

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

January 15, 2023

2nd 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

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

icc



2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”
John 1:29

© Diocesan
St. John the Baptist, 1657, by Philippe de Champaigne

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.

MARCH TO LIFE

If you would like to attend the March for Life in Washington DC on January 20, 2023, please see the information below from St. John the Apostle Parish to reserve a seat on their bus.

St. John the Apostle/St. Bernadette parish will attend the March For Life in Washington, DC. Come celebrate the 50th annual March for Life and the momentous overturn of Roe v. Wade. Join us in the continued fight to protect and respect the dignity and sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

Once again, as Marchers we will bring our prayers and the Pro-Life message to our nation's capital. Our work to end abortion is far from over.

Bus fee: \$15 per person. Please RSVP your seat by Jan.8th. We will begin the day with Holy Mass at **8am**. Bus will depart at 9am and return by 9pm.

For more information, please contact Vivian Alvarado at the parish office (302) 422-5123 x100 or Ramon Quinene (302) 423-1525.

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

Ending January 1, 2023

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	\$44,200	\$27,760	\$16,440
YTD	\$709,264	\$741,060	(\$31,796)
Needs	\$838	\$1,604	(\$766)
Christmas	\$24,485	\$39,000	(\$14,515)

WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending December 25 2022 Ending Jan 1, 2023

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	\$4,796	Regular	\$3,851
Second Collection	\$1,953	Second Collection	\$627

TAX STATEMENTS

The **HC Parish Office** is preparing tax letters for everyone who contributed during the 2022 year. If we have your email in our records, this information will be emailed to you by the end of January. If we do not have your email or you want a hard copy sent to you, please email mdornberger@holycrossover.org. Thank you.

For ICC please contact the parish office to pick one up or have it mailed to you.

Dear Parishioners,

Rest in Peace. Before I begin the column, I wanted to take a moment to make note of the passing of my first pastor, Msgr. J. Thomas Cini, who passed away on January 4 at age 80. He served as the Vicar General (Bishop's right-hand man) for 35+ years under four Bishops. I came to know him as my first pastor under whom I served at St. Ann's in Wilmington for four years. Whether as a Pastor, a Principal, a Parish Priest or a Vicar General, Msgr. Cini spent his life in service to the Church, and now goes to his rest. I would ask you to keep him and his family in your prayers. Rest in peace, good Monsignor!

Thank You! I want to thank all of the many parishioners who sent Christmas cards and gifts to myself, Fr. Ferris and Msgr. McGlynn. Your generosity and your kindness to us during this Christmas season was most appreciated by us all. Again, thank you!

—

Well, we are back in Ordinary Time, but this week's column is no ordinary column.

No News is... I have to confess, that, in general, I don't watch TV news. Why? Because it is no longer news but rather cheerleading squads rallying for one political side or the other. It seems to me that news channels have become "bread and circuses" for their respective tribal camps, thus dispassionate reporting is found replaced by screeds; with MSNBC lurching to the looney left, FOX running to the raucous right, and CNN is just plain running all over the place (like the Dullahan of Irish folklore looking for its lost head). I hate to be so blunt, but TV news seem these days to be relayed by living-caricatures of political division rather than by any sort of journalistic ethic. (Let me add, yes, there are those TV news shows that strive to be fair and balanced in their presentation; but they are in the astute minority).

Print's Charming. So where do I get my news? Well, I do look at some online sources of news, but as a bit of a Luddite with antediluvian tendencies, I must confess that I still enjoy print (hold-the-news-in-your-hands) media — newspapers, magazines, etc. I like these as well as online renditions of that print media. Thus, each day, I hold and read the Delaware State News for local news, I hold and read (and also go online to read) the Wall Street Journal for national news, and I subscribe to an online edition of the Daily Telegraph (from London) for British and international news.

Ionic Iconic Columns. Anyway, let me get back to the Delaware State News, Wall Street Journal and the Telegraph. In these papers, while I do indulge in the news coverage, I also have many columnists that I enjoy following — most specifically in the Wall Street Journal and the Telegraph.

Telegraph Lines. One of my favorite columnists is from the Telegraph. He is a British columnist — a convert to the Catholic faith named Tim Stanley, who the newspaper describes as an "historian, and columnist and leader writer." Mr. Stanley writes from time to time on faith-related or faith-adjacent issues (and writes, of course, also on host of British proprietary topics, most frequently — often with a gentle faith or cultural overlay).

Of Words and Doffed Hats. Last week, Mr. Stanley wrote a beautiful homage and analysis of the Papacy of Pope Benedict. I had been writing one, too, for my weekly Pastor's Column. After having read his, I came to the conclusion that he expressed the very thoughts that I had and, in fact, put it to words much better than I had. I doff my hat to you Mr. Stanley. With that that in mind, and with a few tweaks to the text for our American readership, I produce the text of Mr. Stanley's column for your consideration as we recall a great Pope: Benedict XVI — a man who may one day be a Doctor of the Church on the basis of his prolific writing on all-things Catholic.

Thus, for the first time in nine-years as Pastor, I hand over the text of the substance of my column to another writer. To wit, here are the words of column is Tim Stanley on Pope Benedict XVI:

Never has there been such a disconnect between the public perception of a man and the human reality. Joseph Ratzinger, otherwise known as Benedict XVI, was portrayed by his critics in the media and church as a reactionary "Rottweiler".

In private he was a fan of cats, showing kindness to the strays in Rome - a shy man, an accomplished pianist who would've preferred to write books than be Pope. His time in office was colored by controversy; his resignation was a study in humility. But what Benedict will be chiefly remembered for in centuries to come was his contribution to the world of ideas, his attempt to make "God credible" to modern man.

Born in Bavaria in 1927, much was later made of the fact that the first German pope in 1,000 years was enrolled in the Hitler Youth. It certainly wasn't by choice. His family were anti-Nazi, which is why his father was demoted as a policeman. In opposition to this revolutionary movement with its fake pagan rituals, the Church seemed to Benedict to be ancient, authentic — "not always logical" but "wonderful... like one's home."

He entered seminary, was ordained in 1951 and settled down to an academic career, attending the reforming Vatican II council in Rome in the early 1960s as a keen supporter. Politically, Benedict was always essentially

(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 (HC)

Condolences to the families of those who have recently died:

- Maureen Welsh
- Mary Stiller
- Pauline Miozza
- Julian Servantes

NEW PARISHIONERS (HC)

We welcome those newly registered parishioner to Holy Cross:

- Santiago, Jamann, Lucianna and Isabella Celles
- Irene and William Thomas
- Charles Schwartz
- Stephen and Patricia Cockerill
- Israel Wasinda
- Frank Sr. and Frank Jr. Schultz and Robert Flynn

NEWLY BAPTIZED (HC)

Welcome to our newly baptized:

- Ross Douglas Barrett
- Cooper Duncan Barrett
- Leona Ellen Barrett

THANK YOU

Thanks to the generous donations to the Holy Cross Samaritan Pantry this last year, we were able to provide food to 1074 families (2351 Adults and 3402 children). Those figures show we were able to help feed 5,753 people during the course of this past year!! These figures include the 350 families who received baskets on the holidays. Many, many thanks to all of you who help make this possible.

3RD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME (JAN 22)

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 8:23—9:3

People who once suffered invasion and war will one day be blessed with the joy of true light and liberty.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-13, 17. Paul appeals for unity among the followers of the Lord.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:12-23

Jesus begins his mission in Galilee with the light of his teaching and his healing power.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Next Saturday, January 21st, Dan Pin from the Diocese of Wilmington Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry will discuss the upcoming “Jesus Night,” a celebration of fellowship, fun, witness, and worship for students in grades 6 through 12, plus parent and ministry leaders. Catholic Forum airs on Saturday afternoons at 1:30 on Relevant Radio 640.

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

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 begins the weekend of February 10 - 12, 2023 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.

SAVE THE DATE

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 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.

The Bishop will be available for photos with interested couples beginning at 12:00 noon 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. There is no cost to you, however reservations are required. Please make your reservations by January 30th.

This year, you can register by clicking on <https://cdow.coursestorm.com/category/family-life-events> or by calling the office at 302-295-0657.

For more information, please contact the Office for Marriage and Family Life 302-295-0657 or OMFL@cdow.org

SWITCH TO eGIVING (HC)

The new year is filled with hope and promise as we seek to grow our vital ministries, explore new

MASS INTENTIONS JANUARY

16 MONDAY	
HC 9:00 am	Virginia Crews
17 TUESDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Jan Maranucchi
18 WEDNESDAY	
HC 8:15 am	Joseph McCafferty
19 THURSDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Thomas Clark
ICC 7:00 pm	For the People
20 FRIDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Renata Kosior
21 SATURDAY	
HC 8 am	Rositta and Harry Donnatieri
HC 5:00 pm	DM Casey Family
22 SUNDAY	
HC 7:30 am	Caremen Campanicki
ICC 8:30 am	Anna Adam
HC 9:30 am	LI Osenkoya Family
ICC 11:00 am	Marie Hagood
HC 11:30 am	Helen and William Stawicki
ICC 1:00 pm	For the People

(LI—LIVING INTENTION
DM—DECEASED MEMBERS)

ways to share the good news of Christ's love, and reflect His care and mercy to those in need throughout the community. To continue to make a difference in 2023, Church of the Holy Cross is reaching out to our parishioners.

Begin the new year with eGiving to help sustain and build ministries throughout 2023 that reflect the steadfast promise of God's love. The need is great in our community, and your generous online gifts will help people all around us.

We prayerfully request that you consider signing up for eGiving from your computer, smartphone or tablet. You can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Sign up today by visiting faith.direct/DE251. Or go to the Holy Cross website (holycrossdover.org) and click on the Online Giving button.

HOLY CROSS JANUARY 21/22

	EMHC		SERVERS
5:00 PM	D. Field	F. Hettinger	G. Coyle
	C. Helwig	D. Kaltenbaugh	M. Coyle L. Curley
LECTORS			
L. Christiansen V. Viddy			
7:30 AM	S. Gede	R. O'Neill	A. Costa
	M. Jacobs	R. Pritchett	E. Costa M. Costa
LECTORS			
M. Jacobs			
9:30 AM	C. Jones	S. Lascano	F. Madukwe
	K. Kelly	D. McGinnis	M. Milligan W. Shuron
LECTORS			
S. Crossen C. Parks			
11:30 AM	C. Garcia	A. Luna	
	B. Guzman		
LECTORS			
TBD			

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM	B. Casey		
	LECTORS		
G. Godfrey			
9:30 AM	J. Carrow		
	LECTORS		
S. Tucker			
1:00 PM	TBD		

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.

REUPHOLSTERING THE PEWS

The Contractor has informed us that the material for the pews is scheduled to arrive the end of January.

Therefore, beginning on Monday, February 6, the church will be closed for the week to allow for this work to start. The church will remain closed from February 6 through Saturday morning, February 11. If they do not complete the job in one week, then the church will reclose again on Monday, February 13, until the job is completed. We will have a better idea once they begin the work.

PRIEST STUDY WEEK

The priests are away on a Priest Study Week the week of Feb. 6 through Feb. 10. There will be Mass on Monday, Feb. 6, at Immaculate Conception at 8 am. The rest of the week, there will be no 8 am Mass or service. On Saturday, February 11, Mass will be held at 8 am at ICC followed by confessions from 8:30 to 10 am.

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 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
SATURDAY	12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm, 7 pm, 8 pm

ADULT EDUCATION

The Catechism in a Year
With Fr. Mike Schmitz

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>



- Gracias a todos los que colaboraron de una manera u otra para celebrar nuestra tradicional día de Reyes. Terminaremos nuestra fiesta navideña el domingo 5 de febrero, con la celebración de la fiesta de la Candelaria. Se les pide a los anfitriones que fueron bendecidos con el niño en la rosca, por favor de recordar traer los tamales. Compartiremos ese día.
- Si usted desea compartir su talento o quiera participar en alguno de los ministerios por favor comuníquese con la Sra. Arline Dosman o llame a la oficina parroquia al 302-674-5787 ext. 118
- 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.
- Estamos organizando una reunión de planeamiento el para el domingo, 5 de marzo en el salón parroquial de eventos. Esta reunión es de suma importancia para planear todas las actividades del próximo año litúrgico que será desde Julio 2023 a Junio 2024. Si usted está interesado en contribuir con ideas, trabajo por el bien común de nuestra comunidad y nuestra parroquia venga a esta reunión, que durara aproximadamente 2 horas. Es una reunión de trabajo y les pedimos encarecidamente de no traer niños, porque es una jornada larga y los niños se inquietan y hay que atenderlos y se hace más larga la reunión. Todos están invitados, todos somos iglesia.

Feliz Año Nuevo 2023

ICC- EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

- El Sacramento de La Primera Reconciliación es el sábado 21 de enero, 2023 de 10:00 AM – en Holy Cross, Dover, DE
- **CONFIRMACION DE JOVENES** Cuarta Sesión es Domingo, 15 de enero, a las 2:30-5 pm en el Salón Parroquial.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next Class 1/22/2023 3 to 5 pm
Interested in enrolling a student in Religious Education? Registration forms available at 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

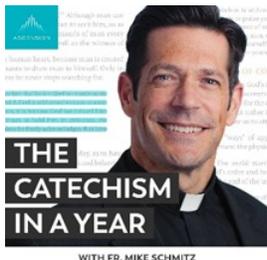
LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)
Next class February 12, 2023 at 10:30 am in the Matthew/Mark Room in the Early Learning Center. Interested in enrolling a student in LAFF? Contact Tammy Korosec.

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 began 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



Join us in a great New Year's resolution that will change your life – let's read the entire Catechism in a year!

Holy Cross Catholic Church together using Fr. Mike Schmitz's podcast, "The Catechism in a

Year," beginning January 1st. With this podcast, we won't just read the Catechism in 365 days... this podcast will help us understand what it means to be Catholic and allow those truths to shape our daily lives!

You can find this podcast on any podcast app, on YouTube, or just by clicking this link! www.ascensionpress.com/pages/ciy-registration-parish

CONFIRMATION AT HOLY CROSS

Confirmation Classes
Next classes - Sunday, January 22 and January 25

Confirmation Retreat
Makeup day retreat takes place January 28 at Holy Cross. Please keep this date open if you were unable to attend the overnight retreat in November.

Jesus Night
Open to any teen 6th grade through 12th grade. Friday evening, February 3 from 7-9 pm at Holy Cross. Enjoy a night of fellowship, fun, witness and worship with Damascus Camp. Cost is \$10 per person, and teens must be accompanied by a parent. You must register on line <https://www.cdowcym.org/forms/jesus-night-registration/>

CHWC - Drexel Hill - June 25 to June 30, 2023
We still have a few spots left - please let Mrs. Darling know if you would be interested in serving the community of Drexel Hill this summer.

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@iccmarylodel.org for more information. Also, If you have any difficulty with affording RE, please call Alicia Poppiti, and the office can assist you.

Youth Confirmation for Immaculate Conception
Fourth Session is Sunday, January 15, at 2:30-5pm in the Parish hall.

First Reconciliation Immaculate Conception
Sacrament of 1st Reconciliation will be Saturday, January 21st at Holy Cross @ 10am.

Hospitality. That which makes a guest feel a sense of welcome in your home, your office, a classroom, anyplace where a visitor might come to call should convey a feeling of warmth, a feeling that speaks “I’m so glad you’re here” upon their arrival. A sincere handshake sometimes is all it takes, or the universal sign of friendship; a smile, is often enough to put a visitor at ease. The creation of a comfortable environment is also important. Providing a nibble or two is always nice, or a simple beverage of some sort sets the mood for a comfortable, relaxed conversation.

I always look forward to meeting prospective families. In the wake of the pandemic, I have had the privilege of meeting many new families who have made the decision to seek out another direction in providing an education for their child(ren). I am not inferring that all are unhappy with their current school placement. Some of our new families have relocated to Delaware, some have purchased a new home in an area in closer proximity to Holy Cross, while some others are looking for a first-time school placement for their young child. For whatever reason, the Holy Spirit has steered them in the right direction and they find themselves meeting with me. I meet with all new families. I meet with all families who are bringing a sibling of a current student. It is important to me, and I believe it’s important to the parents that my first meeting with their child is held long before they occupy a desk in the classroom. I also believe it is important to the new student that I know her name before they occupy the desk in the classroom. So, there’s a lot that transpires prior to Day One.

Answering the phone, I listened to Mrs. Arndt; “Mrs. Pollitt, your 1:00 is here.” In the outer office awaited a family. Exchanging a warm handshake with mom and dad, I addressed their daughter personally. It was she that I wanted to assure a warm welcome to Holy Cross.

Permit me to tell you the true story of Annie.

Annie and I first met when she and her parents came in for their first appointment a few weeks before our Christmas holiday. Annie’s parents were not necessarily sold on Holy Cross upon our first meeting. Mom had a clipboard with many questions in preparation for our conversation. I invited them to my office where I initiated a brief conversation with mom and dad. Annie was nervous. I directed my attention to her in an effort to chase away some of the butterflies in her tummy. Knowing Annie had attended school for a portion of that day, I asked her to tell me a little bit about her day. Annie agreed to tell me a few things, I asked her what her favorite subject was in school, and a little later in our conversation I asked her how she felt about changing schools. Annie admitted that she was excited about the prospect of a new school environment. Friends and colleagues had directed Annie’s parents to HCS. On that first day they were on a fact-finding mission; plain and simple. “Annie is going to go to a different school, we have decided,” Annie’s mom shared. “We just don’t know which one.”

Annie discussed her primary concerns with me. She attended school with children who were not kind, and she was having increased difficulty learning subject matter in a different language. Annie was a Spanish immersion student in one of the area schools, and she had been bullied. (Plain language.)

I assured Annie that she would not encounter bullies at Holy Cross and if mom and dad would agree to a shadow day, I promised Annie that she would have new friends by the end of her visit. We toured the school and continued our conversation which included curriculum, class size, the schedule for the day, uniforms, transportation, lunch, snack, pre-enrollment screening, weekly Mass attendance, the school nurse just to name a few. I asked mom if I was hitting any of the questions on her clipboard. She smiled and we continued our conversation. We arrived at one of the two classrooms I was hoping Annie might be a part of one day and as always, I include the students in our tour stop. HC students get excited at the prospect of a new friend and always extend a warm welcome. I am the one who usually asks “Why Holy Cross?” I love their responses about the teachers, recess every day, yummy lunches....but the one that warms my heart the most is when one will offer that “we get to learn about Jesus.” I invite the parents to address the children, most decline, then I invite the prospective student to ask questions. Almost all decline. Not Annie. She told me she had a question to ask. Enthusiastically, I invited her to do so. My heart broke for her when she asked the students “Do you have any bullies here?” Their collective, immediate response was “No!” Annie’s eyes met mine, I smiled and I asked her softly, “Now, do you believe me?”

At the end of our time together, Annie was so excited and asked to wear a uniform on her upcoming shadow day. No decisions had been made, but I was hoping that HC was at least now on the short list.

The Shadow Day: Excited, Annie came to school in a HC uniform to spend the day with us. I checked on her a couple of times, once I was greeted with a hug! Annie was having a great day. I could see happy in her sweet smile. At the end of the day, I went to get her. As we waited just a few more minutes for mom, Annie shared sheepishly, “You were right, I do have friends here.”

Today: Annie is a HC student. She shared with her mom over the Christmas holiday that she never knew “kids could be so nice.”

liberal: he valued the separation of church and state. He leant towards social democracy; the environment, he said, must be protected.

But as the Sixties wore on, Benedict came face-to-face with an earlier incarnation of “woke” – the far-Left on campus. Even the theology department seemed determined to jettison worship of God and replace it with worship of man. Marxism, he argued, maintained religious fervor but minus the mercy, resulting in totalitarianism. “Reason is inherently fragile”: a society that depends purely upon politics to decide what is right or wrong could, like Germany in the 1930s, persuade itself to do terrible things.

This was the context to Benedict’s Vatican career, after he was made a cardinal in 1977 and was appointed head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by John Paul II in 1981 – the body in charge of policing theology. Some Catholics wanted to shrug off tradition; others, like Benedict, saw this as undesirable and impossible. He held the line on abortion, contraception and the ordination of women, and cracked down on Left-wing liberation theology. He clearly did not relish the role of enforcer, however, because he asked if he could retire when he turned 70 and serve as an archivist. [Note: The answer was “No!”] When John Paul II died in 2005, and the conclave voted for a successor, Benedict prayed to God not to make it him.

“The Lord”, he later said, “was not listening to me.”

At his inaugural Mass, Benedict urged his audience to make a friend of Jesus, laying out an intelligible, personal faith that reached its zenith in the publication of his biography of Christ. It had relevance, too, for the non-believer. The West, he warned during his pontificate, lacks “self-love. All that it sees in its own history is the despicable and the destructive”.

At war with the past, rejecting religious tradition, we risk sliding into moral relativism and decline, he said. Nowhere is this more evident than within those churches suffering from “fatigue”. Challenged by science and sexual liberation, many of them have chosen to imitate society in order to remain relevant. Benedict, on the other hand, believed that Christians should engage with modernity but not be changed by it, for “in a decaying world [faith] is the only thing left to give shape to life.” This can be expressed through beauty: Benedict lifted onerous restrictions on the use of the prayerful Latin Mass, discouraged since Vatican II.

To those who reply that this emphasis upon passionate faith contradicts reason, Benedict replied that the very thing that defines Europe is the blending of faith and reason in the marriage between Christianity and Greek philosophy. The Christian God would never ask us to do anything unreasonable. At his famous Regensburg lecture in 2006, he claimed that this contrasts with Islam, that Allah is not bound by rationality. His speech was interpreted unfairly to imply that Islam is inherently violent – and, ironically, fanatical Muslims responded with violence. Churches were attacked. A nun was murdered.

There’s no denying that Benedict, hampered by poor health, his gentle personality and Vatican politics, was increasingly overwhelmed by the task of being Pope in an era of intense media scrutiny. And however much he wished to share Jesus’ message, what millions wanted was decisive action on child abuse – a task that by his own later admission, he failed. Having seen how paralyzed the Vatican was by John Paul II’s ill-health, he chose to step down in 2013, making him the first pope to resign since 1415.

Paradoxically, this most “conservative” of popes triggered a sharp adaptation to the reality of modern life – that we are living longer and cannot serve competently right up to the very end – and proved that such an initiative could work if the intention is honorable. Even as Pope Francis contradicted some of his papal legacy, Benedict remained largely silent, respecting his successor’s authority. The interesting question is whether or not Francis will follow suit, and if this is the future for monarchies across the world.

The year ends with the loss of two heads of two churches, Pope Benedict XVI and Queen Elizabeth II. Both embodied service. Both had a faith that in its uncomplicated conviction might appear to belong to another age, on the brink of extinction. But their witness will have inspired admiration, even conversion. The seminaries are full of admirers of Pope Benedict XVI.

He never raged against the dying of the light. In 1969, Benedict predicted in a radio address that the Christian church would become smaller and poorer, but also “more spiritual”. Secular society might be richer but “more lonely”, and it will find in this “little flock of believers” something new: the faith, cherished and preserved. —

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor