



Holy Cross  
**Connections**

*Merry Christmas*



# What Christmas is All About

by Fr. Jerry Stluka



Christmas is all about presents. Or is it PRESENCE? It's about giving and receiving gifts: the most precious one being the priceless presence of God with us.

Christmas is all about God's total gift of self to us empowering us to give ourselves totally to each other and to receive each other wholeheartedly as priceless Gifts from God. Christmas is all about giving and receiving the Gift of God uniting us in Love forever!

As I reflect on my experiences of Christmas I cherish the gifts of God, faith, family and friends:

- God coming to be at home with us—freeing us from all sin and giving us eternal life.
- Christ reconciling us to one another and to our Father
- The presence of people who care.
- Thoughtful presents from faithful and generous friends.
- The heartwarming excitement of children of all ages enjoying the magical wonder of the season
- The inspiring liturgies, choirs and chorales that bring back memories of Christmas over the years.
- The generous outpouring of food and clothing to the needy.
- The welcoming care and compassionate concern our parish brings to the sick, homebound, strangers, estranged, visitors and guests
- The marvelous gift of time we give and receive as we grow in relationship with God and each other.

Yes! Christmas is all about the priceless Gift of God's presence among us and our presence to each other. God is here for us. We are here for each other.

I wholeheartedly invite you, your family and friends to celebrate this wondrous Gift of Christ among us in the Holy Eucharist:

**CHRISTMAS EVE MASS AT 4:00**

**CHRISTMAS MORNING MASS AT 10:00**

May the PEACE of CHRISTMAS PRESENCE be in your hearts and homes and in our world now and forever!



## From the Oldest to the Youngest Parishioner:

by Sr. Pat Pieper

Congratulations to **Mary Knapp**, who celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on September 8! **Jack Kustron**, one of our Eucharistic ministers, accompanied by Mary's daughter, **Louise**, visits her at an assisted living center every two weeks to bring her the Eucharist, pray and chat a bit.

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, we welcomed our youngest parishioner when **Margaret (Maggie) Rose Walsh** was baptized here at Holy Cross. Congratulations to the proud parents, **Rachel** and **Tom**.

**Jeanne Brown**, as one of our parish representatives to the Center City Deanery, hosted their monthly meeting on Nov. 11. Since the Cum Christo

building was unavailable, St. Patrick's graciously offered their space and Jeanne provided the light supper. These meetings are the next steps to the parish self-study project.

Congratulations to **Terry Creedon**, who has begun serving on the parish Finance Committee. Sincere thanks to **Jean Finn**, who rotates off after her years of faithful service.

Our PSR (Parish School of Religion) is well underway. We have 10 children in grades K-5 with **Debi Matthews** and **Mary Ann Scholl** as our master teachers. They are assisted by aides **Anne Reinhardt**, **Melissa Boyer** and **Addie Davis**, who have

completed the necessary training modules, "Protecting God's Children". **Bridgid Davis** is awaiting her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to begin and **Emily Soprovich** will be completing her training soon.

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**Hold the date January 25<sup>TH</sup> on your calendar for our...**

### PARISH TOWN HALL MEETING

This will be a follow-up on the parish level to our self-study meeting and will be an opportunity for beginning to put into place some of the practical suggestions that surfaced at that time. More details to follow.

## A Late Bloomer

Sr. Ruth Ann Heider O.S.F. is a Holy Cross treasure.

A lector at Daily Mass, a Eucharistic Minister and member of our choir, she also is a Sacristan at Nazareth Towers, helps out in the parish office, was involved with our capital campaign, counts Sunday collections and along with Carol Plank helped organize the photo sessions for our Parish Directory. Oh yes, and was also a RCIA sponsor.



**Sr. Ruth Ann Heider O.S.F.**

Not bad for someone in the 8<sup>th</sup> decade of her life.

Born and raised on the South end, she attended St. Mary's for grades 1-3 then St. John the Evangelist grade school (now St. John/Holy Rosary) then Sacred Heart High School. She has one brother and one sister.

Calling herself "a late bloomer," she entered the business world after high school and didn't feel the calling to the Religious life until her mid-twenties. Sr. Ruth Ann says that she attended Novenas, and Daily Mass, here at Holy Cross and "just felt a calling – not a voice, but something inside that said that things weren't right." Her Confessor, Fr. Robert White, from St. Joseph Cathedral encouraged her to explore the Religious life and she eventually entered the order of St. Francis of Penance & Christian Charity, based in Stella Niagara, NY. She then became a teacher.

Those of us that were fortunate enough to have a Catholic education will most likely have fond memories of their 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher and Sr. Ruth Ann taught those little ones for 25 years in New York, South Carolina and Ohio. In between she was a child caregiver at St. Vincent's Orphanage, here in Columbus for 6 yrs., then went to Catholic Social Services, where she worked in the senior care program into retirement at Nazareth Towers, about 13 years ago.

"This has been the joy of my life – being here at Holy Cross," Sr. Ruth Ann says "it just fulfills all the things that I need at this time of my life."

## Christmas Memories of Holy Cross

By Walter Jakeway



My memories of Holy Cross begin in 1959, after I was received into the Catholic Church. I Joined the choir, under the direction of Brother Michael Carlyle, BGS. We helped decorate the church by putting up the almost life-size nativity, a real undecorated tree and much more.

My memories of Christmas include children from the congregation walking up the center aisle, with one child carrying the infant Jesus to the creche. Also, children from St. Martin's Home, down the street on Rich, would sing "Away in A Manger." The choir would sing Christmas

### Dates to Remember:

- Dec. 14** - Deanery Reconciliation Service at Holy Cross - 4:00pm
- Dec. 24** - Christmas Eve Mass at 4:00pm
- Dec. 25** - Christmas Day Mass - 10:00am
- Dec. 28** - Holy Family Sunday - Rectory Open House after both Masses
- Jan. 25** - Parish Town Hall Meeting - 2:00pm
- Feb. 22** - Sunday before Ash Wednesday - Palm Burning/Pancake Breakfast
- Feb. 25** - Ash Wednesday - 11:30am Mass

carols before Midnight Mass. In the early years, the Mass was in Latin, then in the mid sixties, Mass was in English and Latin. We always had several trumpets and a violin. The choir, in their robes, would come down first to receive Holy Communion, then go back to the choir loft to sing.

These are some of my memories of Holy Cross at Christmas, some forty plus years ago. My memories for the 21<sup>st</sup> century are just as good. I am sure others will have good memories twenty-five years from now, and will be celebrating 200 years of Holy Cross Parish.

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**Parish Staff**

Reverend Father Jerome D. Stluka, Pastor  
Reverend Monsignor Lawrence J. Corcoran, P.A., In Residence  
Sister Patricia A. Pieper, SNDdeN, Pastoral Associate  
Michael P. Agriesti, Administrative Assistant

**Liturgy Schedule**

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.  
11:30 a.m. Tuesday - Saturday

**Confessions**

Every Friday: 11:00 a.m.  
Every Sunday: 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

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