



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 4, 2026

Epiphany

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



*Where is the newborn king of the Jews?
We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage.*

Matthew 2:2

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.

Lord, as 2026 begins, we place our family in Your care. Protect us, surround us with Your peace, and keep us united in love.

Be present in our conversations and decisions. Help us to support each other and be a refuge of joy and encouragement.

Amen.

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC) Ending December 28, 2025

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Regular	Figures not available at Time of printing this Bulletin. Updates will be Included in the next bulletin		
YTD			
Needs			

WEEKLY OFFERING (ICC) Ending December 28, 2025

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Regular	Not available
Second	

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,

On September 1, 1890, September 7, 1896, and October 2, 1920, something occurred in Major League Baseball that had never happened before 1890 or since 1920. It was an event that ESPN could only dream about, an event that the players' union would undoubtedly complain about, and an event that none of us has ever witnessed. On those three days of yesteryear, the Brooklyn Bridegrooms (that was the actual team name) playing the Pittsburgh Alleghenies (1890), the Baltimore Orioles playing the Louisville Colonels (1896), and the Pittsburgh Pirates playing the Cincinnati Reds (1920) all played "Triple Headers." Yep, on those three dates, each of the six teams played three back-to-back baseball games.

Baseball Dream. Today, a double-header is a rarity, and a triple-header would be considered nothing more than a wild dream of a fan at Citizens Bank Park after one too many beers. And just for the record, the Brooklyn Bridegrooms and the Baltimore Orioles swept all three games of their triple header, and suffice to say, the Pittsburgh Pirates did not (always nice to see that some things never change; they lost 91 games this past season). But yes, those three dates remain the only triple-headers in Baseball history.

Our Triple. This year, in a 72-hour period, we have a triple-header of sorts. From Thursday through Saturday night/Sunday, we celebrate: the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1), the civil New Year (January 1), and the Solemnity of the Epiphany (this year celebrated the evening of January 3 [vigil] and on January 4).

Mary, Mother of God. While the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is a Holy Day of Obligation this year. It is an important day in the Church, as it caps the Octave of Christmas (the eight days of Christmas to be celebrated with great joy and solemnity). This high holy day was formerly known as the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord, until 1970. The readings of the Mass remain the same as they did for the old feast, but the focus shifted from the act of Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to be circumcised (following the laws of Judaism), to Mary as a mother raising her child in the faith (thus bringing him to be circumcised).

New Year's Day. Not a Church event, but a civil one, it is nonetheless observed by people around the world, in the Church and outside the Church, as the start of a new calendar year. A calendar year whose number is normed by the birth of Jesus Christ. This year marks the 2,026th year since Christ was born, or as it is sometimes expressed, 2026 A.D. (anno domini, or the "year of the Lord"). This is a day when people look with hope to the year ahead, and often make resolutions to improve themselves or their

lot in life. As Catholics, our New Year started on the first Sunday of Advent, so we have a head start in improving not just our lot in life but also our faithfulness and trust in God. It is providential that New Year's begins on the final day of the Christmas Octave (January 1), a period of high celebrations of the holy birth of our Savior. There would be no better way to cap off that Octave than to make a resolution to strengthen your commitment to the Catholic faith, a faith built on a Savior who redeems us.

Epiphany in Brief. The Solemnity of the Epiphany is one of the highest holy days of the Church year. In most of the world, it is observed on January 6, the twelfth day of Christmas; however, in the United States and Canada, it is transferred to the Sunday nearest January 2 (this year, that is, January 4). This feast day, commonly called "Three Kings Day," celebrates Jesus' manifestation (being made known) to the world, in the form of his visitation by Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. With their gifts of Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh, the three kings honored Christ as king (gold), God (frankincense, an incense offered only to God), and man (myrrh, used to prepare a body for burial after its death). And now for a deeper spelunking in the history and mystery of the Epiphany.

Looks Like Reign. Let's start with understanding the idea of a king. In countries where a king is the sovereign leader, he reigns, and people are subjects to his rule. England would be an example of that: England has a monarch (King Charles), and the residents of Great Britain are not commonly called citizens; they are rather identified as subjects of the monarch. As it was in Christ's time, so it is still with monarchies today: when the monarch has a child, a proclamation goes out announcing the child's birth and his given name. The child is then presented to the king (his father), the other members of the royal family, the Lords (nobility), and, last on the list, to the people of the kingdom.

It's a Boy. The Epiphany of Christ our Lord reflects that monarchical tradition, but with one drastic change. You see, when Christ was born in Bethlehem, a proclamation did indeed go out about His birth, as it would with any royal birth. But the first people to be invited to see this newborn child – the first to whom He would be revealed – were not the royalty or the Lords or the Ladies of the day; nor the landowners or the kings – no, the shepherds, that is, the common folk, were the first to see this royal child. A complete reversal of royal traditions.

(continued on page 10)

HC & ICC CLERGY

Vy. Rev. James S. Lentini , V. F. Pastor
 Rev. John Enemuo 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

MAILING ADDRESS

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

JAN. 11—BAPTISM OF THE LORD
FIRST READING: ISAIAH 42:1-4, 6-7

The prophet announces the servant of the Lord — chosen, gentle, and faithful — who brings justice to the nations and healing to the oppressed.

SECOND READING: ACTS 10:34-38

Peter proclaims that God’s love includes all peoples and that Jesus, anointed with the Holy Spirit, brought healing and goodness to the world.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 3:13-17

Jesus is baptized by John and is revealed as the Son of God, the beloved, on whom the Spirit rests.

SAMARITAN’S FOOD PANTRY

Happy New Year. We thank you so much for all of your help with the Samaritans throughout the past year. We were able to help so many families due to your contributions.

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.

CATHOLIC FORUM

Listen to Catholic Forum each week. Tune-in this week to learn about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, founded by Maryland Eastern Shore native, Servant of God Paul Wattson when Paster Mark Hansen and Ed Gordon are the guests. The Catholic Forum podcast on Apple, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Amazon Music podcasts and YouTube.com/ DioceseofWilm debuts every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.; and on Relevant Radio 640 every Saturday afternoon at 1:30. More information is available at cdow.org/CatholicForum and Facebook.com/CatholicForum.

RACHEL MINISTRY

The Archdiocese of Baltimore is hosting a Weekend of Hope & Healing retreat offering a beautiful opportunity to any woman or man who has struggled with the emotional or spiritual pain of an abortion. Information can be found on the CDOW website.

Date: March 20-22, 2026

Confidential Location: Ocean City, MD area, disclosed after registration

Suggested donation: \$250/person, \$400/couple (scholarships available)

For confidential inquiries and registration, please contact Project Rachel Ministry: Call (410) 625-8491

Text (410) 299-9345

Projectrachel@archbalt.org

HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR FAITH-FILLED COMMUNITY!

Holy Cross High School is now accepting applications for the 2026–2027 school year. Located in Dover, Delaware, we offer a Classical Catholic education rooted in faith, virtue, and academic excellence. We warmly welcome families to explore our mission and discover how Holy Cross can be a place where your child grows in faith and knowledge. For more information, contact Christina Klaus, Director of Admissions: cmklaus@hchs.org or visit our website at www.hchs.org.

NEWLY REGISTERED

Welcome to our newly registered parishioners:

- Brien and Mary Thiel and John Filomeno
- Jeffrey, Rachel, Charlotte and Chase Rogan

RECENTLY DECEASED

Our condolences to the families who recently lost a loved one:

- Jane Roth
- Mary rose Durk
- Jeanne Grill

MASS INTENTION JANUARY

5 MONDAY

HC 8:00 am M/M Ted Bakowitz

6 TUESDAY

HC 8:00 am Louise and Edward Quinn

7 WEDNESDAY

HC 8:15 am Grade P. Jara

8 THURSDAY

HC 8:00 am Marylyn Schaeffler

ICC 6:00 pm For the People

9 FRIDAY

HC 8:00 am Stephen Flaherty

10 SATURDAY

HC 8:00 am Todd Ray Sheldon

HC 5:00 pm James F. Canalichio

11 SUNDAY

HC 7:30 am Carol Ann Napolitano

ICC 8:30 am Deacon Sherman Mitchell

HC 9:30 am James and Ann Nyakurimua

ICC 11:00 am Salvatore Vogl

HC 11:30 am For the People

ICC 1:00 pm For the People

Jan 4—Jan 10 Sanctuary Candle in Church is for the intention of parishioners of Holy Cross.

Jan 4—Jan 10 Sanctuary Candle in the Adoration Chapel is for Margie and Gino Galli.



JANUARY 10/11, 2026

EMHC

SERVERS

5:00 PM D. Field M. Sirolli M. Rubino
S.Garber N. Sirolli W. Shuron

LECTORS

G. Murphy
M. Phillips

7:30 AM A. Fischer S. Gede A. Wilk
J. Fischer M. Jacobs C. Wilk

LECTORS

K. Meire

9:30 AM S. Lascano M. Lausten J. Beugre
J. Lausten L. Olmstead C. Beugre

LECTORS

J. Amoako
T. Baurys

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

LECTORS

G. Hernandez
N. Almengor

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM E. Costello

LECTORS

K. Escalante

11:00 AM L. Schlaupitz

LECTORS

Lausten Family



HELP WANTED—WE NEED YOU

We are looking for more volunteers to help us bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound of our parish. Call the Holy Cross Parish Office if interested in this ministry.

We can always use more volunteers to help at Mass as an Altar Server, Extra-Ordinary Minister of Communion, or a Lector. If interested please contact the Parish Office at 3020-674-5787.

ADORATION CHAPEL

"To entrust our struggles to Jesus, we have to spend time with Him in prayer. We have to have a relationship with Him. In quiet, we can speak honestly with Him about what is in our hearts. During Eucharistic adoration you can look at Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. You know that He looks at you and He looks at you with love. He often speaks to us gently, in stillness."

Pope Leo XIV, November 21, 2025

Come, signup for Adoration and make this the best Advent ever. You may just decide to make this a weekly commitment after Advent. You don't need a time if you cannot make a commitment. Please feel free to come in and sit with our Lord, when you can.

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.

- **Feliz Año Nuevo 2026:** Que este nuevo año nos llene de esperanza, buena salud, paz en nuestras familias y en nuestro mundo, amor, prosperidad y abundantes bendiciones.
- **Día de Reyes:** Hoy domingo, 4 de enero, 2026 celebraremos la Epifanía del Señor, conocido como día de Reyes, tendremos nuestra tradicional Rosca de Reyes. Los reyes llegaron para adorar al Niño y darles aguinaldo a nuestros niños. Los que tienen el privilegio de sacar de las rosas al muñeco que representa al niño Dios, serán los anfitriones de la Candelaria que se celebra el domingo 8 de Febrero.
- **Bautismo del Señor:** Con esta fiesta literalmente terminamos el tiempo navideño y regresamos al Tiempo Ordinario, Tenemos que bajar todo de Navidad después de la misa de la 11:30 am –Poner todo en su lugar y empezamos el Tiempo Ordinario el color predominante para este tiempo es color verde.
- **Fiesta de la Candelaria:** La Fiesta de la Virgen de 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), combinando tradiciones católicas con ritos ancestrales de los países andinos y Latino América. Incluye misas, bendición de velas, procesiones, música y danzas tradicionales, siendo una de las devociones marianas más extendidas en América Latina.
- **Foro Cristiano** Reanudaremos nuestro Foro Cristiano “ Santos y Camino a la Santidad” el viernes, 10 de enero 2025 de 6-8 de la noche, en el ELC. Quedan todos cordialmente invitados.
- **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

ICC- EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

Sacramentos:

- **Primera Reconciliación:**
- **Retiro:** Sábado, 11 de enero 2025 de 9-12 en el salón, solamente los niños
- **Sacramento:** El sacramento de la Reconciliación será e sábado, 18 de enero en la Santa Cruz, en Dover a las 10:30 de la mañana .
- **Confirmación 2025:** Sesión # 4 domingo 12 de diciembre de 3-5:30 en el salón parroquial.
- La hoja de los padrinos entregarlos el 1 de enero .comuníquese con Alicia en la oficina parroquial llame al 410-482-8939 o por correo electrónico a dre@iccmaryl.org
- **Formación de Catequistas :** Domingo, 12 de enero de 12-2 PM en el salón de conferencia de la oficina parroquial.

RELIGIOUS ED AT HOLY CROSS

This Epiphany, we celebrate a beautiful moment of revelation—God making His Son, Jesus, known to the world! It's a time for all of us, especially our children, to recognize that Jesus is the light that dispels darkness and brings hope to everyone, just as the prophet Isaiah foretold.

Next Class: January 6th (K-4th Grade) and January 7th (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)

Class today, January 4th. Next Class January 18th. 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

Next class: **January 6th** – Foundations of Faith session 13

"Foundations of Faith: A Journey Through the Catechism of the Catholic Church is the ultimate way for your parish or small group to encounter the wisdom of the Catechism and deepen your understanding of the Catholic Faith.

This is a free class; however, the workbook set associated with this program is available for a cost of \$40 (workbook and catechism chart)

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.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Confirmation Retreat— at Holy Cross on January 10. Please check emails for details

Confirmation Class— January 11 and January 14 will be cancelled because of retreat on January 10. 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 meeting will take place on Sunday evening, January 11 from 6:45-8 pm in the Luke room, 2nd floor ELC building. All high school teens are welcome to join us for Faith, Fellowship and Food.

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.

SRE classes resume on January 4th.

First Communion Prep:

Parent meeting- Tuesday, January 6th, 7pm, parish hall OR Sunday, January 11th, 2:30pm in Parish Hall
Session #1: January 13th at 6:30pm-7:30pm in Parish Hall

Confirmation Prep:

Session #4- Sunday, January 18th, 3-5:30pm in Parish Hall

This past week our school community was blessed to enjoy a final week of Christmas break. We hope that this sacred season allowed families to slow down, reconnect, and truly celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christmas invites us to pause amid our busy lives and reflect on the incredible gift of Christ.

Although our halls were quiet and we were not physically together as a school community, we remained united in prayer. Throughout the week we held our parish family, students, parents, teachers, and staff close in our hearts, giving thanks for the many blessings that make Holy Cross such a special place. Even in moments of rest, our shared faith continues to connect us and guide us forward.

This past week also marked the beginning of a new calendar year. It is hard to believe that we have already entered 2026. With a new year comes renewed hope and anticipation. We look forward to moments of celebration such as the Winter Olympics and the celebration of our country's 250th anniversary this July. Most importantly, we look ahead with gratitude for another year together rooted in Catholic education. We pray for health, happiness, and peace for all, and we ask God to guide us as we continue our mission of helping our students grow academically, socially, and spiritually.

As we return to campus next week, the month ahead will be a busy and meaningful one. On Monday, we will welcome students and teachers back and gather for our level coordinators meeting. Representatives from each building and hallway will come together to share ideas, address concerns, and collaborate in support of our school community. These meetings are an important way for voices across our campus to be heard and for us to continue strengthening communication and unity.

On Tuesday, students will celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, also known as Three Kings Day. Through prayer and learning, students will reflect on the visit of the Magi and the significance of their journey to honor the newborn King. This celebration reminds us that Christ came for all nations and all people.

Wednesday will bring a joyful treat for our students with ice cream served at lunch thanks to the generosity of our Home and School Association. That evening, members of our religion committee will gather to ensure that Catholic Schools Week is thoughtfully planned and meaningful for our entire community. We are excited to highlight the many blessings of Catholic education and to celebrate our faith filled school.

On Thursday, we will hold our first faculty meeting of the new year as teachers come together to reflect on goals and plan for the remainder of the school year. We will end the week with a quieter Friday, allowing students and staff to ease back into routine as we transition into a full and fruitful season of learning.

As always, we pray that you continue to enjoy the remainder of the Christmas season. We look forward with hope and gratitude to all that 2026 will bring.

Blessings,
Mrs. O'Mara

A Magi-cal Visit. After the common folk of the world gazed upon the face of their savior, their Lord, then and only then did the royalty of the world get a glimpse of this Prince of Peace. The Kings (called Magi) are among the last to come to that stable and see the child in the manger – and they did so on the 12th day of Christmas, which we call Epiphany. Although they were the last to visit, the three Kings' visitation is nonetheless of great significance. Their visit represents Christ being made known to the several corners of the world. The word Epiphany itself means “manifestation” – that is, a making known. Once the Kings knew of Him, then it was deemed that all the nations knew of Him. Once the Kings knelt before Him (something unheard of), the world knew that Jesus was not just another child; He was God incarnate and was to be light to all nations. This visit represents the whole world being made subject to a new king.

These Three Kings. Getting the right gift for someone is sometimes difficult. I remember the story of a husband who gave his wife an amazingly beautiful, extravagant diamond necklace for Christmas. His friend saw this expensive-looking gift and said, “That’s a beautiful necklace. I can’t imagine how you could afford it. But didn’t your wife want a new car for Christmas?” And the husband replied, “Yes, but where am I going to find a fake car?” Unlike the husband in the joke, the three kings get exactly the right (and real) gifts. What do these three kings –known as Melchior, Casper, and Balthazar – bring the newborn King? They don’t bring Him a gift card, or candy, or Phillies tickets (maybe next year will be the season they go all the way). No. They brought Him the same things that we should bring Him.

Gold Plated. King Melchior is said to have brought gold. This symbolizes the recognition of Christ’s royalty, His kingship. The walls of ancient temples were often lined with gold, as were the palaces of kings, who were often thought to be somehow connected to God. And at Mass, the body and blood of Christ are placed on a paten (plate) and in a chalice made not of clay, not of glass, but of gold, a noble metal fit for a king. And we should also be bringing Him gold. That is to say, we should bring Him our recognition of His status as our Lord, our Savior, our King, and our God.

A Scents-ible Gift. King Caspar is said to have given frankincense. Frankincense is a type of incense that comes from the sap of trees found in Persia. It was used for centuries before Christ as a fragrance offered to God in worship. And so, this fragrance usually offered to God alone is offered today to this child, recognizing that He is no ordinary child, but rather He is a child worthy of worship and adoration – He is God among us. He is one whose sweetness will pale, the sweetness of the frankincense. And we, too, like the Kings, should offer to God that which is proper to God, our heavenly King – like faith, trust, adoration, and love. The incense of our sweet prayers should always rise up to our sweet Lord.

An Arrivederci Aroma. King Balthazar is said to have brought myrrh in a jeweled cup. Myrrh was a type of embalming scent used to prepare the dead. This would be an odd gift to give a newborn, but this gift was a foreshadowing of the coming death of this child, a death prepared for by this gift at the time of His birth – a redemptive death that would give new life to us. And we, too, like the Kings, should bring to Christ the myrrh of our recognition of His value and the redeeming power of His death and resurrection. We should be prepared to die with Christ, die to ourselves – take on that aroma of myrrh – and therein rise with Him.

A Gift for Us. Even today, these gifts given to Christ should be remembered for their significance in Christ’s Epiphany –His being made known to the world. These gifts given by Kings to a King recognized the royal nature of our Savior. Let us be like these three wise men, these three kings, let's follow the star –the light of Christ – and be willing to offer our recognition of who this child is. He is Jesus Christ, the one and only Savior of mankind, and God’s gift to us. There is no other. Happy Epiphany to all of you.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor