



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 26, 2021

Holy Family

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
No choirs at the Masses at the present time; a cantor will be available for the 5 pm and the 9:30 and 11:30 am Masses.

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Monday-Saturday, 8 am
During Lent, Monday and Friday, 12:10 pm
Federal Holidays, 9 am only (Presidents Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day)

CONFSSION 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

CONFSSION SCHEDULE

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



The Holy Family
by Joseph Paelinck
© Diocesan
circa 1820

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

Sacraments

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.

IF YOU PLAN TO MAKE
A YEAR-END
DONATION TO HOLY CROSS OR
TO
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION,
PLEASE BE SURE IT REACHES OUR
OFFICES BY NOON ON
DECEMBER 30, 2021.

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PARISH OFFICES WILL
REOPEN ON DECEMBER 28.

THE DAYS OF DEC. 28-30TH, WE
WILL BE OPEN IN THE MORNINGS
ONLY.

WE WILL BE CLOSED
DECEMBER 31 THROUGH
JANUARY 3.



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE
STAFF AND CLERGY OF
HOLY CROSS AND ICC.

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.

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

December 12, 2021

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Offertory	\$28,352	\$26,725	\$1627
YTD	\$618,911	\$622,750	(\$3,839)
Needs	\$1,445	\$1,480	(\$35)

WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending December 12, 2021

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Offertory	\$3,765
2nd	\$429

For Holy Cross, you can also Sign up for Faith Direct or call the office to leave your name and phone number if you wish to make your contribution by a credit card.

We appreciate your generosity to the church.

stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

This Pastor's Column will present one of the more bizarre segues into a column that is about the coming of the Lord at Christmas. Be patient, grab a coke, some cookies, and, as they say at the opening of "Gilligan's Island," "sit right back and you'll hear a tale..." He we go: Back in 2012, there were two movies out in the theatres at the same time both involving the life of our nation's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln.

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 movie about Lincoln that was in theatre 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-styled fight scenes. It also showed that the reason that he opposed the Confederacy was because... well... it was because they were actually 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 psychotropic drugs while reading too many comics.

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 line 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 snow-

flakes, 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 trapping – many of which are beautiful – have likewise overtaken, or overshadowed the truth of what Christmas is.

The Greatest Gift of All? A number of years ago, I received a video from a friend of mine from New York. He forwards me – I don't know – a million emails a day. Usually with 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 nice, 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 shown in that video was, singing hymns at a shopping mall is 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 real low. Like when singer Belinda Carlisle had a hit in the 1980s called "Heaven is a Place on Earth," that sets the bar low. Or when a movie poster boasts "Best Nicholas Cage movie in years," 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 Belinda Carlisle reckoned Heaven as some place on earth, and just as Lincoln portrayed as a Vampire Hunter diminished the truth of a great President, the contemporary secularization Christmas diminishes what this day 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 and for better. And so, each year at this time, we celebrate with the most solemn reverence, the Nativity of the Lord, the

(continued on page 10)

HC & ICC CLERGY

Vy. Rev. James S. Lentini , V. F.
Msgr. Daniel McGlynn
Rev. Mano Salla

Pastor
Pastor Emeritus
Parochial Vicar

HC CLERGY

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

Deacon
Deacon
Deacon
Deacon
Deacon

ICC CLERGY

Mr. Sherman Mitchell

Deacon

HC STAFF

Parish Office
Jane Green/Susan Cutrona
Diane Belt
Kenneth Trojan
Michele Dornberger
Arline Dosman
Tammy Korosec
Linda Darling
Justin Wurzel
Len Dornberger
Michael Perza

302 674 5787
Receptionist, ext. 110
Assistant to the Pastor, ext. 113
Business Manager, ext. 119
Records/Asst. Bus. Mgr., ext. 116
Dir. of Hispanic Ministry, ext. I18
CRE Religious Ed, ext 122
Youth Ministry, ext. 123
Maintenance Director
Cemetery Administrator, ext. 135
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
Marilyn Dixon
Alicia Poppiti
Susan Venezia
Arline Dosman

410 482 7687
Office Manager
DRE Religious Ed.
Bookkeeper
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

Principal, ext. 111

Linda Pollitt

MAILING ADDRESS

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

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

The feast is over but the visiting and company may continue through the Christmas holidays. Although generally a happy time of family togetherness, Christmas can also be a time when stress causes short tempers. Be mindful and merciful with your beloved these days when you might be together in extremely close quarters.

PARENTING POINTERS

As we mark the end of 2021, ask your family to gather and recall one regret and one happy memory they have of this past year. Try to commit to one positive act during the first month of 2022.



There's still time to support the ministries of the Annual Catholic Appeal



As the close of 2021 fast approaches – you may wish to take this final opportunity to improve lives and make a 2021 tax-deductible donation to the Annual Catholic Appeal.

**Connect here to make
an end-of-year contribution**



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON DEVELOPMENT OFFICE | THE ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

To further support the ministries of the Diocese of Wilmington, check out the QR code above or go to cdow.org/catholic-diocese-of-wilmington-offices-and-ministries/development-office/

READINGS FOR JANUARY 2**EPIPHANY****FIRST READING: ISAIAH 60:1-6**

Isaiah offers a promise of light, of tenderness and of abundance.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 3:2-3, 5-6

God's grace is shown to Paul so that he may give it to others.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 2:1-12

In hope the wise men follow the star that leads to the light of Christ.

MEN OF THE HOLY CROSS (NEW AND MORE CONVENIENT MEETINGS)

It is now easier than ever for you to join the Men of The Holy Cross! You are welcome to come in person or participate from the comfort of your home, sitting in your favorite chair with a cup of coffee. Thanks to our newest innovation (a state of the art "Meeting Owl" which makes you feel like you are there in person), all you need is your smartphone, tablet or computer. Just type in or click on the following link and it will automatically guide you through the Zoom Meeting set up and join our hybrid meeting. <https://zoom.us/j/30861480> Wednesday mornings at 6:30 AM (time certain) for prayer, gospel reflections, Church teachings and timely discussions. Even for busy men who are constantly on the go, it has never been more convenient for you to give us a try; our meetings are as close as your phone!

SAMARITAN GIVING TREE

This year, we will continue with our Giving Tree for the Samaritans. We would still like to collect monetary donations in order to help those in need. We have our Samaritan Tree in the Gathering Space with envelopes on it. All funds received will go into the Samaritan account so we can then help those in need who contact us and are cleared that they truly need help. Please consider making a donation to the Samaritans through this Giving Tree so we will have funds available to help those in need throughout the year. Take an envelope from the tree and return it to the Parish Office or put it in the collection basket in the envelope. All funds go into the Samaritan account. Do not leave checks or money at the tree.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Catholic Forum. Catholic Forum returns from the holiday break on January 8th when Mr. Rusty Gilles from St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Hockessin, Delaware will discuss the history of the parish as they begin their 250th anniversary year. Catholic Forum airs on Saturday afternoons at 1:30 on Relevant Radio 640. You can listen online anytime at cdow.org/CatholicForum, or by searching "Catholic Forum" on Apple, Spotify, iHeartRadio, or Amazon Music podcasts.

MASS INTENTIONS

DECEMBER

27 MONDAY	HC 8:00 am	Morning Prayer
28 TUESDAY	HC 8:00 am	Tom and Delores Kolakowski
29 WEDNESDAY	HC 8:00 am	Pauline Creszenzo
30 THURSDAY	HC 8:00 am	Bill Tedeman and DM Tedeman Family For the People
	ICC 6:30 pm	
31 FRIDAY	HC 8:00 am	Paul Schnappauf
	HC 5:00 pm	For the People
	ICC 5:30 pm	For the People
	HC 7:00 pm	For the People
	ICC 9:00 pm	For the People
1 SATURDAY	HC 8 am	For the People
	ICC 9 am	For the People
	HC 10 am	For the People
2 SUNDAY	HC 7:30 am	Grace Kapys (LI)
	ICC 8:30 am	Bernard Folker
	HC 9:30 am	Kouassi Gerard Dayato
	ICC 11 am	Catherine Beck
	HC 11:30 am	Rev. Gary Zerr (LI)
	ICC 1 pm	For the People

(LI = LIVING INTENTION
DM—DECEASED MEMBERS)

RETRouveILLE: REDISCOVER THE LOVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE

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. Couples learn to build communication skills. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties or crises. The next program begins the weekend of February 11-13, 2022 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.

HOLY CROSS MASS SCHEDULE

- Holy Family of Jesus – Sunday, December 26**
7:30 and 9:30 am Mass; 11:30 am Spanish Mass
- Monday, December 27, 2021**
8:00 am Morning Prayer
- Tuesday, December 28 – Friday, December 31**
8 am Mass
- New Year's Eve – Friday, December 31**
Solemnity of Mary
5:00 pm Mass
7:00 pm Spanish Mass
- New Year's Day – Saturday, January 1, 2022**
Solemnity of Mary
8:00 am Mass and 10:00 am Mass
No 5 pm Mass in Anticipation of Sunday
- Epiphany - Sunday, January 2, 2022**
7:30 and 9:30 am Mass; 11:30 am Spanish Mass

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MASS SCHEDULE

- Holy Family of Jesus – Sunday, December 26**
8:30 am Mass, 11:00 am Mass
1:00 pm Spanish Mass
- New Year's Eve – Friday, December 31**
Solemnity of Mary
5:30 pm English Mass; 9:00 pm Spanish Mass
- New Year's Day – Wednesday, January 1, 2022**
Solemnity of Mary
9:00 am English Mass
- Epiphany – Sunday, January 2, 2022**



SAVE THE DATE:

Mark your calendar! Designer Purse Bingo will be here on **Saturday evening, April 2**. More information to follow soon - please come support our youth attending Catholic Heart Work Camp in Greensboro, NC this coming summer.



this & that

WANTED—PICKUP TRUCK (HC)

Looking for a place to donate your good condition used pick up truck. Holy Cross Parish is in need of a used pick up truck for our maintenance department. Our current pick up has died and is beyond repair. If you have, or know of someone who would like to donate a used pickup that is in good condition to the parish, please contact the Parish Office, extension 113. Thank you for your consideration.

ADORATION CHAPEL (HC)

The Adoration Chapel is open again each day from 5 am to 9 pm. If you would like to take a permanent time slot, it's not too late. We still have many openings on various days. See the openings listed below. Call Joann Pate today at 674-4496 to reserve a time for you.

SUNDAY	7 am, 10 am, 12 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm
THURSDAY	2 pm
FRIDAY	8 am, 7 pm
SATURDAY	5 am, 6 am, 8 am, 10 am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm, 7 pm

WELCOME NEW PARISHIONERS

We extend a warm welcome to:

- Mary Kistle
- Noe, Maria Calcido, Evelyn and Luciana Placencia

RECENTLY DECEASED

Our condolences and prayers to the families of:

- Margaret Grinsted and Robert Andresen, Jr. May they rest in peace. Amen.

NEWLY BAPTIZED

Congratulations to our newly baptized members:

- Arnold Nathaniel Vargas Hernandez
- Angela Daleyza
- Amari Rose
- Clara Ann Dill
- Katelyn Michele Dill



NUESTRA FAMILIA HISPANA

- Nuestro más sincero agradecimiento a todos los que nos acogieron y nos dieron posada en sus hogares. Tanto los hermanos de la parroquia de Holy Cross como la de la Inmaculada Concepción es una verdadera bendición poder compartir nuestras tradiciones navideñas
- El 31 de diciembre celebraremos la vigilia de la solemnidad de María Madre de Dios, nuestra santa Misa en español, a las 7:00 de la noche en la parroquia de la Santa Cruz en Dover a las 9:00 de la noche en la parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción en Marydel. Es día de precepto y tenemos que asistir a misa.
- Que este nuevo año que se aproxima nos traiga, Salud, esperanza, amor, prosperidad y abundantes bendiciones. Feliz Año Nuevo 2022.
- El domingo 2 de enero, 2022 celebraremos la Epifanía del Señor, conocido como día de Reyes, tendremos nuestra tradicional Rosca de Reyes. Los reyes llegarán para adorar al Niño y darles aguinaldo a nuestros niños. Si usted desea colaborar con una Rosca o con una olla de atole o champurrado hable con la Sra. Arline Dosman.
- Si usted está interesado en participar y compartir sus talentos como lector, ministerio de música, ujier, ministros Extraordinario de la Comunión, Arte y Ambientación, dar Clases Pre-bautismales. Por favor hable con los coordinadores de los ministerios o llame a la oficina al 302-674-5787 ext. 118
- Symbolon Explicación de la fe católica:

Viviendo la fe católica. Estamos ofreciendo una serie de videos / libros de estudio una vez más El costo es de \$ 25 para el libro del participante Parte 2.

- En español en la parroquia de la Santa Cruz. Con el padre Oscar y la Sra. Arline. Todos los viernes a las 6:00 – 8:00 PM de la tarde el ELC a partir de enero. Si está interesado hable con la Sra. Arline. En inglés en la parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción con la Sra. Alicia. Todos los lunes a las 7:00P.M. La primera parte continuará hasta el 13 de diciembre y la segunda parte comenzará después del Año Nuevo.

EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA (ICC)

No habrá clases el 26 de diciembre ni el 2 de enero 2022. Se reanudarán el día 9 de enero 2022.

Primera Reconciliación el próximo 14 de diciembre en el salón de 6:30-7:30PM

1ra Reconciliación Prep- próxima sesión es el Retiro sábado, 8 de enero, 2022 en el salón, 2022 a las 9 am-12 mediodía.

Sacramento 1ra Reconciliación: sábado, 22 de enero, 2022 a las 11:00 am at Holy Cross, Dover.

Prep candidatos a la Confirmación – próximo domingo 16 de enero, 2022 a las 2:30-5pm en el salón.

faith formation

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next Class: January 9, 2022

- Children are to be dropped off at the double doors next to the Elementary office.
- 7th and 8th graders are in the Holy Cross Junior High building.
- No one except students and volunteers are allowed to enter either building.
- MASKS ARE MANDATORY.
- Hall monitors will assist getting children to their classes.

Dismissal from the ramp side will be as follows:

- Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and Sacramental Prep – 5:15pm
- Grades K-1 -5:20pm
- Grades 2- 5:25pm
- Grades 3-4 5:30pm

If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302)674-5787 X 122.

Interested in enrolling a student in Religious Education? Please contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122

LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)

Next class January 9 at 10:30am-12:30pm in the Matthew/Mark Room;

Interested in enrolling a student in LAFF, please contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122

YOUTH AT HOLY CROSS

Next Class for Confirmation:

Sunday, January 9 at 1 and 4 pm and Wednesday, January 12 at 6 pm.

Confirmation Retreats:

Reminder to please email your choice of dates for retreat to ldarling@holycrossdover.org

SRE (IC)

There will be no SRE on Sunday, December 26 or January 2, due to the Christmas Holiday.

SRE next classes: Classes will resume on Sunday, January 9th.

Sacraments:

Youth confirmation prep- Next session will be Sunday, January 16, 2022 at 2:30-5pm in the hall

1st Reconciliation Prep- next session is the Retreat on Saturday, January 8th, 2022 in hall at 9am-12noon

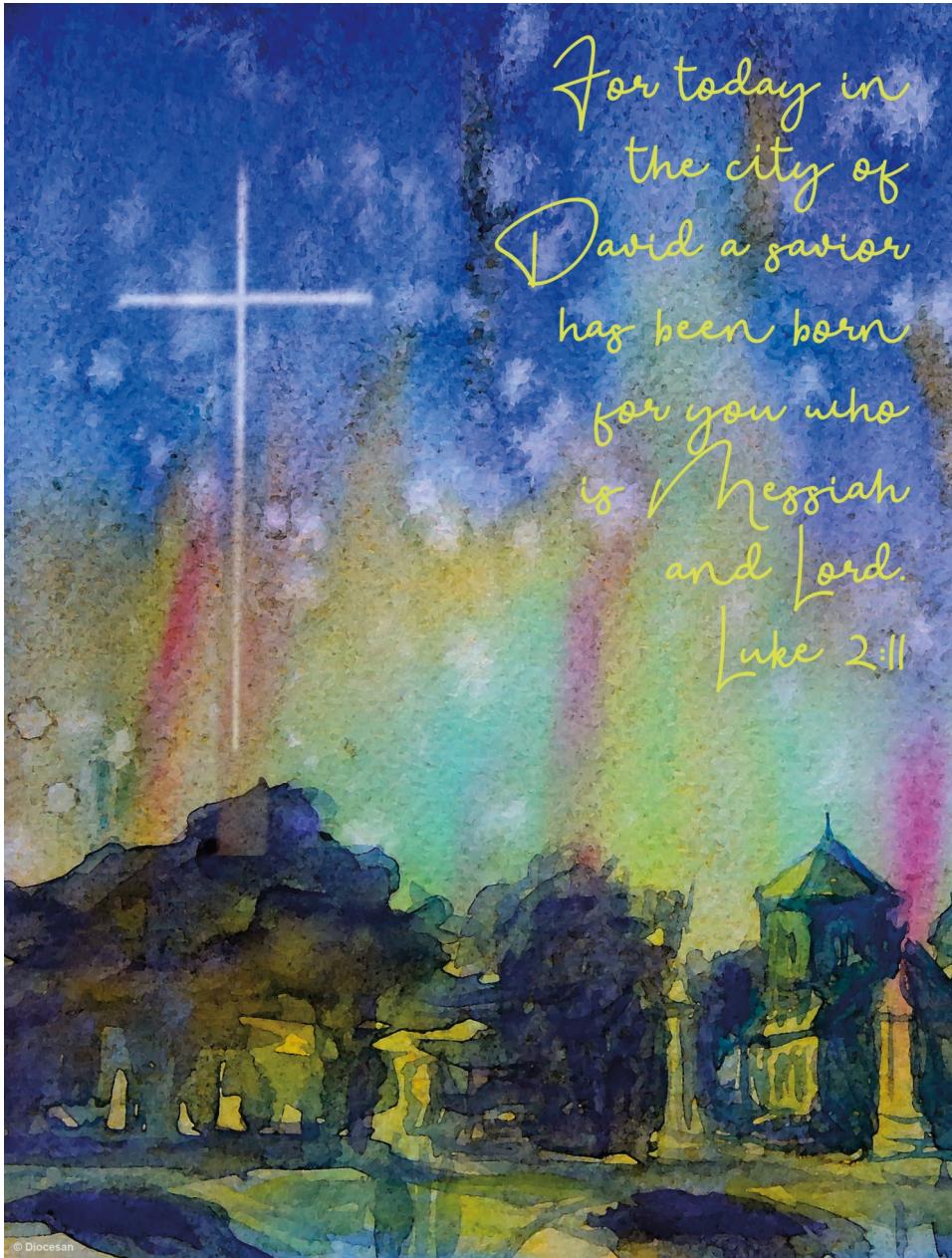
Sacrament of 1st Reconciliation: Saturday, January 22, 2022 at 11:00am at Holy Cross, Dover.

Symbolon: will finish up on January 3rd.

Part 2: Living the Faith, will begin soon after, with schedule to be posted. You are welcome to join, no need to have participated in Part 1: Knowing the Faith, you can catch up later. You just need to register, so we can order your book.



Holy Cross School



...for, behold, I
bring you good
tidings of great
joy, that shall be
to all the people:

For, this day, is
born to you a
Savior, who is
Christ the Lord,
in the city of Da-
vid. And this
shall be a sign
unto you.

You shall find
the infant
wrapped in
swaddling
clothes, and laid
in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying:

Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.

It is on behalf of the faculty and staff of Holy Cross School
that I send glad tidings of the joy, love, and peace
of our newborn Savior.

Mrs. Pollitt

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 to give generously to the poor, 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 man up, and allowed our souls to feel their worth before God.

God In the Flesh. God chose in the incarnation 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 with regrets, and sometimes we feel very much 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 experiences 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 this day 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 and 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 not 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 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 an call it a Merry Christmas! Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor