

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

February 1, 2026

4th Sunday Ordinary Time

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

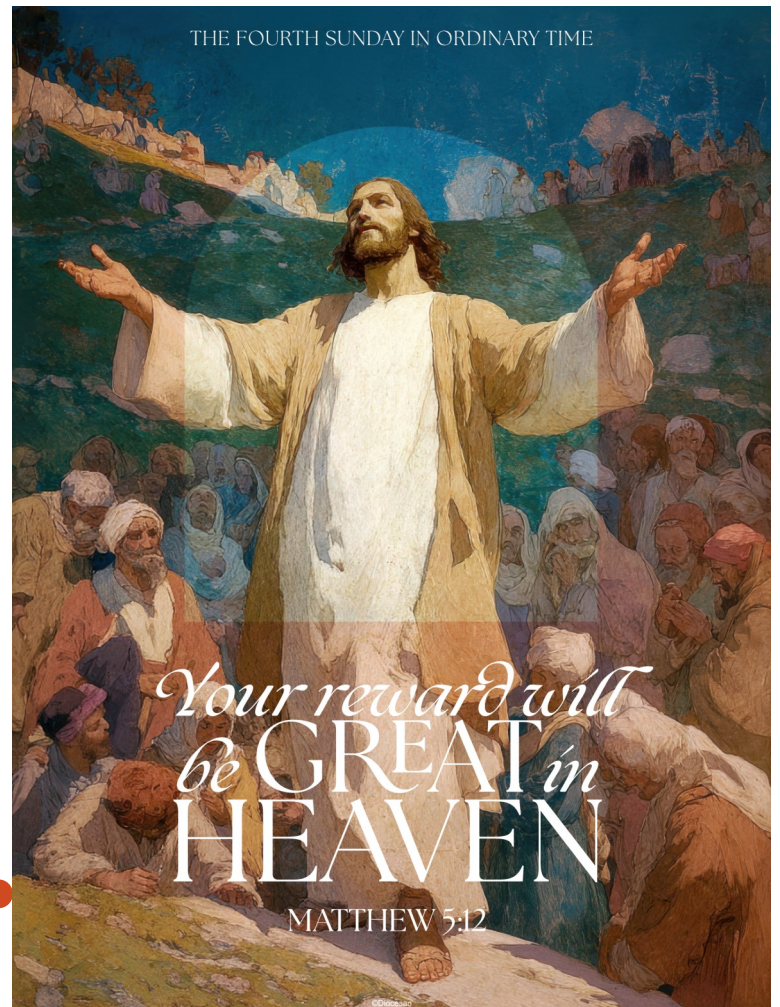
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9 am-5 pm
Closed Wednesday and Friday

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

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

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Thursday, 6 pm, Spanish



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.

THE PRIESTS WILL BE AWAY TUESDAY, FEB. 3, THROUGH FRIDAY, FEB. 6.

Morning Prayer will be offered at the normal Mass times during the week.

On Tuesday, Feb. 3, Blessing of the Throats will take place after the 8 am Morning Prayer.

Please keep our Priests in your prayers as they attend the Priest Retreat for all of our Diocesans Priests.

TAX LETTERS—HOLY CROSS

Holy Cross Parish has emailed tax statements to everyone we have an email address for in our Parish Data System. Emails come from the following site: notifications@ondemandmail.com. If you don't see an email, please check your spam folder.

If you don't have a current email on file with us, you can call the Parish Office to request a tax letter be mailed or give us an email address so we can send you one. Thank you.

TAX LETTERS—IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Please call the Immaculate Conception Office if you wish to receive a tax statement.

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC) Ending January 18, 2026

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	\$26,777	\$27,500	(\$723)
YTD	\$773,445	\$773,360	\$85
Needs	\$1,772	\$1,738	\$34

WEEKLY OFFERING (ICC) Ending January 18, 2026

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	\$4,437
Second Col.	\$633

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,

Here we are in February, on the weekend after a big weekend snowstorm. As I write this column, it is Friday, January 23 — a day before a snowstorm is scheduled to hit. Unless every weather service has this wrong (which has happened before), we are poised to get about 10"-12" of snow and a layer of ice. Also, as I write this, the various weather-prognostication websites are saying that on the evening of February 1 into February 2, Delmarva will be getting another blast of snow. As you read this, you can figure out if their prognostications were correct. As always in Delaware and the Eastern Shore, the weather report is really a "whether report" — guessing whether it will snow or not.

