

# CHURCH *of the* HOLY CROSS

631 South State Street  
Dover, Delaware

302 674 5787  
holycrossdover.org

522 Main Street  
Marydel, Maryland

410 482 7687  
iccmmarydel.org



## IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

January 1, 2023

Solemnity of Mary

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

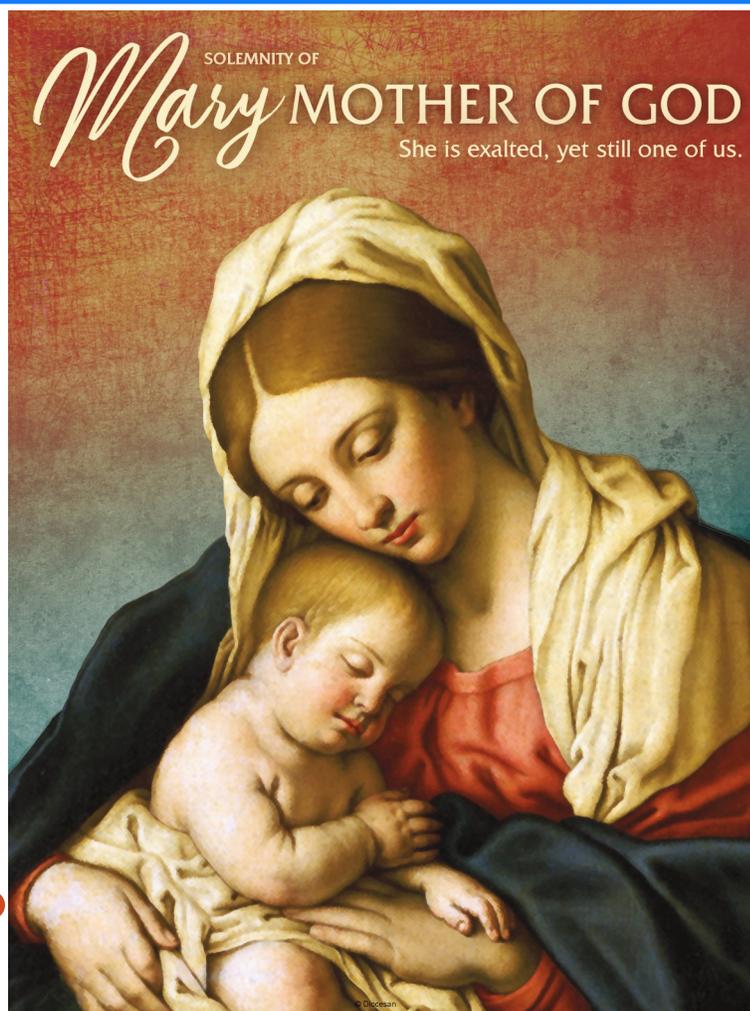
Sunday, 8:30, 11 am  
Sunday, 1 pm, Spanish

### DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Thursday, 6 pm, Spanish

### CONFESSION SCHEDULE

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



### HOLY DAY SCHEDULE (HC AND ICC)

Mary, Mother of God, January 1  
Assumption, August 15  
All Saints' Day, November 1  
Immaculate Conception, December 8  
Christmas, December 25

*Mass schedules for Holy Days of Obligation and other special days will be printed in the bulletin as each one draws near*

## RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS

*The seven Sacraments of the Church were instituted by Christ to confer grace.*

**Sacrament of Baptism.** Call the office to register for Parent Pre-Baptismal Instruction. For adults seeking to enter the Church and be Baptized, contact our Religious Education Office.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).** Children in our religious education program and school are prepared for Confession at age seven as part of First Communion preparation.

**Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.** Children in our religious education program and school are prepared for First Communion at age seven. Adults seeking First Communion should contact our Religious Education Office. To request a visitation for Holy Communion to the Sick, contact our parish office.

**Sacrament of Confirmation.** Young people in our parish are prepared for reception of Confirmation in the ninth grade (age 14). Adults seeking Confirmation should contact our Religious Education Office.

**Sacrament of Marriage.** Couples planning for Marriage are to contact a parish priest or deacon one year in advance to set the wedding date and plan for pre-Cana instruction.

**Sacrament of Holy Orders.** If you believe you have, or someone you know has, a vocation to the Priesthood or Diaconate, please contact one of our parish priests.

**Anointing of the Sick.** For the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, which is administered by a Priest, a person or an immediate family member must make the request. Late night requests may not be able to be answered until the next day.

## 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 December 18, 2022

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	\$35,527	\$29,200	\$6,327
YTD	\$647,980	\$684,100	(\$36,120)
Needs	\$1,886	\$1,604	\$282

## WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending December 18, 2022

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	\$3,508
Second Collection	\$601

**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,

Today is January 1, when our nation and most of our world celebrates the beginning of the New Year. In the Catholic Church, however, our New Year began on November 27, on the first Sunday of Advent. So, while we are aware of the national festivities of January 1, we are not so much celebrating the beginning of the New Year as we are celebrating the first born of the new creation: Jesus Christ.

**That was Then, This is Now.** Putting this in context, for us January 1 is the eighth day of the Christmas Octave (eight days of celebration). It is also the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, a day on which we honor Mary's Motherhood as it brought forth the first born of the new creation, our Lord. Thus, as mankind's first creation (Adam and Eve) didn't go so well, and saw mankind booted from paradise, God has given man a time of a new creation, a time of redemption — set in motion, fully, with the birth of Jesus to his Mother Mary.

The Song Remains the Same. This feast day, Mary, Mother of God, was formerly known as the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord. Of note, the readings, prayers and antiphons for this day never changed, even though the name of the feast day changed. This is because the same person is being honored, but with a change in focus.

- When January 1 was the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord, the focus was on Mary (and Joseph) bringing the child Jesus for circumcision, as required for all Jewish male children. The focus was on Mary's faithfulness (doing as God asks, following her faith) and observance of the obligation of God's law (ensconced in Jewish law) regarding circumcision.
- With the change, in 1969, to January 1 being the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the focus shifts to (1) Mary's very Motherhood being the result of her faithfulness (saying "yes" to God) and (2) Mary's observance of God's law (i.e., as relates to circumcision) not just out of obligation but out of love.

**A Girl Named Maria.** So, why do we celebrate, on January 1, Mary's Motherhood. Well, "Mary, Mother of God" is a title bestowed on our Blessed Mother in light of her role as the "theotokos" (God-bearer); it is not a celebration of motherhood (like Mother's Day is), rather it is a celebration, specifically of Mary's unique Motherhood. It is a celebration of Mary fulfilling Old Testament prophecy and seen in prefigurations. It is ultimately a celebration of the outcome of Mary's fiat — her yes to God — bringing forth the first born of the new creation, a new time for man. Thus, January 1, the beginning of a New Year around the world, beckons as a good time for this celebration.

**The Union of the Snake.** The background for the crux of this holy day takes us back to the Old Testament. Let's

get into the Wayback Machine and set the dial for the era of the Garden of Eden. The Garden was home to Adam (the first "born" of the first creation) and Eve (who came forth from the man, Adam). In that Garden, Adam and Eve, following that snake's... that serpent's... that Devil's temptation, ate from the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — which was the one prohibition God commanded them. After the fall of Adam and Eve, God punishes Adam and Eve, and the Serpent. He says to the Serpent (Satan):

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel." (Genesis 3:15)*

**I've Got a Crush on You.** And so it came to pass as the Motherhood of Mary brought these words to fulfillment. Jesus (the firstborn of the new creation) born of Mary (from whom Jesus came forth) is the fulfillment of these words because it was ultimately Him — the Son of God and the son of Mary — who crushed Satan's head, ultimately conquering death by His sacrifice, by His cross and by His resurrection. This time of the New Covenant, and new creation, had begun when God put enmity between Mary and original sin, preserving her from it. He likewise put enmity between her offspring, Jesus Christ, and Satan's offspring, evil and death. Thus, Mary is often pictured with a serpent (the Devil) at her feet being crushed.

**The Eve of Destruction (and the New Eve).** Further confluences that point to the significance of Mary as Mother of God, are very much seen in the juxtaposition of Mary and Eve. Mary and Eve are two virgins — Mary perpetually, Eve while in the Garden — both of whom had something of importance to do with the fallen state of mankind through their relationship with Christ and Adam. The contrast of what they each did could not be more stark: Eve contributed to the fall of mankind, while Mary contributed to its redemption. Because of this Mary is often called "The New Eve"; one of her titles is the "white dawn" — this reflects that the "eve" is time of the day when the darkness begins to come, while dawn is when the light shines into the world. Mary is the "New Eve" because of her role in reversing fallout from Adam and Eve's disobedience.

Take a Message to Mary. Jumping ahead in the Old Testament, we take the Wayback Machine to the era of the Prophet Isaiah, who was one of those known as "the Major Prophets." Isaiah wrote a text fa-

*(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

## 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](http://holycrossdover.org/school)

Linda Pollitt Principal, ext. 111

## 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:

- Francisca Rivera
- Lee McCulley
- Efran San Antonio

## NEW PARISHIONERS (HC)

We welcome those newly registered parishioner to Holy Cross:

- Robert Vail
- Margaret Staples
- Isaac Fettig

## EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (JAN 8)

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 60:1-6

The glory of the Lord draws all creation towards him in joy.

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

The Lord makes God's covenantal relationship open to all the nations.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 2:1-12

The magi journey to visit the newborn Christ.

## CATHOLIC FORUM

Happy New Year! Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Next Saturday, January 7th, tune-in to hear an interview with Allison Gingras, author of the new book, "Encountering Signs of Faith: My Unexpected Journey with Sacramentals, the Saints, and the Abundant Grace of God." 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.wwme.org> or call Tony and Linda Massino at 302-648-2228.

## MARRIAGE MOMENTS

As we transition to a new year, many people make resolutions to start new positive habits. Maybe you're already satisfied with your marriage, but there's always room for deepening your love. Pick 1 new action – perhaps a daily honest compliment, a favor, praying together... OK, even if only once a week feels doable, DO IT.

## SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass will be held on World Marriage Sunday, February 12, 2023, at 1 pm at Saint Margaret of Scotland Church in Newark, Delaware. The Mass coincides with National Marriage Week, February 7 through 12. For more information, please contact the Office for Marriage and Family Life 302-295-0657 or [egaus@cdow.org](mailto:egaus@cdow.org)

## SWITCH TO eGIVING (HC)

Looking for a good stewardship habit? Try eGiving – it streamlines your generosity and lets you do even more to help Church of the Holy Cross grow our ministries that share the Good News of God's love. You can make the switch today! Signing up is easy from your computer, smartphone or tablet, and you can set up a recurring donation or make a one-time gift. Thank you for your continued support of our parish family. Go to Holy Cross website: [holycrossdover.org](http://holycrossdover.org) and

## MASS INTENTIONS JANUARY

<b>2 MONDAY</b>	
HC 8:00 am	Michael Adisa Apesin
<b>3 TUESDAY</b>	
HC 8:00 am	Stan Oleysyck
<b>4 WEDNESDAY</b>	
HC 8:15 am	Marie Kozel
<b>5 THURSDAY</b>	
HC 8:00 am	Deacon James Dean
ICC 7:00 pm	For the People
<b>6 FRIDAY</b>	
HC 8:00 am	James F. Canalichio
<b>7 SATURDAY</b>	
HC 8 am	Grace Jara
HC 5:00 pm	Darlene Gorgoretti
<b>8 SUNDAY</b>	
HC 7:30 am	Amela and Aleksander Grydz
ICC 8:30 am	William F. & Ann R. Sullivan
HC 9:30 am	Joe and Michael McLaughlin
ICC 11:00 am	Richard Bragg
HC 11:30 am	DM Delgado Greener Family
ICC 1:00 pm	For the People

*(LI—LIVING INTENTION  
DM—DECEASED MEMBERS)*

click on the Give Online button at the top of the page.

## FOOTPRINTS

The Footprints Ministry, the Diocesan Miscarriage Ministry, offers resources for families on their journey after the loss of their unborn child, whether it was very recently or many years ago. We aid mothers, fathers, couples, and families with support, education, and compassion by providing books, guidance, and resources on the website [www.cdow.org](http://www.cdow.org).

HOLY CROSS JANUARY 8

	EMHC	SERVERS	
5:00 PM	J. Bieker C. Bugglin	M. Cacesse M. Casey	G. Coyle M. Coyle L. Curley <b>LECTORS</b> J. Davis D. Dixon
7:30 AM	C. Brown J. Chandler	J. Davis T. Dinan	A. Costa E. Costa M. Costa <b>LECTORS</b> C. Cuffee
9:30 AM	T. Arndt K. Boyer	K. Canfield S. Cordie	J. Beugre C. Beugre M. Ford <b>LECTORS</b> T. Baurys S. Ford
11:30 AM	C. Garcia	B. Guzman A. Luna	<b>LECTORS</b> TBD

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM	B. Lawson	<b>LECTORS</b> B. Thompson
9:30 AM	F. Cristiano	<b>LECTORS</b> K. DeFrancesco
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.

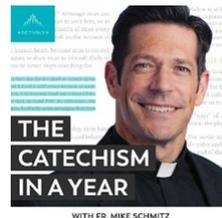
We are always in need of more Lectors, Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Communion, and Altar Servers.

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

ADORATION CHAPEL (HO)

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

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



ADULT EDUCATION

The Catechism in a Year  
With Fr. Mike Schmitz  
Coming Jan. 1, 2023

In English:  
Father Mike Schmitz

<https://media.ascensionpress.com/all-bible-in-a-year-episodes/>

In Spanish:  
Fray Sergio Serrano



<https://ascensionpress.com/pages/biy-espanol-registration>

- Los sacerdotes, diáconos, seminaristas y todos los que laboramos en las parroquias de la Santa Cruz y la Inmaculada Concepción les desea un Feliz Año Nuevo, que este nuevo año traiga salud, fe, prosperidad y amor. Recordemos que nuestra Madre María es Reina de la Paz y su Hijo es el príncipe de la Paz.
- El Papa Francisco nos invita a que oremos con fe y confianza por la paz. Paz en nuestros corazones, en nuestras familias y en el mundo entero.
- Nuestro sincero agradecimiento a todos los ministerios que han trabajado para una que nuestra parroquia de testimonio del amor de Dios mediante sus talentos y su buena voluntad de trabajar para el bien de la iglesia y construyendo una comunidad mas fervorosa, más unida y devota a nuestra santísima Madre la virgen María que nos lleva a su hijo Jesucristo nuestro Salvador.
- El domingo, 8 de enero de 2023 es la Epifanía del Señor y celebraremos nuestra tradicional Fiesta de Reyes, si alguna persona o familia desea donar una Rosca de Reyes o un atole, Champurrado o Ponche comuníquese con la Sra. Irma Venezia. Los Reyes Magos del Oriente estarán trayendo presentes a todos los niños presente.
- Los candidatos a la Confirmación, por favor de llenar todos los requisitos antes del Retiro de Confirmación que es el 28 de enero. Llame o visite la oficina de Educación Religiosa.
- Gracias a todos los que ayudaron con todas las actividades en nuestra parroquia en especial al Ministerio de Arte y ambientación.
- Feliz Año Nuevo 2023

## ICC- EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

**Retiro para la Primera Reconciliación:** es el sábado 7 de enero, 2023 de 9:00 AM - 12 mediodía en el Salón Parroquial. Esto es solo para los niños

**CONFIRMACION DE JOVENES:** Tercera Sesión es hoy domingo, 18 de diciembre. a las 2:30 – 5:00 pm en el salón.

Cuarta Sesión es Domingo, 15 de enero, a las 2:30-5pm en el Salón Parroquial.

Retiro de Confirmación es el 28 de enero en Holy Cross, Dover .

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next Class 1/8/2023

Next Class 1/22/2023

Interested in enrolling a student in Religious Education? Registration forms available at [holycrossdover.org/teaching-the-faith/christian-formation/k-8-formation](http://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](mailto:tkorosec@holycrossdover.org)

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### LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)

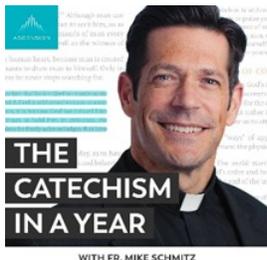
Next class January 8, 2023 at 10:30 am in the Matthew/Mark Room in the Early Learning Center. Interested in enrolling a student in LAFF? Contact Tammy Korosec.

### ADULT FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES (HC)

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

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

Classes begin January 10th at either 9AM or 7 PM in the Matthew/Mark Room in the Parish Office. This will be a free class. No workbooks will be provided. If you are interested contact Tammy Korosec at either [tkorosec@holycrossdover.org](mailto: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](http://www.ascensionpress.com/pages/ciy-registration-parish)

### CONFIRMATION AT HOLY CROSS

#### Confirmation Class:

Sunday, January 8 and Wednesday, January 11

#### Confirmation Retreat:

Saturday, January 28 at 8 am at Holy Cross

#### MOUNT 2000:

We are full! We are blessed to have a group headed to Mount this year - thank you for your prayers and support.

#### CHWC 2023:

We will be traveling to Drexel Hill, PA June 25 to June 30. We have 8 spots open - please consider joining us for a week of service and faith.

### 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@icmarydel.org](mailto:dre@icmarydel.org) for more information. Also, If you have any difficulty with affording RE, please call Alicia Poppiti, and the office can assist you.

**NO Religious Education Classes this week, January 1st. Classes resume on January 8th.**

#### First Reconciliation Immaculate Conception:

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

#### Youth Confirmation for Immaculate Conception:

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



Perhaps the not the best scenario, but, truly, it's the only time we are together as a school community. With everyone in attendance, it is an opportunity, albeit not perfect, to address all of the children and faculty at one time. It's not announcement time, per say. Most often this time presents the chance to recognize student accomplishment.

The opportunity that presents itself follows Mass. We are in the church. All the parts are in place. A captive audience, a microphone, and a viable reason to prolong our time away from the classroom while we recognize excellence achieved by one or more of our students. This is a frequent occurrence because we have so many students who distinguish themselves academically, as well as in other areas where their talent warrants accolades from their peers.

The Patriot's Pen Essay Contest is sponsored annually by the local Veteran of Foreign War. Conducted nationwide, this VFW-sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme. The theme for the 2022-2023 school year is My Pledge to Our Veterans. It has become a fall "tradition" for Mrs. Toya Peek to include the essay writing on the annual theme put forth by the local VFW post in her plans for instruction of written expression. Without sounding too boastful, it is also a tradition of sorts that Holy Cross students are awarded recognition for the quality and content of their essay submissions. This year was no exception.

And so it was this past week following Mass, Mrs. Peek welcomed representation from the local VFW posts in Camden, DE. Giving a short overview of the significance of the Patriot's Pen essay contest, Mrs. Peek proudly announced that two of our student essays had been selected for recognition. One student had been selected at the local level and one had been selected at the District level. Miss Myla O'Brien was awarded a certificate and monetary gift for her essay written on this year's theme. Miss O'Brien was asked to read her essay to the congregation. In her essay she expounded upon her dismay, disappointment, and sadness in the plight of some in the veteran population who face homelessness, mental illness, and lack of deserved recognition for their sacrifice, and contribution in the protection of our freedom and country. Myla pledged to make a difference. Her words were poignant, and her determination to keep her pledge was admirable. Congratulations to Miss O'Brien for receiving just recognition for her essay submission.

The other HCS awardee? It's a well-guarded secret thus far. Only Mrs. Peek and I know the identity of that student. Suffice it to say there were certain circumstances that prevented the second announcement of this particular student. For now, let us all stay tuned. Personally, I am excited and eagerly anticipate listening to the words of the award-winning essay shared with our school community.

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,  
which God prepared in advance for us to do.  
Ephesians, 2:10*

Taking advantage of the captive audience still in place who were looking forward to returning to class and all the fun things planned on the last day of school before the onset of the Christmas holiday break, Mrs. Swartzentruber stepped behind the microphone. She, too, had an exciting announcement to make regarding this years All-State Junior Chorus.

All-State Chorus is sponsored by the Delaware Music Educators Association. Those who are in the position of student selection for this prestigious group of young musicians are assessing and vetting a group of talented young vocalists who desire to share their gift of song. The students who audition must meet stringent requirements and are committed to fulfilling all the prerequisites leading up to the final selection process. Students are assessed in the following categories: *Tone Quality, Pitch Accuracy/Intonation, Rhythmic Accuracy, Diction, Expression/Style*. Based on what I have heard in the past, the audition process is arduous, and day-long.

This year students who completed the application process desiring consideration were assigned to prepare their individualized vocal part in the audition song, *The Gurt Black Dog of Somerset*, a composition written by Oliver Barton and Martin Forres that tells the story of a black dog that haunts the Quantock Hills in Somerset, England and is said to protect wandering children. And so, it was Mrs. Swartzentruber's delight to recognize Miss Ava White and her beautiful soprano voice for selection by some very astute and discriminating judges for participation in the 2022-2023 All-State Junior Chorus.

As a school community, to Miss Myla O'Brien and Miss Ava White, and their families, we offer our sincere and heartfelt congratulations for setting yourselves apart from the rest, for accepting a challenge and for rising above.

*Every good and perfect gift is from above.  
James 1:17*

mously known as the “Emmanuel Prophecy.” This “Emmanuel Prophecy” historically speaking, is actually talking about the wife of Ahaz, King of Judah, however there is a fuller meaning to this scripture beyond the literal. The Church has continually held that the fuller meaning of this passage puts forth a prophecy relating to Mary. This passage (later reiterated in Matthew 1:23) reads:

*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall be living on curds and honey by the time he learns to reject the bad and choose the good. For before the child learns to reject the bad and choose the good, the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted.” (Isaiah 7:14-16)*

**Mary Had a Little Lamb.** This prophecy, fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, the Lamb of God and our Savior, sees many correlations between the era of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Thus, the word “Emmanuel” which means “God is with us” is, through a reference in the Gospel of St. Matthew, a title distinctly identified with Jesus. Similarly, Jesus was born in poverty of the woman – Mary – just as had been foretold. This point to the doctrine of Mary being a Virgin before, during and after the birth of Jesus (what the Church calls “the three-fold virginity of Mary”). It keeps Mary in that unique role by Isaiah words: “The Lord himself will give you this sign” – the virgin who shall “be with child” (before the birth), the virgin who shall “bear a son” (during birth) and virgin who shall “name him Immanuel” (after his birth).

**I Will Survive.** A further prophecy in the Old Testament, from Micah (one of “The Minor Prophets”) predicts destruction for Jerusalem. This prophecy had also predicted that the Kingdom would be restored, made free, and re-unified by a mighty ruler from a humble town – a ruler whose origins are eternal and who is born of a woman. Sound familiar? Here is what the Prophet Micah wrote:

*“Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord, his God; And they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth” (Micah 5:2-3)*

**Peter, Paul and Mary.** That statement that “the Lord will give them up until the time when she who is to give birth has borne...” means, in other words, mankind’s redemption will begin with the incarnation. Thus, the woman being spoken of is, in prefiguration, Mary. The remainder of that passage speaks of his “brethren” (that is his brothers, the Apostles – like Peter, James, Andrew, etc., and later Paul) who do return to the children of Israel, and “reach to the ends of the earth.”

Same Auld Lang Syne. It is by way of these prefigurations and prophecies from the Old Testament, that the ensuing Motherhood of Mary looks back and finds its roots and points forward to its fulfillment. On January 1, as we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, let us remember the role of Mary, the Theotokos (the God-bearer) and her role in salvation history – a role built around her faithfulness to God, her fullness of grace, and her willingness to be God’s handmaid.

**If You Say My Eyes are Beautiful...** As we conclude the Octave of Christmas, and prepare to celebrate the Epiphany (“Three Kings Day”), let’s keep our eyes focused on Jesus Christ, our Savior born unto us. In that regard, there was a song about 30 years ago that stated, “If you say my eyes are beautiful, it’s because they’re looking at you.” Mary’s eyes, and indeed her life, are most beautiful because they focus on Jesus. Let Mary be an example to us in keeping our eyes focused on the Lord. And let us also remember the words of St. Luke’s Gospel that focus our minds and hearts on the birth of our Lord:

*In the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’ (Luke 2:11-14)*

And in regard to that last line, on January 1, we honor Mary, who indeed “found favor with God” (Luke 1:30) and whose Motherhood was both unique and pivotal “for us men and for our salvation.” (Nicene Creed). Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

Yours in Christ,  
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Pastor