



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 9, 2022

Baptism of the Lord

holy cross

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

School Year, Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-3:30 pm
Summer, Monday-Thursday, 9 am-1 pm

SCHOOLS OFFICE HOURS

School Year, Monday-Friday, 8 am-3:30 pm
Summer, Monday-Thursday, 9 am-1 pm

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, Vigil, 5 pm
Sunday, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 am Spanish
No choirs at the Masses at the present time; a cantor will be available for the 5 pm and the 9:30 and 11:30 am Masses.

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

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

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

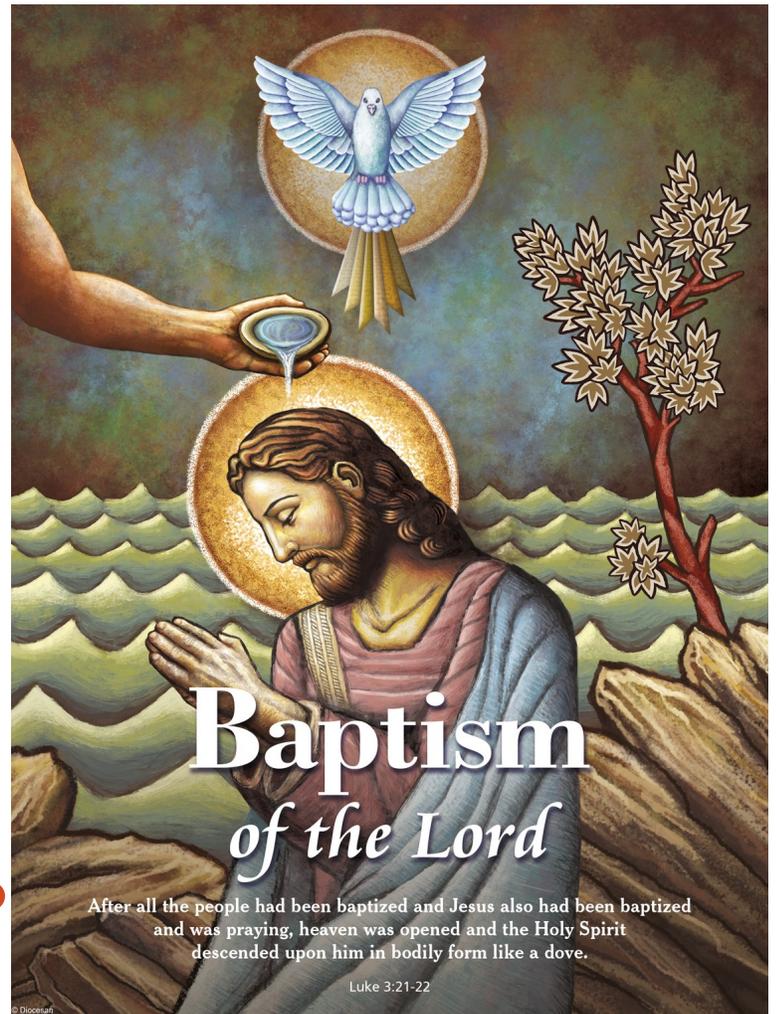
Sunday, 8:30, 11 am
Sunday, 1 pm, Spanish

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

Thursday, 6 pm, Spanish

CONFESSION SCHEDULE

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



Baptism of the Lord

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.

Luke 3:21-22

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 FOR LIFE DOVER - JANUARY 13TH

THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO WALK WILL MEET AT

- (YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND 8:00 AM DAILY MASS AT HOLY CROSS FIRST.)
- 10:00 AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD AT 805 SOUTH GOVERNORS AVE, DOVER, AND SIGNS WILL BE GIVEN OUT AT THIS TIME.
- 10:30 WE WILL PROCEED TO WALK THE SIDEWALKS OF STATE STREET UP TO LEGISLATIVE HALL FOR SHORT RALLY AT 12:00-1:00. (TAKE A ROSE AND YOUR MESSAGE TO YOUR LEGISLATOR AFTER THE RALLY.)
- FOR THOSE NOT WALKING, GATHER AT THE EAST STEPS OF LEG HALL AROUND 11:15 AM.
- PARKING IS A CHALLENGE, TRY THE ARCHIVES AND AROUND THE LEGISLATIVE GREEN. CARPOOLING IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
- WEAR LIME GREEN SHIRTS, HATS, MITTENS ETC. BRING HAND WARMERS.
- ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT DONNA LATTEI 862-266-1099 OR VISIT WWW.DERIGHTTOLIFE.ORG

WEEKLY OFFERING (HC)

December 26, 2021

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED	BUDGETED/ NEEDED	DIFFERENCE
Offertory	\$39,015	\$26,725	\$12 380
YTD	\$687,210	\$676,200	\$11,010
Needs	\$1,378	\$1,480	(\$102)
Christmas	\$30,922	\$35,000	(\$4,078)

WEEKLY OFFERING (IC)

Ending December 26, 2021

OFFERTORY TYPE	RECEIVED
Offertory	\$5, 863
2nd collection	\$187
Christmas	\$4,197

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

We appreciate your generosity to the church.

Dear Parishioners,

As we roll into 2022, a few items I want to begin with before getting to the beef of this week's column:

Thank You! I want to thank the many parishioners who generously gave Christmas gifts and cards to your priests. Please note, your generosity and kindness is greatly appreciated. Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception Parishes are always full of good Christmas spirit, and this Christmas season is no different! As I say every year, thank you for the many cookies, cakes, pies, and chocolates that came over to the rectory, as you can see I am wearing them!

Regarding the Christmas Collection. This Christmas at one of our Mass, I believe the 6:30pm Christmas Eve Mass, no collection was taken, and a partial collection was taken at another Mass. After finding out about this, and after being revived with smelling salts, I decided to put it out there to our faithful – if you were at that Mass and were unable to give because there was no collection, nor basket in which to drop your envelope/gift, then please just drop into another collection, or simply mail it to the parish office. I am so sorry for this faux pas, and we will be sure this doesn't happen again!

Last Year's Annual Appeal. Also, we are only a few thousand dollars short for meeting the goal of last years Diocesan Annual Appeal. If you had planned to give to the annual appear for 2021, but hadn't gotten around to it or forgot about, please just send in your appeal donations to the Parish office and we will get it up to the Diocesan Offices. This is important, because an unmet amount short of our Annual Appeal goal, will still have to be paid. So, if you are so inclined please help us raise the final few thousand need so that we can meet our 2021 Annual Appeal, and not owe any additional payments.

And now back to our regular schedule Pastor's Column – on the subject of this Sunday's Feast that ends the Christmas season: The Baptism of the Lord.

The Beatles In the 1970s – and into the early 1980s – fans of the Beatles constantly hoped for a Beatles reunion. In 1978, the Church got John Paul (as our Pope), but Beatles fan still awaited John Paul – and George and Ringo reunited. Precursory events that spurred on that hope were many; primarily in the form of music industry gossip. Reunion-mania hit fever pitch in 1979, when the Sep-

tember 21st front page of *The New York Post* screamed the headline, "The Beatles are Back" with a subhead telling readers: "Fab Four Reunited for big U.N. concert in New York." Oh, the thrill of it all! Oh, the joy! But, as Lucy pulled the football away from Charlie Brown so many times, the Beatle's football, so to speak, was pulled away from me and many. Yep, it turns out that the story was wrong... 100% wrong. And so, on September 22nd, 1979, I along with many Beatles fans found our hope unfulfilled. But Ob-la-di-ob-la-da, life went on!

About the Supremes Being Together. Now, while that Beatles reunion never happened, another musical reunion of note did happen just a few years later. Diana Ross and the Supremes had disbanded in 1969. This group, Motown's biggest success of the 1960s, went their separate ways following their last #1 hit "Someday We'll be Together." That chorus of "Someday We'll be Together" sounded to fans like a promise of sorts. It resounded like General Douglas MacArthur's promise of "I shall return" as he left the Philippines in 1942 upon the arrival of an overwhelming Japanese invasion force. Just as MacArthur did return to trounce the forces of imperial Japan, Diana Ross and the Supremes likewise re-grouped and returned -- for a Motown Special in the mid-1980s. It was a pop-culture event of events. The group appeared with other Motown stars, and then parted again after once more singing, "Someday We'll be together," ostensibly for the last time. Nonetheless hope was fulfilled, unlike The Beatles, we got to hear, see and witness The Supremes back together.

About the Supreme Being, Together. This Sunday the Universal Church ends its celebration of Christmas, on the 16th day of the that season, as it observes the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. That event, that Baptism of the Lord, marks the end of Jesus' "hidden years" from age 12-30, and simultaneous marks the beginning of his three-year public ministry and life. It also brings us a reunion of sorts, not of the Supremes, but of the Supreme... the Supreme Being that is! The Gospel passage we hear at Mass this weekend resounds in the ears of our faith like the best of any of the Supremes' hits of the 1960s (except this passage is in theophonic, not stereophonic, sound):

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice

(continued on page 10)

HC & ICC CLERGY

Vy. Rev. James S. Lentini , V. F.	Pastor
Msgr. Daniel McGlynn	Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Mano Salla	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/Susan Cutrona	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

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

Take a moment this week to look at a star together. Remember that God’s love for you and your love for each other is bigger than this world and the sky.

PARENTING POINTERS

During these mostly indoor days of winter, challenge each family member to let go of something they no longer need – a toy, a piece of clothing, a book, old papers...

SVDP MEETING (IC)

St. Vincent de Paul meeting will meet from now on in the office building every month on the 2nd Monday of the month at 5 pm.

PRAYER SHAWL GROUP (IC)

We meet the 3rd Thursday of the month at 11 AM in the ICC Parish Hall. Knitters & crocheters welcome. Questions call Karen Cairns 302-382-9316.

KNITTING CLUB (HC)

Holy Cross ladies meet every Tuesday at 10 am in the St. Luke Room, second floor of the Early Learning Center building to knit and/or crochet for approximately 90 minutes. They make shawls, lap blankets, etc. Any fellow knitter/crocheter is welcome to join.

READINGS FOR JANUARY 16 2ND SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 62:1-5

The prophet proclaims that just as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so God rejoices in God’s people.

SECOND READING : 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11

Paul speaks of the great variety of gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL: JOHN 2:1-11

At a wedding at Cana in Galilee, Jesus gives his disciples the first sign of his glory.

Men of the HOLY CROSS



THE MINISTRY OF MEN TO MEN

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

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

CATHOLIC FORUM

Listen to the Catholic Forum radio program/podcast each week. Next Saturday, January 15th, tune-in to learn about St. Norbert and the Norbertine Fathers, when Fr. James Herring, O. Praem, Prior of the Immaculate Conception Priory, is the guest. Catholic Forum airs on Saturday afternoons at 1:30 on Relevant Radio 640. You can listen online anytime at cdow.org/CatholicForum, or by searching "Catholic Forum" on Apple, Spotify, iHeartRadio, or Amazon Music podcasts. For photos, in-

MASS INTENTIONS JANUARY

10 MONDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Albert Bullidis
11 TUESDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Mary Calabro
12 WEDNESDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Myra Baker-White
13 THURSDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Thomas Murtha
ICC 6:30 pm	For the People
14 FRIDAY	
HC 8:00 am	Bettina Coroniti
15 SATURDAY	
HC 8 am	Maria A. Maddalena
HC 5 pm	John Hanlin
16 SUNDAY	
HC 7:30 am	Virginia Crews
ICC 8:30 am	Alexis DeFrancesco
HC 9:30 am	Guido Ranieri
ICC 11 am	Rosemary Vasquez
HC 11:30 am	Josephine Nardone
ICC 1 pm	For the People

(LI—LIVING INTENTION
DM—DECEASED MEMBERS)

formation regarding upcoming guests, links and more, "Like" Catholic Forum on Facebook at facebook.com/CatholicForum.

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. It provides help for marriage problems, difficulties or crises. The next program begins the weekend of February 11-13, 2022 at the Family Life Center in Malvern, PA. For more information, or to register, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.org or call 215-766-3944 or 800-470-2230. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

faith in action

HOLY CROSS JAN 15/16, 2022

EMHC SERVERS

5:00 PM D. Darling L. Darling F. Hettinger D MacLeish J. Salamone E. Cota M. Costa

LECTORS

R. Allderman D. Kilby

7:30 AM R. Fritsche D. Novack R. O'Neill P. Sheldon M. Thompson B. Manu G. E. Manu-G.

LECTORS

C. Cuffee

9:30 AM D. Martinez K. Kelly D. McGinnis J. McIlvain L. Olmstead K. Fernandez G. Maddalena R. Willemin

LECTORS

S. Ford S. Crossen

11:30 AM R. Ramirez B. Guzman R. Richards E. Guzman K. Espinosa C. Geronimo

LECTORS

A. Luna

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

8:30 AM G. Godfrey

LECTORS

D. Smith

11:00 AM P. Lardizzone

LECTORS

S. Toker

1:00 PM To be determined

LECTORS

B. Dionisio

SAVE THE DATE:

Mark your calendar! Designer Purse Bingo will be here on Saturday evening, April 2.



More information to follow soon -

please come support our youth attending Catholic Heart Work Camp in Greensboro, NC this coming summer.

WANTED—PICKUP TRUCK (HC)

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

ADORATION CHAPEL (HC)

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

SUNDAY 7 am, 10 am, 12 pm, 4 pm, 5 pm

THURSDAY 12 pm

FRIDAY 7 pm

SATURDAY 5 am, 6 am, 8 am, 10 am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm, 7 pm, 8 pm

RECENTLY DECEASED

Our condolences and prayers to the families of:

- John Scrafford

May they rest in peace. Amen.

NEWLY BAPTIZED

Congratulations to our newly baptized members:

- Declan Ralph Scott

NUESTA FAMILIA HISPANA

- Este domingo 9 de enero, vamos a remover del templo todas las flores y las cosas navideñas después de la santa Misa. Si usted desea ayudar se le agradece.
- No habrá la celebración de la Candelaria en la parroquia, pero si usted va a tener una levantada en su hogar con mucho cuidado. Recuerde que todavía estamos con el contagio del virus.
- Sinodalidad el Papa Francisco ha invitado a toda la Iglesia a un Sínodo cuyo título es «Por una Iglesia sinodal: Una Iglesia sinodal es una Iglesia que escucha, recuerde que escuchar es más que oír. Donde todos tenemos algo que aportar y todos formamos la iglesia y en la cual cada uno tiene algo que aprender del otro. Una iglesia sinodal es una iglesia fraterna, en comunión, participación y misión. La palabra “sínodo” significa “caminar juntos” —laicos, inmigrantes, ricos, pobres, todas las razas y lenguas incluyendo los que están en la periferia, el clero, el magisterio todos somos hijos de Dios hecho a su imagen y semejanza — es un concepto fácil de expresar con palabras, pero qué difícil es ponerlo en práctica. Hay un gran trabajo que hacer para poder tener una iglesia sinodal, tenemos que aprender que todos tenemos algo que aportar, pero es necesario la participación, el escuchar y el caminar juntos. Pidamos al Espíritu Santo que nos guie en este “Caminar juntos”. La Diócesis de Wilmington esta trabajando para formar un proceso de consulta donde se le invita a la participación en un futuro no muy lejano.

- Si usted está interesado en participar y compartir sus talentos como lector, ministerio de música, ujier, ministros Extraordinario de la Comunión, Arte y Ambientación, dar Clases Pre-bautismales. Por favor hable con los coordinadores de los ministerios o llame a la oficina al 302-674-5787 ext. 118
- Symbolon Explicación de la fe católica: Viviendo la fe católica. Estamos ofreciendo una serie de videos / libros de estudio una vez más El costo es de \$ 25 para el libro del participante Parte 2.
- En español en la parroquia de la Santa Cruz. Con el padre Oscar y la Sra. Arline. Todos los viernes a las 6:00 – 8:00 PM de la tarde el ELC a partir de enero. Si está interesado hable con la Sra. Arline. En ingles en la parroquia de la Inmaculada Concepción con la Sra. Alicia. Todos los lunes a las 7:00P.M. La primera parte continuara hasta el 13 de diciembre y la segunda parte comenzara después del Año Nuevo.

EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA (ICC)

- Clases se resumen el domingo 9 de enero, 2022 maestro y estudiantes deben de usar mascarillas. Si su hijo no se siente bien que se quede en casa y cuidese.
- **1ra Reconciliación Prep-** próxima sesión es el Retiro sábado, 8 de enero, 2022 en el salón, 2022 @9am-12mediodia.
- **Sacramento 1ra Reconciliación:** sábado, 22 de enero, 2022 a las 11:00am at Holy Cross, Dover.
- **Prep candidatos a la Confirmación –** próximo domingo 16 de enero, 2022 a las 2:30-5pm en el salón.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HC)

Next Class: January 9, 2022

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

Dismissal from the ramp side will be as follows:

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

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

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

LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)

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

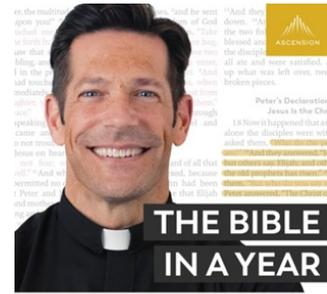
Interested in enrolling a student in LAFF, please contact Tammy Korosec at either tkorosec@holycrossdover.org or call (302) 674-5787 X 122

Adult Eductaion (HC)

The Bible in a Year Podcast

“In The Bible in a Year podcast, Fr. Mike Schmitz guides you through the entire Bible in 365 episodes. Using an exclusive reading plan rooted in The Bible Timeline (a ground-breaking approach to understanding salvation history developed by Biblical scholar Jeff Cavins) you won’t just read the Bible ... you’ll finally understand how all the pieces fit together to tell an amazing story that continues in your life today!” Also available in Spanish led by Father Sergio Serrano. See the links below:

In English:
Father Mike Schmitz
<https://mascensionpress.com/all-bible-in-a-year-episodes/>



In Spanish:
Fray Sergio Serrano
<https://ascensionpress.com/pages/bi-y-espanol-registration>



YOUTH AT HOLY CROSS

Next Class for Confirmation:

Sunday, January 9 at 2 and 4 pm and Wednesday, January 12 at 6 pm.

Confirmation Retreats:

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

SRE (IC)

SRE next Classes: Classes will resume on Sunday, January 9th, 2022.

Masks are still required for students and teachers. If you are not feeling well, please stay home and take care of yourself.

Sacraments: (IC)

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

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

Symbolon (IC)

Part 2: Living the Faith, will begin on Monday, January 24th at 7 pm and run until 9 pm.

You are welcome to join, no need to have participated in Part 1: Knowing the Faith, you can catch up later. You just need to register, so we can order your book.

If my memory serves me correctly, I believe I have shared with you that for the whole of my childhood my grandmother's second husband figured significantly in my life. My grandfather was a member of the Jewish faith. I learned from him much of the history of their faith and beliefs, their abundantly rich traditions, and worship practices. Sadly, I was not raised in a particular faith, although my family professed their allegiance to the Episcopal Church; they were not practicing Episcopalians. So, as I grew in age and came to know members of my grandfather's family, I found myself an invited guest at Seder meals, Hanukkah festivities, and Bar Mitzvah events. I remember the occasional Saturdays when I would accompany my grandfather to the synagogue. My grandfather's family members were of the less formal, (for lack of a better term) Reformed congregation of Beth El Synagogue. But even though they were far more liberal than other Hebrew congregations I still observed practices that are rooted in their ancient traditions. I was very much enamored of the faith, and there was a time in my life when I might have taken on the faith as my own. But; my family wasn't very fond of the idea. And, many years later I know that God had an entirely different plan for my life. I have fond memories, though. I am grateful to my grandfather who provided me with some religious upbringing when I would have had none at all.

I have a clear recollection of men draping the ritualistic prayer shawl across their back prior to the beginning of their prayer devotions. I remember the fringes, the design, the fabric. Some were well worn from use over the years. I love tradition. I find comfort and peace in the practice of tradition.

Fast forward a few decades, maybe four or so, and I find myself sitting in the St. Luke Room with a prospective family. We had not yet started our meeting when a kind lady walked in and asked if we were there for the Knitting Club meeting. I replied that we were not, and would be happy to relocate our discussion elsewhere. In the next room over, I noted other ladies as the gathering of the Knitting Club seemed to grow. I later learned that this group of ladies meets weekly for knitting, crocheting, and fellowship. What a great way to spend a morning! Finding myself hard pressed to sew on a button, I admire those who with no more than two needles and a lengthy string of yarn can fashion just about anything from socks, and hats, to mittens, and blankets. All the different stitch patterns and types of yarn make for a beautiful end result. I once worked with a lady who crocheted all the time. Honest to goodness; she created blankets by using two sawed off broomsticks as needles. I sat in fascination watching as she looped and manipulated those broomsticks in such a fashion as the blanket was formed before my eyes.

It was but just a few weeks ago that Mrs. Arndt informed me of a phone message she had taken from a lady who was interested in making a donation of knitted items to the school. Initially, I was a little unsure as to the nature of the donation and asked Mrs. Arndt if she could gather a little more information. She did. Later learning that the donation was being made by the Prayer Shawl Ministry of HC Parish, it was apparent to me that Mrs. Arndt was very taken by her conversation with the lady who had called, and was really trying hard to impress upon me that these ladies had worked very hard, the items were newly created, and that I had nothing to fear. Although I was still a little unclear, I asked her to reply in the affirmative in that we would be most grateful to them for their kind thoughts and donation. Little did I know.....

And so, it was on one of the last mornings before we embarked upon the Christmas holiday break when a group of ladies walked up to the door of the Elementary Building. Before my very eyes appeared about six boxes filled to the top with lovely crocheted prayer shawls. There were all colors, some variegated, some of one color, some small, some rectangular, some triangular, but all of them soft, and just down right cuddly! Tied to one corner of each prayer shawl was a blue ribbon looped through a silver crucifix. An attractive straight pin adorned at the top by a small pearl affixed a yellow strip of paper to each shawl. This prayer shawl was knitted especially for you. Thank you to our teachers and all who have shown devotion to the children of Holy Cross Parish. (paraphrased)

Everyone was so grateful, nearly incredulous! They couldn't decide which color, which size, which shape, they even tried them on...all before making a final decision. It was evident that each wanted to make just the right choice.

It was truly a most thoughtful and lovingly generous overture; the presentation of each prayer shawl touched our hearts. We are humbled, and we are grateful. May God bless you in the continuation of your ministry and in your kindness.

**A generous person will prosper;
Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
Proverbs 11:25**

came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”(Luke 3:21-22)

A Divine Scene. **In this scene at the Baptism of the Lord, (1) we hear the voice of the God the Father, (2) we see the descent of the God the Holy Spirit, and (3) we witness the Baptism of Jesus (God the Son, incarnate) in the Jordan River.** God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – God in the fullness of the Trinity – in one moment in Salvation history! It is a reminder to us of that beautiful truth and mystery divinely revealed to us by Christ: That there is but one God (unity) in three Divine persons (trinity). On that day, in that way, hope was fulfilled: God manifested himself palpably to our world as a Trinity, at the outset of Christ beginning his saving work.

I Hear a Theophany. The palpable presence of God, when he appears in this world, especially as expressed in scripture, is known as a “theophany.” Theophany is a \$50 word that means the experiencing of God in this world. It is on that basis, that in the Orthodox tradition, this Feast day is called (take a deep breath) “The Feast of the Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Now Appearing. There are many examples of theophany in scripture, God spoke with Adam and Eve, he appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush, he led the people of Israel as a Pillar of Fire, his voice revealed the Ten Commandments, he comes during the time of the Judges as a powerful storm, etc. But a theophany of God that emphasizes His Trinity is rare. The Baptism of the Lord is the best known of those moments, though there is also a famous passage in the Old Testament that is built around a theophany of the Trinity, namely Genesis 18:1-2:

“The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oak of Mamre, as he sat in the entrance of his tent, while the day was growing hot. Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, he said: ‘Sir, if it please you, do not go on past your servant.’”

Ain’t Nothing Like the Real Thing. But this theophany we hear about in today’s scripture of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit at the Baptism of the Lord, make God’s presence about as full, clear and real as it can be. If the Epiphany (last week) made Jesus known to the world, then it is the Baptism of the Lord that makes it manifest that Jesus is Divine, he is the Christ, he is the promised Messiah, and he is God the Son, incarnate.

Baptism of the Lord. And so, in this profound moment –the Baptism of our Lord by John the Baptist in the Jordan River– Christ begins his Divine ministry and mission, to redeem fallen man, to bring salvation and hope to weary world, and to heal the divisions between God and man caused by sin. He receives a Baptism of Repentance – which he in truth doesn’t need. But he receives that Baptism in the Jordan to show mankind that it needs to embrace repentance, and turn back to God. He does this as our Savior; with the Father and the Holy Spirit present and approving; one God, forever and ever! And later, at the Cross, when Blood and water flows from Christ’s side at the crucifixion, he will take this concept of Baptism, and replace the water of the Jordan River, with the saving water that flowed from himself. And he thereby remakes and elevates Baptism from a sign of repentance to a cleansing Sacrament that wipes away the taint of original sin and gives us a beginning in the life of grace.

Supreme Hope. And so, now at the end of this Christmas season, we have seen Christ born (December 25); made manifest to the world on the Epiphany (January 6); partaking in a Baptism of Repentance (of which he has no need); and preparing to begin his public ministry. Reflecting on all of this, and pondering it in our hearts, we are filled with a hope imbued into us by the truth of this Christmas season. It is a hope that, unlike the Beatles who would never “Get Back” together, our God will never abandon us. And it is with that blessed hope that we are able to look to Heaven, and look to the Saints – our brothers and sisters in Christ – and say with prayerful hope, and with a Supreme faith, “Someday we’ll be together!”

Yours in Christ,
Fr. James Lentini
Pastor