it is expressed through the Bible and the Mass. This six-lesson study, presented by Dr. Scott Hahn, will unlock the meaning of covenant, sacrifice, and sacrament as understood in the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation.

Built around three of Dr. Hahn's foundational talks: "The Lamb's Supper," "The Fourth Cup," and "Consuming the Word," *The Eucharist in Scripture* examines the biblical foundations of the Eucharist and explores the Church's liturgy as the original context for the books of the Bible."

Classes begin January 10th at either 9AM or 7 PM in the Matthew/Mark Room in the Parish Office. This will be a free class. No workbooks will be provided. If you are interested contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122

CONFIRMATION AT HOLY CROSS

Confirmation Class:

Sunday, January 8, at 3:30 pm
and Wednesday, January 11, at 6 pm

MOUNT 2000

We have 2 spots left for Mount 2000 retreat

February 3-5, 2023 at Mt. St. Mary's University. Cost is \$100 per teen - open to any high school teen interested in joining us. Please contact Mrs. Darling for a link to register.

CATHOLIC HEART WORK CAMP 2023

We will be traveling to Drexel Hill, PA June 25 to June 30 for a week of service, faith and fun. Please consider joining us - spots available. See Mrs. Darling.

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.

First Reconciliation Immaculate Conception:

Retreat for 1st Reconciliation is on Saturday, January 7th, 9am-12noon in the Parish Hall. This is for the children only.

Sacrament of 1st Reconciliation will be Saturday, January 21st at Holy Cross.

Youth Confirmation for Immaculate Conception:

Fourth Session is Sunday, January 15th, at 2:30-5pm in the Parish hall.

Confirmation Retreat is January 28th at Holy Cross.

There will be no Religious Education Classes on Sunday, December 25th or January 1st. **Classes will resume on January 8th, 2023.**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM
ALL OF US AT
HOLY CROSS AND
IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION.**

Merry Christmas from Holy Cross School

Straight Outta Bethlehem! That was the title of the musical so many had long awaited. Every day I would meet parents who just couldn't wait for Tuesday night. "Gianna has been so quiet about the play, she won't tell me anything! I hear her singing, but she keeps everything a secret. It's a surprise!" We haven't had a Christmas production for three years. Listening to their singing, watching their enthusiasm, was, for me, like finding an oasis in the desert.

A red pick-up truck is filled with presents of gratitude for the HSA who provided us with some fun days as we grew closer to Christmas. We loved the hot cocoa days, the ice-cream days and the chance to hang the uniform up and wear our blingy red and green for a day of spirit and fun. May God bless abundantly our HSA moms who, like Santa's elves, are working year 'round to provide our students with pleasurable and enjoyable activities. A red pick-up truck is filled with presents of gratitude for the HSA who provided us with some fun days as we grew closer to Christmas. We loved the hot cocoa days, the ice-cream days and the chance to hang the uniform up and wear our blingy red and green for a day of spirit and fun. May God bless abundantly our HSA moms who, like Santa's elves, are working year 'round to provide our students with pleasurable and enjoyable activities.

Another smashing success has been our HSA sponsored Secret Santa Shoppe. The revenue has just been pouring in as all of our Crusaders have been filling their bags with gifts for mom, dad, sister, brother andhmmmm....maybe a personal gift or two?? The bags were full and the coffers were "fuller"! Fun Services proved to be a great partner in our endeavor as they were eager to fill our requests for additional gifts, Mr. Klaus even made an emergency run to Christiana to meet the company rep on the shopping center parking lot for a fast pick-up of My cup of gratitude runneth over and is offered to all of the fabulous volunteers who helped the children with their shopping, with counting money, set-up and breakdown. None of it would have been possible without our parent volunteers. Mrs. Rambo was brave and kind enough to take the lead on making it all happen. Actually, I'm not too sure who had the most fun, the parents or the children?

It is on behalf of the faculty and staff of Holy Cross School that heartfelt wishes for a joyous Christmas season are shared as we pay homage and give our hearts over to the One who came "Straight Outta Bethlehem!"



hope and the weary world rejoiced. He gave his people in Israel, not what they wanted... but something better. He gave them beyond their wants and met all their needs in the Birth of Jesus Christ.

Back to the Beginning. On that day, a Savior was born to us. On that day began the marriage of God and man – a marriage of heaven and earth. A re-creation: the beginning of the opening of heaven to mankind, an opening which had been closed since Adam and Eve’s original sin. With the birth of Christ, human nature was raised as that nature was taken on by Christ. Whatever Christ touches he redeems, and on that first Christmas day, God touched mankind and our redemption was at hand.

The Gift of God. In Bethlehem, a Savior was born unto us – not as a mighty warrior messiah, not as a regal king – but born as a baby, in squalor. This savior though realized that he had all he needed – life. He was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit – he was fully Divine and fully human. And all he needed to be fully human was life. A gift from God – and in this case the gift of God, himself. But the same gift we all share.

Redemption. This Savior would begin the redemption of humanity. He would begin the restoration of creation. And the wood of that manger that he lay upon at the outset of his life, would serve as a reminder of the wood of the cross that he would lay upon at the end of his life. A savior from start to finish. Today we celebrate the start – we celebrate that gift we needed and still need. Today we celebrate the incarnation, God coming into the world at man.

The Word became Flesh. Incarnation comes from root word carne meaning flesh. Hence a carnivorous animal eats flesh, carnage is destroyed flesh, and the incarnation is the enfleshment of something. In this case: God in the flesh. We try very hard to understand the depths of God’s love that he would fulfill our needs so radically – but at times rather than understanding a gift we receive, we simply need to say thank you for it! Today is that day. Today is a day of wonder, a day of awe, and a day of thanks. Today, we should be filled with wonder at God’s gift to us, as were the shepherds in the field that night of that First Noel.

Damaging Christmas. Over the years much has been done to confuse and damage the Christmas story. Legends have been overlaid on it, secularity has commercialized it, but even through all of these layers the truth of that first Christmas shines forth. For example, in the secular realm we hear of Kris Kringle – that name actually comes from the phrase Kristkindel, which means the Christ child. Thus, no matter what number of wrongs are laid upon the Christmas story, all roads lead back to that long road to Bethlehem.

Hold the Glitter. And so, on this Christmas we gather to thank God for his wonderful gift of himself to us. No bows, no wrap, no glitter – just God incarnate. Coming to us to save us.

Elements for Christmas Night. And at Mass this Christmas, and at every Mass, God continues to come to us – as the elements of bread and wine become his body and blood, soul and divinity. And he does this not in a symbolic sense, not in some analogical sense, and not as a mere sign. No! After the Consecration that bread and wine will be no more: the bread becomes the Body of Christ; the wine, his blood. Those simple elements will be changed forever.

Changed Forever. So too, when Christ came that first Christmas, we —our world— was likewise changed forever and for better. The prophecies were fulfilled, redemption was at hand, God set aside his majesty for us and was born as an infant in a manger, that he might walk among his people. This is our faith, and source of our joy. As Pope Benedict noted in 2007:

“If the light of God — the light of truth — is turned off, life becomes dark and without a compass. If one does not recognize God became man, what sense is there in celebrating Christmas? Christians must reaffirm with deep and felt conviction the truth of the birth of Christ, to pay witness before everyone the understanding of a gift never before dreamed of that is a richness not only for us, but for all people.”

Thus, let us never forget, in prayer, to say thank you to God, for the greatest gift He could ever give: Himself. Let us put a bow around that and call it a Merry Christmas.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor