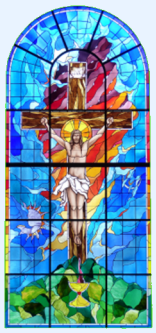


Church of the Holy Cross

631 South State Street
Dover, Delaware

302 674 5787
holycrossdover.org

522 Main Street
Marydel, Maryland

410 482 7687
iccmarydel.org

Immaculate Conception

September 13, 2026 — **24th Sunday Ordinary Time**

holy cross

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

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

Sunday Mass Schedule
Saturday, Vigil, 5 pm
Sunday, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 am Spanish

Daily Mass Schedule
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 8 am
Wednesday – 8:15 am
Federal Holidays, 9 am only (Presidents Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day)

Confession Schedule
Saturday, 8:30 am—10:00 am,
Fridays in Lent, 5:30 pm

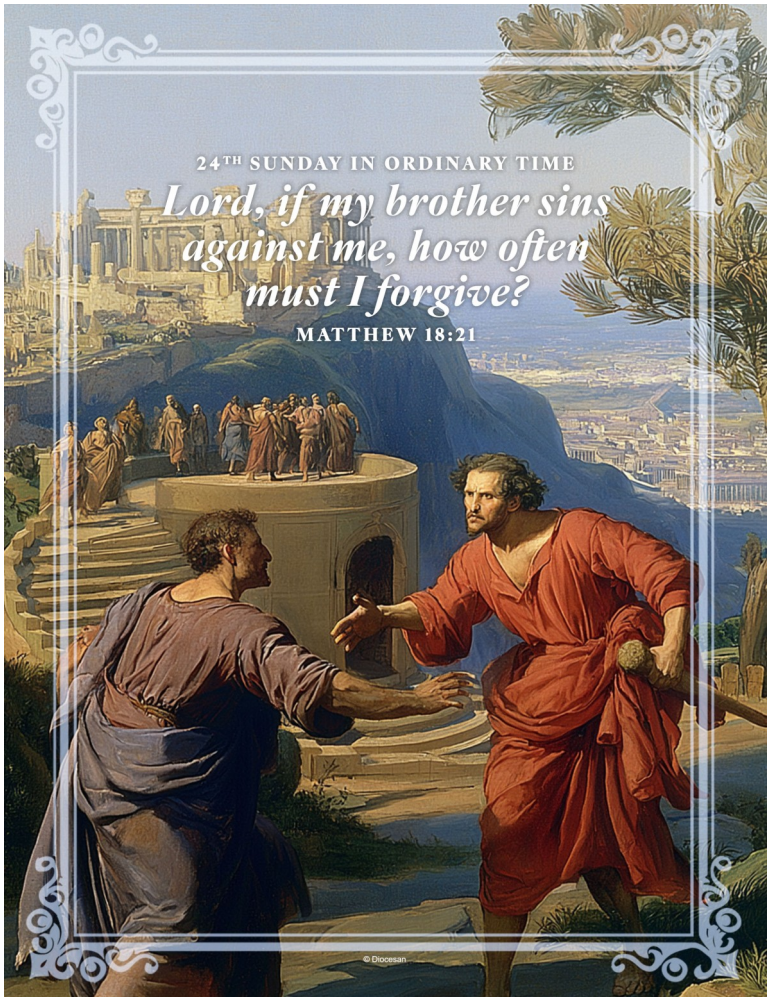
Adoration Chapel Hours
Daily, 5 am—9 pm

icc

Parish Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9 am-1 pm
Closed Wednesday and Friday

Sunday Mass Schedule
Sunday, 8:30, 11 am
Sunday, 1:30 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
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

sacraments

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.

happenings

Have you been thinking about becoming Catholic?

Are you interested in learning more about the Catholic faith? Have you received some, but not all, of the Sacraments of Initiation? If so, you are invited to explore the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA).

OCIA is the process through which adults learn about the Catholic faith and prepare to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. Classes meet every Sunday, 1:00pm-3:00pm in the Matthew/Mark room in the Parish Office, Building C, Early Learning Center, 2nd floor (back by the playground). Walk-in's are welcome! For further information, contact Tammy Korosec, Coordinator of Religious Education at tkorosec@holycrossdover.org, or call (302) 674-5787. 122.

Attention Parishioners: For the safety of our children, school dismissal procedures demand that the church building is locked during dismissal. Most people probably know to stay away from the dismissal traffic at the end of the school day. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. – Fr. Carroll

stewardship

Weekly Offering (HC)

Ending August 30, 2026

Offertory Type	Received
Regular	$15,083.00
Second	$1,213.00

Weekly Offering (ICC)

Ending September 6, 2026

Offertory Type	Received
Regular	$3,126.00
Second	$489.00

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.

A Word from your Administrator…

The Gospel today challenges us to forgive from the heart. It reminds us that forgiveness can be challenging. Often others do not acknowledge that they harmed us. Maybe they do even realize it caught up in their own stuff. Forgiveness is sometimes necessary for others. Maybe they need it from you. Often we find ourselves in situations where forgiveness from a person, group or institution isn't going to come. Jesus does not want us carrying that burden and further adding to the harm done to us. We all have reason to forgive to let go and live. Many times, I must tell people that forgiveness is not acceptance of something that was done to us. There are times that we need to create boundaries to protect ourselves from someone not to be harmed again.

On Monday night I will join you to preside at Mass at 7:00pm to conclude the **Holy Cross Novena** with a bilingual **Feast Day Mass** to gather the parish community with Exposition, Litany and Procession/Benediction to follow.

May we believe in and celebrate the rich compassion of the Lord.

Fr. Carroll

Having just remembered 9-11-2001 25 years later may we find the resolve to rekindle the spirit of 9-12 when our nation responded with unity and purpose to be more mindful of our brothers and sisters and the heroes among us.

Exercise faithful citizenship. Tuesday is a primary election in Delaware. For more on Faithful Citizenship see www.usccb.org/issues-and-actions In the front of a church there were two signs. One was the regular marque which read: "Our citizenship is in heaven". The cardboard sign next to it said "vote here" because it was a polling place. Fundamental to the Church's guidance on this issue is: vote. Exercise your right.

On Sunday, October 11 at 2:00pm Holy Cross will be hosting the Diocesan **Adult Confirmation in Spanish.** If you are over 18 and in need of the Sacrament of Confirmation and speak Spanish, see Fr. Padilla to register.

pastor's column

Monday
September 14
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Nm 21:4b–9
Phil 2:6–11
Jn 3:13–17

Tuesday
September 15
Our Lady of Sorrows
1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a
Jn 19:25–27 or Lk 2:33–35

Wednesday
September 16
Sts. Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs
1 Cor 12:31—13:13
Lk 7:31–35

Thursday
September 17
Weekday
1 Cor 15:1–11
Lk 7:36–50

Friday
September 18
Weekday
1 Cor 15:12–20
Lk 8:1–3

Saturday
September 19
Weekday
1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49
Lk 8:4–15

Sunday
September 20
Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 55:6–9
Phil 1:20c–24, 27a
Mt 20:1–16a

connections

HC & ICC Clergy

Vy, Rev. Norman P. Carroll	Administrator
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
Lilie Ramos	Receptionist, ext. 110
Vivian Alvarado	Assistant to the Pastor, ext. 113
Darcee Impagliazzo	Business Manager, ext. 119
Rev. Padilla	Dir. of Hispanic Ministry, ext. I15
Tammy Korosec	CRE Religious Ed, ext 122
Ashlyn Baynocky	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
Rev. Padilla	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

faith in action

Samaritan's Food Pantry

The Food Pantry is in need of the following: Canned Kidney, Black and Pinto Beans, peanut butter, jelly, hamburger helper, one pound bags of rice, Manwich, Cereal, Jell-O, Chicken Broth. These and small packs of meat or burger can be left in the pantry drop off door behind the rectory.

Spiritual Bouquet

Join us in Providing a Spiritual Bouquet for Fr. Giamello, our incoming Pastor; and our other troops, who are deployed to the Middle East. The Spiritual Bouquet can be found in the Brides Room outside of the Adoration Chapel.

Catholic Men of Delmarva

ATTENTION: MEN FROM THE DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE CATHOLIC MEN OF DELMARVA'S INAUGURAL CONFERENCE,

Saturday, October 3, 2026, 8AM-5PM

Saint Mark's High School, Wilmington, Delaware.

Conference Theme: Authentic Masculinity.

Day includes music ministry; confessions; vendors; refreshments, lunch, and fellowship with men from throughout the Diocese. Inspirational speakers include Father Larry Swink , Matthew Leonard, Gary Zimak, Father James Gebhart, Father John Solomon, and Deacon Philip Belt. Day closes with 4 p.m. Mass with Bishop William Koenig

More information & registration
DelmarvaCatholic.org
or scan the QR code at right

Spiritual Growth:

The Spiritual Growth Group will be starting a new series on The Psalms with Dr. John Bergsma, a course from The Science of Sainthood on Monday, 9/14/26 at 9:00 in the Luke room of the ELC. All are welcome! Hope to see you there!

Annual Appeal Update:

2026 ANNUAL FAITH & CHARITY CATHOLIC APPEAL
Church of the Holy Cross
Goal: $235,000.00
Pledges Received: $198,646.30 (84.53%)

Immaculate Conception (Marydel)
Goal: $25,625.00
Pledges Received: $23,510.41 (91.75%)

The Faith and Charity Catholic Appeal continues to experience strong support throughout our Diocese. We are grateful to all who have already made a gift or pledge to this year's Appeal.

If you have pledged, please remember that fulfilling your commitment helps provide essential funding for ministries that serve those in need.

If you have not yet participated, there is still time. Every gift, regardless of size, makes a difference. Thank you for your continued generosity and support of the Faith and Charity Catholic Appeal.

Welcome New Parishioners

We extend a warm welcome to our newly registered members:

- James and Palmira Manos
- Hortens Fleury, Beaubien Alexandre and Jaylens Alexandre
- Helene Samson, Kayden Liberal and Khaleeyah Liberal
- Justin Lunn

Recently Deceased

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

- Katherine A. Alortta-Luke

Newly Baptized

Congratulations to our newly baptized member:

- Alexander Noel Mendez-Green

Mass Intention September

14 Monday
HC 8:00 am Jorge Rodriguez
HC 7:00 pm For the People

15 Tuesday
HC 8:00 am Fr. Anthony Giamello & All our Troops (LI)

16 Wednesday
HC 8:15 am Helene Cotiere (LI) & Aborted Baby

17 Thursday
HC 8:00 am Johnny Couchman
ICC 6:00 pm For the People

18 Friday
HC 8:00 am Douglas Kistle

19 Saturday
HC 8:00 am Helene Cotiere (LI)
HC 5:00 pm Dante Coroniti

20 Sunday
HC 7:30 am Linda Lee Szafranski
ICC 8:30 am Mathew Gulrich
HC 9:30 am Jonathan R. Andrews
ICC 11:00 am John & Ann Pirro
HC 11:30 am For the People
ICC 1:30 pm For the People

Sanctuary Candle in Church is for the intention of Joseph Casey, Jr. donated by March Casey.

Sanctuary Candle in the Adoration Chapel is for the intention of Filomena & Ida Ranieri, donated by Carolina Ranieri.

Memorials: Please know that Sanctuary Candles, Altar flowers and Mass intentions are available if you would like to donate in Memory or Honor of someone. Just call or stop by the parish office for more information.

Become a registered parishioner today! We welcome all visitors and newcomers to our Parish. If you wish to register please stop by the Parish Office.

faith in action

faith in action

September 19/20, 2026

	EMHC		SERVERS
5:00 PM	C. Helwig M. King	M. Lewandowski A. Van Vooren	N. Klaus Z. Klaus
			LECTORS
			L. Christiansen H. Curley
7:30 AM	M. Thompson A. Wyllie	C. Brown J. Davis	E. Costa M. Costa
			LECTORS
			M. Jacobs
9:30 AM	S. Ford F. Hanlin	K. Kelly S. Lascano	G. Maddlena M. Willoughby
			LECTORS
			C. Petka J. Pierce
11:30 AM	B. Guzman M. Rivera	C. Garcia	D. Aguilar Y. Aguilar
			LECTORS
			N. Almengor A. Garcia

Immaculate Conception

8:30 AM	E. Costello		
			LECTORS
			D. Smith
11:00 AM	L. Schlaupitz		
			LECTORS
			Lausten Family

If you are interested in becoming a Lector, Extra-Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion, or an Altar Server, please all the Parish Office at Holy Cross. Leave your name and contact information.

As always, we can use more volunteers to become ministers to the sick and home-bound. This ministry is growing daily and they so appreciate receiving Our Lord especially since they can't come to Mass. Sign up at the office if you are interested in learning more about this ministry.

this & that

Adoration Chapel

"A Holy Hour before the blessed sacrament is worth more than a thousand years of human glory." ST. PADRE PIO 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, text, or email jkm2015@verizon.net

Times Available are:

Sunday	6-7am	7-8am	5-6 pm	6-7 pm	8-9pm
Tuesday	6-7am	3-4pm			
Thursday	6-7am	4-5pm	8-9pm		
Friday	8-9am				
Saturday	6-7am	8-9am	12-1pm	6-7pm	
	7-8pm	8-9pm			

Knights of Columbus: The Knights of Columbus Council 4182 will be serving breakfast next Sunday, September 20th after the 7:30 and 9:30 am Masses in the Parish Hall. The proceeds will be used to purchase the Little Books from the Diocese of Saginaw for the parish and to support the council's programs for the Delaware hospital for the chronically ill. Cost is $13 for a single, $25 a couple, or $40 for a family.

- **El Consejo 4182 de los Caballeros de Colón** servirá el desayuno el próximo domingo 20 de septiembre tras las misas de las 7:30 y 9:30 de la mañana en el Salón Parroquial. Los beneficios se destinarán a comprar los Pequeños Libros de la Diócesis de Saginaw para la parroquia y para apoyar los programas del consejo para el hospital de Delaware para enfermos crónicos. El coste es de 13 dólares para un individuo, 25 dólares por pareja o 40 dólares por familia.

- **El domingo 11 de octubre a las 2:00pm**, Holy Cross acogerá la **Confirmación Diocesana de Adultos en español.** Si tienes más de 18 años y necesitas el Sacramento de la Confirmación y hablas español, consulta al P. Padilla para inscribirte.

- **La Virgen Peregrina:** La Virgen Peregrina está visitando casas, si usted desea que la imagen de la virgen peregrina visite su casa por una semana, hable con nuestra hermana Marta Espinosa.

- **Jesús te Invita a que pases una hora con El: Capilla de Adoración Eucarística**: «Ven y pase una hora con Jesús en el Santísimo Sacramento. Para anotarse llame a la oficina parroquial.

- **Las clases de educación religiosa se imparten en la Escuela Primaria Holy Cross Para más información comuníquese con**: Sra. Tammy Korosec Coordinadora de Educación Religiosa email -tkorosec@holycrossdover.org o llame al 302.674.5787 ext 122

- **Memoriales:** Por favor, tengan en cuenta que velas del Santuario, flores del altar y las intenciones de la misa están disponibles si deseas donar en memoria o honor a alguien. Solo llama o pása por la oficina parroquial para más información.

- **Conviértete en feligrés registrado hoy!** Damos la bienvenida a todos los visitantes y recién llegados a nuestra parroquia. Si desea registrarse, por favor pase por la Oficina Parroquial.

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PARROQUIA DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCION- MARYDEL

- **Inscripciones para la Escuela Dominical:** Ya se están recibiendo inscripciones para el próximo año. Por favor, inscriban a sus hijos ahora para asegurar su lugar en una clase aquí en la Inmaculada Concepción.

- **Todos están invitados** todos los Jueves a la Santa Misa a las 6pm. A las 7pm Adoración al Santísimo Sacramento y Confesiones.

faith formation

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Religious Ed at Holy Cross

Registration for the 2026-27 Religious Education School Year is now open. Click on the QR Code to go to the website:

Adult Religious Education Classes

2026-27 Class – Beginning on September 8th

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.

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Youth Ministry

Registration for Confirmation Preparation 2027: May be found on the church website under Confirmation 2027

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LAFF (Living as a Family of Faith Catechesis)

LAFF (*Living as a Family of Faith Family Catechesis*); Adult/child Meeting, the first and third Sunday of month 11:00am-1:00pm in the Matthew/Mark Room of the Parish Office. Family works on activities at home in between. (Limited to 25 families-after the max is met a second day/time will be established on a weeknight evening)

Adult Education Opportunities
Catechism in a Year: https://ascensionpress.com/pages/catechisminayear
Bible in a Year: In English: Father Mike Schmitz https://media.ascensionpress.com/all-bible-in-a-year-episodes/

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Religious Education at ICC

SRE: Registrations are being taken now for next year. Please get your children registered now to save their place in a class here at Immaculate Conception. $50 per child, but if you are unable to pay at this time, let us know. Do not let your child's religious formation lapse due to finances. Religious education classes for the children begin on Sunday, September 20th. Parent beginning of the year meeting is on Sunday, September 13th at 2:30pm in the parish Hall. If you have not attended before or are new, please attend. This meeting gives information about your children's year in SRE.

Catechists, assistants, and aids are needed for the 2026-2027 school year. Kindergarten, Grade 5, OCIA, Confirmation Prep and assistants for several grades. We have classes from September -May. Training and formation provided. Please decern whether this is your way of giving back to the Church community. Any questions, please feel free to contact Alicia Poppiti at 410-482-8939 or dre@iccmarydel.org
Immaculate Conception: **Religious Education- I need of persons with a desire to broaden your faith while teaching others the Catholic faith. Call Alicia Poppiti 410-482-8939 to inquire. Kindergarten and 5th grade, and sacramental prep Catechist needed.**

Catechist in-Service: Tuesday, September 8th at 7pm in the parish hall. This gathering is for Catechist, assistants, aids and anyone interested in teaching or helping out with our Religious Education with our children on Sunday mornings.

Prep Parent meetings: First Reconciliation/Communion Parent orientation: Tuesday, September 15 at 7pm in the Parish hall or Sunday, September 20 at 2:30pm in the parish hall. You must attend if your child is in 2nd grade or higher and in second year of formation for the sacraments. All letters went out in the mail to those families in class this year.
Confirmation Parent orientation: Tuesday, September 22 at 7pm or Sunday, September 27 at 2:30pm in the Parish hall. Parent must attend if child is scheduled for second year of formation for 8th grade or higher.

OCIA is a yearlong process which leads an adult person toward Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation or full communion with the Catholic Church. Interested individuals seeking to enter the Church or individuals interested in serving on a team of individuals should contact **Alicia Poppiti, DRE at 410-482-8939 or dre@iccmarydel.org**

This past week, Holy Cross School was closed on Monday in observance of Labor Day. We hope all of our students, families, faculty, and staff enjoyed a restful long weekend. After our first full week of school, the additional day offered everyone a welcome opportunity to pause, recharge, and prepare for the weeks ahead.

Tuesday and Wednesday were quiet days on campus as our students and teachers returned to their routines. On Thursday, however, our campus came alive as we celebrated our annual First Responders Day. We extend our deepest gratitude to Mrs. Barton for the tremendous amount of time and care she devoted to coordinating this event. Planning began last school year, and Mrs. Barton worked diligently to connect with first responders throughout our community and bring this meaningful experience to our students.

Our campus welcomed an incredible variety of agencies and emergency personnel. Students saw a Delaware State Police helicopter, mounted police officers and their horses, canine units, ambulances, the Dover Police Department bicycle unit, the Mobile Crisis Center, lifeguards from the Delaware beaches, and many others. They also participated in CPR simulations and learned firsthand about the important responsibilities of those who serve and protect us.

Many members of our school community have family members who work in law enforcement or emergency services. We are especially grateful for the opportunity to honor them and help our students better understand their dedication, courage, and sacrifice. Thank you, Mrs. Barton, and thank you to all the first responders who serve our communities each day.

On Friday, we commemorated the twenty fifth anniversary of the attacks of September 11. We began our morning with a prayer service honoring the innocent lives lost and the brave men and women who responded with extraordinary courage. A special thank you goes to our choir for singing "God Bless America." It was a beautiful and moving moment that allowed us to remember our nation, its heroes, and all those whose lives were forever changed by that tragic day.

During the service, we also paused to remember Corporal Matthew "Ty" Snook and offered a special prayer for him and his loved ones. We were honored to welcome members of his family to our campus that morning.

Following the prayer service, students gathered throughout campus to cheer for the Delaware Law Enforcement Thank You Ride. Participating officers rode their bicycles across Delaware over two days to recognize and thank members of law enforcement. Many rode in honor of a fallen officer, including those who carried Corporal Snook's name through our campus. Together, we cheered, prayed, and remembered. Although Corporal Snook lost his life last year, his legacy of service will continue to live on. We will keep him and his family in our hearts, memories, and prayers.

This week reminded us of the courage shown by law enforcement officers and first responders each day. They leave their families to serve others, protect our communities, and save lives. As a Catholic school community, one of the greatest gifts we can offer is our continued gratitude and prayer.

Next week, we are especially excited to begin with our Feast of the Holy Cross Mass, celebrating our school's feast day. Our eighth grade students will lead us in procession and prayer as we honor the cross of Christ and the hope, love, and salvation it represents.

September is certainly a busy month on campus, but we are grateful for every opportunity to gather in faith, reflection, and fellowship. Thank you, as always, for your continued support of Holy Cross School. May God bless you and your families.

Mrs. O'Mara

13 de septiembre de 2026. Semana 24 del Tiempo Ordinario.

¿Te cuesta perdonar a alguien? Para los que estamos en Cristo, nunca somos más hipócritas que cuando recibimos el perdón de Dios, pero no estamos dispuestos a otorgárselo a otros. Jesús nos ha perdonado una insuperable deuda de pecados. De manera que Dios nos llama a perdonar a otros como Cristo nos ha perdonado a nosotros.

El perdón ilimitado parece demasiado idealista. ¿Cómo es posible seguir perdonando a la persona que continúa ofendiéndonos o haciéndonos daño? Pero si tenemos en cuenta los vv. 15-20, tal vez lo que Jesús está diciendo es que no deberíamos ponerle límites al proceso comunitario de perdón. El resultado depende de si la otra persona "escucha", es decir, reconoce su error y se arrepiente, como bien lo expresa el pasaje paralelo de Lucas 17:1-3: "Si tu hermano peca contra ti, repréndelo; y si se arrepiente, perdónalo." Si la persona se arrepiente, debemos perdonar tantas veces como fuera necesario. Nuevamente es Lucas quien nos ayuda a entender el espíritu del pasaje: "Y si siete veces al día peca contra ti, y siete veces al día vuelve a ti, diciendo 'Me arrepiento', perdónalo." Se trata de la misericordia de la cual nos habla la parábola de los vv. 23-35. Es una parábola que habla de un rey gentil y sus esclavos y que dice que uno de ellos, después de que el rey le perdonara una enorme deuda, se niega a cancelarle una pequeña deuda a uno de sus compañeros esclavos, una deuda ridícula en comparación a la suya propia. Al ser informado el rey retira su perdón (¡algo que Dios nunca haría porque Dios no puede contradecirse a sí mismo!) y pone al siervo malvado en la cárcel para que lo torturen hasta que pague su deuda.

San Mateo ha alegorizado, y por lo tanto espiritualizado, una parábola cuyas connotaciones son principalmente socioeconómicas, pues nos habla de la experiencia de endeudamiento por parte del campesinado a manos de los terratenientes de turno. El no poder pagar sus deudas hacía que los campesinos perdieran sus tierras, que proveían el sustento económico para ellos y sus familias. Al serles perdonadas sus deudas, estas personas recuperaban su posición social y su autonomía económica, siendo así restauradas a la vida de la comunidad. Si bien es cierto que en esta parábola el deudor es el siervo de un rey y que la deuda es muy elevada (un campesino jamás podía llegar a deber diez mil talentos), el ejemplo todavía le sirve al evangelista para ilustrar cómo debe funcionar el perdón en la comunidad. Pero notemos que para que haya perdón debe primero haber un verdadero arrepentimiento. Posiblemente esto se deba al hecho de que algunas personas se estaban abusando de la bondad de otras y continuaban ofendiendo a sus hermanos y hermanas con el pretexto de que, si Dios siempre perdona, entonces ellos también tenían que hacerlo. De esta manera quienes tenían menos poder en la comunidad eran siempre las víctimas de quienes sí lo tenían, especialmente cuando la reconciliación se negociaba en privado. Por eso se exige la presencia de dos o tres testigos y, si esto no funcionaba, la de toda la congregación. Esto protegería a los miembros más débiles, haciendo posible un perdón justo y duradero.

¿Estamos dispuestos a perdonar como Dios nos ha perdonado? ¿cada cuánto tiempo acudimos al sacramento de la confesión? ¡Señor!, ¿cuántas veces debo perdonar a mi hermano o hermana que peca contra mí? ¿Hasta siete veces? Al sugerir siete veces, Pedro quizás pensó que estaba siendo generoso, pero Jesús responde con un llamado radical al perdón, diciendo: «No siete veces, sino setenta y siete veces» o setenta veces siete en algunas traducciones. Este número simboliza el perdón infinito. La infinita misericordia de Dios.

Sinceramente,

Fr. Padilla