

**Welcome to Holy Mass at Holy Cross Church
Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord**

**Thursday, December 24, 2009
5:00 pm**

**Holy Cross Church
3690 Armstrong Road, PO Box 318
Syracuse, NY 13209-0318**

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Intention: All in need of healing in our parish community

The Liturgy of the Word

Reading I

Isaiah 9: 1-6

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

A son is given to us.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian. For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for flames.

For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

This is the Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13

R: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands. Sing to the Lord; bless his name.

R: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Announce his salvation, day after day. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.

R: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound; let the plains be joyful and all that is in them! Then shall all the trees of the forest exult.

R: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

They shall exult before the Lord, for he comes; for he comes to rule the earth. He shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his constancy.

R: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Reading II

Titus 2: 11-14

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus

God's grace has been revealed to all men.

The grace of God has appeared, offering salvation to all men. It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age as we await our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Savior Christ Jesus. It was he who sacrificed himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness and to cleanse for himself a people of his own, eager to do what is right.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Gospel

Luke 2: 1-14

A reading of the holy gospel according to Luke

Today a savior has been born to you.

In those days Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole world. This first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to register, each to his own town. And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to David's town of Bethlehem – because he was of the house and lineage of David – to register with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child.

While they were there, the days of her confinement were completed. She gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where travelers lodged.

There were shepherds in the locality, living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them, as the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very much afraid.

The angel said to them: "You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you – tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people. This day in David's city a savior has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord. Let this be a sign to you: in a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes." Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom his favor rests."

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Thoughts from the Pulpit

Everything Comes Through the Grace of God!

The Grace of God brings us to this wonderful Christmas of 2009! God's Grace has been at work in a special miraculous way since the very First Christmas! It was God's marvelous Grace that enabled Mary to become the Mother of God in her "YES" to God's Plan.

The Grace of God was moving powerfully in all the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ the Son of God. God's Work caused people to leap for joy, sing praise to the Lord, and learn how to trust in God more fully as they journeyed through all Christmases of two thousand years, until now. All of these people were able to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

How can it be that the doubting Zechariah was filled with the Spirit?

How can it be that the barren Elizabeth was able to conceive?

How can it be that the aged Simeon recognized the Messiah in a poor infant?

How can it be that millions of millions of Christ's witnesses for the last two thousand years were able to carry heavenly gifts on the face of the earth?

It was by the Grace of God!

God wants to pour out again on this Christmas the same Grace on our Parish, on our community, on our families, on us! On this Christmas He wants all of us to recognize His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ the Messiah!

Sometimes we can feel barren and forgotten.

Sometimes we, like Zechariah, doubt God's ability to work in our lives.

Sometimes we can be like Simeon, and think that our waiting will never end.

Yet new hope came to each of these people when they least expected it, and they were able to experience Beautiful Christmas! So it can happen to you if you will approach it with humility and reconciliation.

Our Lord, Almighty God, Our Father

You bring us to this Wonderful Christmas 2009 to meditate on and rejoice in Thy continual Love for us human Family on earth.

Open our hearts in welcome thy Gift!

Remove the darkness of our hearts that hinder us from receiving with appreciation and love Thy Heavenly Gift for this earth – Thy Son and Our Messiah. So that we may share His Wisdom and his Love, and thus be able to build Thy Peace on Earth! Amen!

The Communion

Welcome to participation in the Holy Eucharist. By receiving Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we fully participate in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should be baptized, should not be conscious of grave sin, and normally should fast for one to two hours. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive Communion without prior Sacramental Confession.

We always welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Holy Eucharist and Holy Communion. We pray that our common Baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions separating us.

Announcements for December 24, 2009

If you have forgotten your envelope or are visiting and would like to place a donation in an envelope, packs of extra envelopes are in each pew. Just add your name and the amount of your contribution to the front of the envelope. Thank you!!

Envelopes for 2010 are available on the tables in the foyer today. If you do not find envelopes in your name and would like them issued to you, please see Pat.

Stewardship obligations for 2009 can be accepted until December 31. Please remember that basic stewardship is \$275 per individual adult and \$50 per individual adult for cemetery improvement. Please contact Pat if you have questions about your personal stewardship for 2009.

Weekly Calendar

Friday, December 25	SOLEMNITY – NATIVITY OF OUR Lord Intention: prayers for peace around the world
11:00	Holy Mass
Saturday, December 26	FEAST – St. Stephen, Proto-Martyr
Sunday, December 27	SOLEMNITY – HUMBLE SHEPHERDS [FEAST – St. John, Apostle and Evangelist] Intention: +John Sullivan
11:00	Holy Mass
12:00	Coffee Hour

Upcoming Events

Saturday	January 9	Fresh Pork Dinner 4:30 – 7:00 pm
Sunday	January 10	Oplatek Dinner following Holy Mass
Sunday	January 19	Parish Committee Meeting

Monthly Financial Summary

Week of	Weekly Income	Weekly Income Needed	Balance
December 6	\$497	\$642	-\$145
December 13	\$407	\$642	-\$235
December 20	\$829	\$642	\$187
TOTAL	\$1733	\$1926	-\$193