A Quite August Snowfall? In this regard, I am going to write about something connected to — well, August. "Huh?" you may ask. Yes, I am writing about August because, interestingly, what I am writing about is connected with snow... in August. Again, I hear a "Huh?" chorus. Snow in August? Is the Pastor, dare I say, flaking out? Not at all — I promise I am writing about snow: Snow in August. Read on, and your blizzard of questions will be answered.

Some Major News. On August 5 each year, there is a feast day commonly identified as "St. Mary Major." Now, when I was a kid, I always thought that Mary Major was a person; I was wrong. Mary Major is not a person, but rather a place. You see, St. Mary Major is a shorthand form of the full name of the holy day, which is formally known as "The Feast of the Dedication of St. Mary Major Basilica." So, now you might be pondering: "Ah, so, there is a Basilica named after this lady, Mary Major... so then here is a 'Mary Major.'" To answer in Christmas-type manner: No, Virginia, there is NOT a Mary Major.

An Emphasis from Ephesus. You see, the name of the August 5th holy day is a somewhat confusing translation of the name of the Basilica itself, which is properly the "*Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore*" — "*Maggiore*," in Italian, means "major." In the case of this Basilica, the word means "major" in the sense of primacy or priority. Thus, on August 5th, the Catholic Church celebrates the holy day that honors the major (i.e., most important) Basilica of St. Mary in the world. The reason it is so honored is that it was the first Church in the West to be named and dedicated in honor of Mary. This place of primacy — being first — is indicated by the word "major."

A Major Snow. But, you may wonder, "Hey, it's February 1! And didn't you say this Pastor's Column had to do with snow?" Okay, I'm getting to it. So, here's the story, morning glory: You

see, the feast of St. Mary Major on August 5th was formerly known as the feast of Our Lady of the Snows. This may raise the question: So, why was it called Our Lady of the Snows? Why would a summertime feast be connected to snow?

Dream House. To answer the question of why the August Feast for St. Mary Major is connected to snow, let us step into the Wayback Machine and set the dial to Fourth Century Rome, the year 352 A.D. It seems there was a wealthy Roman couple who had no heirs. This couple decided to donate its wealth to the church, but didn't know what to do with it specifically. One night, they prayed that God might direct them as to what they should do. The husband, John, had a dream on the evening of August 4, 352. In that dream, he saw a church honoring Mary being built on Esquiline Hill in Rome. In that same dream, a voice told him that the location for this church would be marked in snow. That same night, Pope Liberius had a similar dream in which our Blessed Mother indicated the building of a Church whose location would be miraculously indicated to the Pope.

The Weather Channeled. The next morning, on Esquiline Hill across from their home, snow had fallen. Now, that's not so odd, you might think — snow on a hillside. But it was odd. And it was miraculous, as it was August 5, and snow in Italy in the summer is unheard of. But it did snow! God, channeling his gracious power, saw to it that the snow fell in the form of an outline of a building. Tradition tells us that Pope Liberius himself staked out the snow's perimeter (which formed an outline of a church) before it melted. It came to pass that the Basilica of St. Mary Major was built on that spot and based on the snow's outline. This gave birth to the title of Mary, as "Our Lady of the Snows" — remember her role and purpose in what came to pass. And that title became the name of the August 5 feast day for many, many centuries.

This Old House. That original Church was built in 352 or so, but did not survive too well for too long — whether due to structural problems, barbarian incursions, or something else — it was deemed in need of being rebuilt. And, so, in 432 A.D., the remains of the original structure were replaced by an entirely new Church. A massive one, at that. One befitting the grand honor of our Blessed Mother. This was a "major" Church. This fifth-century makeover of a fourth-century

(continued on page 10)

HC & ICC CLERGY

Vy. Rev. James S. Lentini , V. F.	Pastor
Rev. John Enemuó	Parochial Vicar
Rev. Rommel Padilla	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
 Marydel, 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
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MAILING ADDRESS

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

FEB. 8—5TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 58:7-10

Isaiah reminds us of the importance of compassion. He tells us how important it is not to look away from other people when they are hungry or homeless, but to share whatever we have with them.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

St. Paul says that he doesn't rely on clever words or great knowledge to persuade people. He speaks instead of his love of Jesus Christ. Even though he experiences anxiety and fear, Paul puts his trust in God.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5:13-16

Through our actions we are to show others what it means to love. We are to be the lamp that stands on the table giving light, and the salt that flavors and seasons. We are to bring hope, joy and love to our neighbors and to society, through our contributions.

SAMARITAN'S FOOD PANTRY

More donations are always welcome. We can always use Hamburger Helper, Manwich, canned goods such as kidney, black, pinto beans, soups, instant potatoes, Brownie Mix, peanut butter/jelly, etc. Thanks for your generosity.

MARTHA AND MARY MINISTRY

The Martha and Mary Ministry invite you to join us to provide solace to the bereaved in our parish. There are many ways that you can serve the Lord and our brothers and sisters during the difficult time of losing a loved one. We will be providing greeters in the Gathering Space to assist in directing visitors to their seats and handing out worship aids, setting up for repasts and providing baked goods upon request. **We welcome both men and women to join us in this important ministry.** If you are interested in joining us please contact Lori Christiansen at 302-745-6900 or via email at shera29@verizon.net.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Tune-in this week to meet Catholic Forum's new host and Diocese of Wilmington's Communications Director, Hannah Dell.

The Catholic Forum podcast on Apple, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Amazon Music podcasts and YouTube.com/DioceoseofWilm debuts every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.; and on Relevant Radio 640 every Saturday afternoon at 1:30.

Purse Bingo



Please join us on Saturday evening, February 28 from 6 pm to 10 pm for a fun night of bingo. We have some beautiful bags to win, basket auction prizes and 50/50. All proceeds help to send our teens to Catholic Heart Work Camp this summer.

Tickets are \$35 each - tables of 8 - and may be purchased in the Parish Office or by emailing: ldarling@holycrossdover.org.

RECENTLY BAPTIZED

Congratulations to our recently baptized members:

- Gunnar James Heitzman
- Bryson Allen Siebert

NEW PARISHIONERS

We welcome those who have recently registered as members of Holy Cross

- Langstan, Marianna, Scarlett, Langstan Jr. Burke and Alyvia Reyes

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

Bishop William E. Koenig invites all married couples in the Diocese of Wilmington to the Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass on World Marriage Sunday, February 8, at 1:00pm at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in Newark, DE. Those celebrating significant anniversaries (5-year increments) - 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, or any anniversary beyond 50, will receive a special certificate from the Bishop. Reservations are needed, no matter what the anniversary

MASS INTENTION FEBRUARY

2 MONDAY

HC 8:00 am Mary Manjo

3 TUESDAY

HC 8:00 am Morning Prayer

4 WEDNESDAY

HC 8:15 am Morning Prayer

5 THURSDAY

HC 8:00 am Morning Prayer
ICC 6:00 pm For the People

6 FRIDAY

HC 8:00 am Morning Prayer

7 SATURDAY

HC 8:00 am Irene D. Sadusky
HC 5:00 pm Casey Family

8 SUNDAY

HC 7:30 am Krisinski & Wengerter Fam.
ICC 8:30 am Gerri and Jerry Bevenour
HC 9:30 am Nadine Noble
ICC 11:00 am Sherman Mitchell
HC 11:30 am For the People
ICC 1:00 pm For the People

Jan 26—Feb 1 Sanctuary Candle in Church is for the intention of parishioners of Holy Cross.

Jan 26—Feb 1 Sanctuary Candle in the Adoration Chapel is for parishioners of Holy Cross.

year. Reservations are required by February 4, 2026.

Bishop Koenig will be available for photos with interested couples beginning at 12:00 pm and again after the Mass. If you would like to have a photo taken with Bishop Koenig, please arrive at 12:00 pm or plan to stay after 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://cdowmarriagepreparation.wufoo.com/forms/qf0nytf11mql00/> or by going to the Diocesan Website - Ministries - Marriage and Family Life.

FEBRUARY 7/8, 2026

EMHC SERVERS

5:00 PM J. Bieker M. Casey V. Everett
C. Bugglin J. Clendaniel M. Rubino

LECTORS

L. Christiansen
D. Dixon

7:30 AM M. Jacobs R. O'Neill L. Thomas
L. Lockett T. Svienty G. Thomas

LECTORS

J. Davis

9:30 AM S. Ford K. Kelly W. Shuro
F. Hanlin S. Lascano M. Willoughby

LECTORS

C. Parks
C. Petka

11:30 AM E. Pastoriza T. Hernandez
A. Luna

LECTORS

G. Hernandez
N. Almengor

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM E. Costello

LECTORS

B. Thompson

11:00 AM M. Soule

LECTORS

S. Tucker



Eucharistic Ministers to the Hospital and Homebound Needed

We are looking for more volunteers to help us bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound of our parish and to those in the hospital. This ministry keeps growing as we have more and more homebound parishioners who are seeking to receive Our Lord.

Call the Holy Cross Parish Office if interested in this ministry: 302-674-5787, extension 110 or 113.

ADORATION CHAPEL

Jesus came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not stay awake and keep watch with Me for one hour?" Matthew 26:40

Don't you have at least one hour a week to spend in prayer with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Adoration? Come signup for Adoration....many hours open.

If you cannot make a commitment with your busy schedule, look at the hours open and come in when you can. Any free time you have to be with our Lord is good for the soul. Keep this option for praying and adoring open in your life.

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

REDISCOVER THE LOVE IN YOUR MARRIAGE (2026 PROGRAMS)

RETROUVAILLE: 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 and to increase intimacy. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties or crises. The next program begins the weekend of February 6-8, 2026 at the Family Life Center in Malvern, PA. For more information, or to register, call 215-766-3944 or visit www.MarriageHelpDelVal.org. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

- Foro Cristiano Reanudaremos nuestro Foro Cristiano “Conozca Su Fe Católica de 6-8 de la noche, en el ELC que es el último edificio C seca de la cancha de juegos y suba al segundo piso. Quedan todos cordialmente invitados.
- **Fiesta de la Candelaria:** La Fiesta de la Virgen de la Candelaria Se celebrara el domingo 8 de febrero en el salón de eventos. Por favor traigan algo para compartir. La Candelaria es una celebración religiosa y cultural que conmemora la Presentación de Jesús en el Templo y la Purificación de María 40 días después de Navidad (el 2 de febrero). Honra a la Virgen María como portadora de la luz (candelas).
- **Reunión General de líderes:**
- El domingo 15 de febrero después de la santa misa, tendremos una reunión general de líderes y coordinadores para elaborar nuestro calendario de julio 2026 a junio 2027. Esta reunión dura aproximadamente dos horas. Lugar de la reunión es el salón de eventos. Quedan todos invitados a participar y traer nuevas iniciativas que conciernen a nuestra comunidad y a nuestra parroquia.
- ¿Qué es el Tiempo Ordinario? El Tiempo Ordinario es el período más largo del año litúrgico, dividido en dos partes, que se enfoca en la vida diaria y las enseñanzas de Jesús, celebrando a Cristo en la vida diaria, con el color verde y la Eucaristía dominical como elementos clave, tras Navidad y Pascua, y antes de Adviento y Cuaresma, donde se escucha la Escritura y se aprende del ejemplo de Cristo y los santos. No tiene nada de ordinario. "Ordinario" se refiere a "numerado" u "ordenado" (del latín ordinalis), no a algo "común" o "aburrido". Celebra los aspectos de la vida y ministerio de Jesús: enseñanzas, parábolas, milagros y la misión salvadora de Dios. Dura 33 o 34 semanas.
- -Primer periodo: Desde el lunes después del Bautismo del Señor (fin de Navidad) hasta el Miércoles de Ceniza (inicio de Cuaresma).
- -**Segundo periodo:** Desde el lunes después de Pentecostés (fin del tiempo pascual) hasta el sábado antes del primer domingo de Adviento.
- **Voluntarios:** 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
- **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- EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

Sacramentos:

- **OCIA:** Todos los lunes en el salón de la oficina parroquial. de 5:30-7:15pm
- **Clase de preparación para la Primera Comunión:** Sesión # 3 martes, 10 de febrero, 6:30 - 7:30 en el Salón parroquial.
- **Formacion de catequistas:** Martes 3 de febrero 7-8:30 en el salón parroquial
- **Confirmación 2026:** Sesión # 4 domingo 18 de enero de 3-5:30 en el salón parroquial.
- **Retiro de Confirmación:** Aquí en ICC ,7 de febrero de 9:00 am – 4:00 PM en el salón parroquial. Solamente los jóvenes candidatos a la Confirmación.

RELIGIOUS ED AT HOLY CROSS

Next Class: February 3rd (K-4th Grade) and February 4th (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 classes February 1st and February 15th. We gather after 9:30am Mass in the Matthew/Mark room. Class will begin at 11:00am and will last until approximately 1:00pm.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS

February 3rd – Foundations of Faith session 15

Beginning February 24 (Pause Foundation of Faith for Lent)

“Crux: Lessons for Surrender” is a hybrid class that incorporates at home meditations with weekly small group study. The class is free; however, a workbook is available for \$7.00. All are welcome! Please call or email to

reserve your workbook to Tammy Korosec (contact info below). Daily Meditations begin on Ash Wednesday (February 18)

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.

MONDAY MORNING GROUP

Began January 26th, the Monday Morning Group reviewing Dan Burke’s “Spiritual Warfare and Discernment of Spirits” Class begins at 9:00 am in the Luke room on

the 2nd floor of the Early Learning Center, the Parish Office.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Confirmation Classes:

Our next Confirmation Class will be Sunday, January 25 from 5-6:30 pm and Wednesday, January 28 from 6-7:30 pm. Both classes will be in the Matthew Mark room 2nd floor of the ELC building - this week only. Parents will NOT be invited to this class because of the space constraints.

Youth Group:

Our next Youth Group meeting will be on Sunday, January 25 from 6:45-8 pm in the Luke Room, 2nd floor ELC building. All high school youth are welcome to join us.

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.

Catechist Formation/In-Service: Tuesday, February 3rd, 7-8:30pm in Parish Hall.

Confirmation Prep: Confirmation Retreat: Here at ICC, February 7th, from 9am-4pm in the Hall. This is for the Confirmation Youth only.

First Communion Prep: Session #3: February 10th at 6:30pm-7:30pm in Parish Hall

Hard to believe we have already closed out the last week of January. While we originally planned to end the month by celebrating Catholic Schools Week, the cold and snowy weather had other plans and led us to move Catholic Schools Week to the last week of February. We wanted to ensure we have a full week to celebrate, pray, and reflect on the gift of Catholic education and the many blessings God pours out through our Holy Cross community. We are looking forward to coming together next month for this special celebration.

Thank you to our families for your flexibility and patience as we adjusted schedules and worked through the winter storm. We hope everyone remained safe, warm, and well during these past several days of low temperatures, ice, and snow. We are grateful for our maintenance team and all those who helped ensure campus was ready for a safe return. As we settle back into routine, we enter the month of February with renewed focus and gratitude.

This month, we will highlight one of the spiritual works of mercy, forgive offenses willingly. As we reflect on this work of mercy, we will help students grow in forgiveness, compassion, and the understanding that God continually offers us second chances. Our hope is that these lessons extend beyond the classroom into our homes, friendships, and daily interactions.

February also marks that we are more than halfway through our second trimester, and it will be a busy and exciting month at Holy Cross. Students will participate in our third round of STAR testing, and we will continue planning opportunities that build community and Crusader pride through school activities and faith filled events. We are also looking ahead to Valentine's Day, faculty meetings, ice cream days, and on site field trips for our Early Childhood Learning Center. Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent will also arrive soon, inviting us to prepare our hearts through prayer.

As we look ahead to next week specifically, we are grateful for several meaningful events. On Monday, we will host an eighth grade parent information night for all families of our eighth grade students. We will review the plan for their final months at Holy Cross, including important dates for field trips, award ceremonies, and graduation details. On Tuesday, our deacons will visit classrooms to bless students' throats in honor of the Feast of Saint Blaise as we pray for protection from illness and for continued health. That evening, we look forward to our fifth grade beginner band concert.

On Thursday, our Early Childhood students will enjoy an on site visit from the Delaware State Police and their service dog. Later that day, our professional development committee will meet as teachers and administration continue planning meaningful learning opportunities that strengthen instruction, support collaboration, and ensure clear articulation across grade levels.

Friday will be a calmer school day on campus, and we will end the evening with our Mother Son Dance. A heartfelt thank you to our Home and School Association for leading and planning this wonderful event.

Finally, a reminder to families that re registration paperwork should be submitted as soon as possible if you have not already done so. We are now in the process of screening and interviewing new families, and timely re registration helps us plan responsibly for the year ahead.

As always, thank you for the support you give Holy Cross. May God bless our students, our staff, and your families.

God Bless,

Mrs. O'Mara
Principal

Church honoring a first-century mother of an eternal God who became incarnate for our redemption was impressive, vast, and holy.

An Emphasis on Ephesus. Why was this rebuilding (or more likely new construction) done in 432? The timing of this rebuilding came a year after the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.) It was at the Council of Ephesus that much of the dogma and doctrine concerning our Blessed Mother Mary was defined. At this Council, Mary was famously given the title “Mother of God” (or, in Greek, “Theotokos,” literally meaning “God-bearer”). This title of Mary served to clarify and affirm the Divinity of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Following this Council, there was a burgeoning movement to honor Mary, and part of that cause was the grandiose rebuilding of that first Church dedicated to the Mother of our Lord Jesus.

Away in the Manger. Today, that Church, now a Basilica, still stands on that spot and is deemed as one of the seven great churches of Rome. At approximately 302 feet long (football field size), 260 feet wide, and 246 feet tall (at its highest point -- its bell tower), this Queen Mother of Churches, dedicated to our Our Mother and Queen, remains the largest church in Rome dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God. It is the second-largest Church dedicated and named for Mary in the world (the largest being the Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida in Brazil). Of note, in that Church, of great significance, is a chapel (I believe it is located under the main altar). In that chapel, there is housed the remains of the manger in which Jesus Christ our Lord lay on the night of his birth. Pilgrims from around the world spend time before that holy object (relic) in prayer, reminded of the truth of the birth of the Savior into the world, and his laying away in that manger, some two thousand years ago

Now and Then. And so, what do we take from this feast? Why do we celebrate this Church and not others? It seems to me that this feast is special because it traces back to the early centuries of the Church and the intense devotion to Our Blessed Mother that grew out of that period. It bolsters the idea that God can guide us in serving him, just as he guided that ancient Roman couple regarding what they could do for the church. God guided them not with a roar or a command but rather by a gentle snowfall — pure and virgin like Mary herself — in which He pointed the way for that man and his wife to serve the Church.

Snow in the Forecast? And so, on this post-snowfall weekend (unless it in fact snows again), the spiritual question that may arise from this ancient part of the Tradition of our Church is this:

- Where does the snow fall in our lives?
- What does God’s snow outline for us that we may do for the church as one of its members?
- Where can we build our monuments to God?
- Where do we erect our places of honor to our Blessed Mother?
- Where do we construct or carry out our works of faith?

To find out, as the couple in that piece of Church history did, we too must pray for God’s guidance. I think that is the lesson of this event passed on to us by Church tradition. Because, in truth, without faith and prayer, we may fail to see the signs that God puts before us.

Yet, if by faith and prayer we watch for the signs that God gives us — snowfall or otherwise — then we may be able to learn God’s will for us. We may learn to do His will and find the outline he laid down for us. We may not be called to build a Basilica, but we can certainly help build the Kingdom. Our Lady of the Snows. Pray for us.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor