

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PARISH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 21, 2025

Today, the fourth Sunday in Advent, Matthew gives us a factual, straight forward account of the birth of Jesus Christ. But think for a moment about the shock, devastation and confusion that overwhelmed Joseph when Mary told him she was pregnant. He knew Mary; he had seen her holiness and this made no sense to him. But Joseph had been raised in the Mosaic law; he was committed to the laws that were passed down in the scriptures and the traditions of his ancestors. In the midst of this he had to decide what he needed to do. He did the only thing he knew how; he relied on himself, his faith and the love that he had for Mary. He weighed carefully what the justice of the law demanded and what mercy required. In a world that was ready to stone and shame Mary, Joseph chose to guard and love. With courage, he resolved to divorce her privately and send her away.

But the story was not over

With his decision made he sought the refuge of sleep. As Joseph slept his sleep became prayer for the psalmists tell us "at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life" and again "the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me". Prayer took Joseph beyond his commitment to his faith and his love for Mary, beyond the law and mercy, beyond his head and heart decision. It brought him to divinity, to the very heart of God. Eternity broke into time and God revealed the truth of the Incarnation to Joseph, "the child conceived in Mary is from the Holy Spirit." Joseph was told "not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife". When he awoke, Joseph did exactly as he had been told and became part of God's plan for salvation.

But the story was not over

Joseph took Mary into his home without hesitation or questions. However, a great deal of uncertainty remained for him. There was still much he did not understand and even less he knew. But Joseph humbly surrendered control into God's hands and he trusted God's guidance. He did not know what lay ahead, yet he probably never expected some of the hardships, threats and dangers they would face. At the very outset Joseph and Mary had to make an arduous and dangerous trip to Bethlehem even as she was heavily pregnant. They could not find a place to stay and the Son of God, the Servant King, the Redeemer of All was born into this world in a stable. They had to flee to a foreign country because Herod was seeking to kill Jesus. And so, their life continued. Joseph relied on God completely and trusted him implicitly and for the many times when he didn't understand Joseph, like Mary, pondered these things in his heart.

But the story is still not over

Now it is our turn. What does this gospel mean for us in our lives today? Many of us probably find familiarity with Joseph in how he set about trying to solve the situation he faced. And we can see the movement he made as things unfolded. He began, by trying to solve the problem on his own, using his own resources albeit very good resources – his strong Jewish faith, his beliefs, values, compassion, and deep caring for Mary. It was only in sleep that Joseph's silence, obedience and humility allowed him to hear God's voice, allowed prayer to enter. It needs to be the same for us. We need always, everywhere, every time and in every circumstance to enter first and foremost into God's presence of prayer, "to lean not on our own understanding" but humbly and obediently to trust God's guidance and surrender to his will. Prayer needs to be our first go-to, for 'the Lord is come', 'Emmanuel, God is with us'. Amen.

Trudy Holden

We acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory Holy Cross Parish stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Report Sexual Abuse

To report sexual abuse at
RCDVictoria.org/Responsible-Ministry

PARISH NEWS & EVENTS

Pastoral Admin Corner

Dear Parishioners,

The Jubilee Year of Hope is drawing to a close. It will end when Pope Leo closes the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica on January 6th, the Solemnity of the Epiphany.

A few days ago, Pope Leo celebrated the last major 2025 Jubilee event with prisoners, guards, and their families. He reiterated Pope Francis' words that hope comes to all people including those who are imprisoned. Though our world has seen some dark days recently due to unexpected violence in a number of locations, Pope Leo encourages us all to embrace hope, the hope that comes from the knowledge that we are loved by our God and that He has redeemed us all.

If you want to read further details about the Jubilee event, the Catholic News Agency article can be found here: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/268519/with-special-permission-prisoners-travel-to-rome-for-the-jubilee>

Rejoice, our Lord's birth is near, Tanya



Christmas Mass Schedule - Holy Cross Parish

- Christmas Eve Mass - December 24th - 6:00pm
- Christmas Day Mass - December 25th - 9:00am
- Vigil Mass, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - December 31st - 6:00pm
- Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - January 1st - 9:00am



Tis the Season for Celebrating and Keeping Well

Tis the Season to celebrate together. However, if you are not feeling well we suggest you wear a mask or take care of yourself by staying home. There are several masses that are being live streamed: <https://www.youtube.com/c/StPatricksHolyCrossChurch>

Collection Envelopes

2026 Collection Envelopes are ready for pick up in the church foyer. If you don't have collection envelopes, and would like a set, please drop by the office to be assigned a number.



The Bishop's Appeal!

Thank you to all the parishioners who have already made a donation or a pledge to the Bishop's Appeal. Every gift strengthens our parishes and reaches far beyond, bringing the love of Christ to our communities and the world. At this point we have reached 85.5% of our \$70,000 goal (\$59,895.10) and 58% of our participation goal of 250 families (145 families). Please, remember that every gift makes a difference. Thank you for your participation!

Pastoral Care Outreach: Winter Series

Pastoral Care Outreach Training series starts in the new year. Nine sessions will be held via Zoom on Sat mornings from 9:30 a.m. to noon, starting on Jan 24 and running until March 28, 2026 (with no session on March 7). A Certificate of Completion is provided to those who complete all nine sessions. Attend classes from home over Zoom or join in person at the Holy Cross Library, where all the technology is provided. Please register through the office at office@holycrossvictoria.org or by phone at 250-477-5321 by January 13, 2026. For further info, please email moiraking@shaw.ca.



QUOTATIONS OF THE WEEK

Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be enlightened by the light that comes from Bethlehem, the light of Christ. *Pope Benedict XVI*

Advent is a time to be still, to listen for the whisper of God, and to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. *Pope Francis*

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. *Desmond Tutu*

PLEASE NOTE: The Parish office will be closed from Dec 20th to Jan 5th. Reopening on Jan 6th.



Prayer in the Style of Taizé

The ecumenical practice of Taizé will be practiced at Holy Cross Church for three months in the new year. It is observed on the third Friday of each month at 6:00 pm. Please make a note of the dates, January 16th, February 20th and March 20th of 2026. There will be scripture, music, prayer and silence. Everyone is very welcome to this evening of prayer.

Introducing Father Silvichan

For anyone who missed the announcement that Catherine Davis made on the First Advent weekend: Father Silvichan Dominic from the Congregation of the Sons of the Immaculate Conception will be our new Pastor, starting in mid-February. Father Silvichan was born in the province of Kerala, India and was ordained in 2008. He came to Canada in 2013 and worked in Edmonton and Leduc, Alberta. Most recently Father Silvichan has been working in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. This is exiting news for our parish, and we thank Bishop Gary for all his efforts finding us a new Pastor.



Parish Council News!

We are happy to introduce to you the Parish Council for Holy Cross for 2025-2026. Catherine Davis is starting her second term as Parish Council chair. Also continuing in their second term are Betty Leitch, Zofia Porter and Terri Siemens. We are happy to welcome new members to the council: Jose Alva, John Bartle-Clar, Michael O'Rielly and Jordan Weaver. Thank you all for volunteering in this leadership role. Pictures and a small bio of each member will be in the Church Foyer. Please take a minute to get to know your council and say hi to them at Mass! Also in the foyer is a binder with Parish Council Minutes and the reports from each committee.

Pax Regis: Seminary Magazine

Read the lastest edition of Westminster Abbey, Seminary of Christ the King's magazine called PAX REGIS, here: <http://westminsterabbey.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/PaxRegisFall2025R.pdf>



Hearing Loop System & Headphones

If you wear hearing aids, switch your hearing aid to T-Coil and you will be connected to the hearing loop system. See: www.advancedlistening.ca If your hearing aids can't support this looping system, we have two headsets available in the Church kitchen wired to the microphones to allow you to listen to the readings, homily and the music.

NEWS FROM THE CHANCERY & ICS

1) Bishop Gary Gordon has written a message to the people of the Diocese of Victoria on the occasion of Christmas 2025. The message may be read online at:

<https://www.rcdvictoria.org/news/bishop-gary-gordons-message-for-christmas-2025>

2) On Sunday, December 28, the Diocese of Victoria will join the worldwide Church in celebrating the Rite of Closing of the Jubilee Year. The Rite of Closing will happen at the 11:00 am Mass at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Victoria, with Bishop Gary Gordon presiding. All are invited to participate in person or via the livestream at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BBaull-9vo>

3) We're getting close to our goal for the 2025 Bishop's Appeal: Love & Unity campaign—thank you to everyone who has generously donated so far! If you've been waiting to give, now is a wonderful time to participate. To receive a 2025 tax receipt, donations must be received by the Diocese before December 31, 2025. To learn more or give online, please visit: <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/bishops-appeal>

4) The recap blog of the 2025 Diocesan Faith Day, held on November 22, 2025, is now available on the Diocesan website. A handout from speaker Dr. Erin Barisano on "The Active Silence" can also be found at the bottom of the recap page: <https://www.rcdvictoria.org/diocesanblog/faith-days-recap-finding-renewal-through-the-active-silence>

Pastoral Care Telephone Visits

Are you feeling lonely or know someone who would appreciate a friendly conversation? Our Pastoral Care volunteers are available to telephone those who are lonely, homebound, isolated, or simply in need of a listening ear. These calls are a gentle reminder that no one is ever alone and that our parish community is here to accompany, encourage, and support one another. To request a telephone call for yourself or a loved one, please contact the parish office at 250-477-5321 or email: office@holycrossvictoria.org.

COLLECTIONS

December 14, 2025

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THESE GIFTS	
Envelopes	\$3,345.00
Loose	\$ 355.00
Christmas Florals	\$ 575.00
Catholic Missions	\$ 20.00
Pre-Authorized Debit	\$1,315.41
Total	\$5,610.41

THANK YOU

Everyone would agree that the parishioners of Holy Cross Parish are generous. Not only generous but compassionate and enthusiastic about making a difference. All we have to do is look at the full bins for the university students or the results of the Bishop's Appeal or the bags of gifts and money collected for the family up island. But there are also the quiet, faithful, and continuous donations to the collection. Without the generous weekly donations, we would not be able to gather in our beautiful church and celebrate mass together. We would not be able to share coffee or a laugh or stories with our community in a safe, dry, and warm building. Thank you to all of you that share so big-heartedly! Our community is blessed!

HOLY CROSS PARISH OFFICE

250-477-5321

office@holycrossvictoria.org

4049 Gordon Head Rd

Victoria, BC V8N 3X7

www.holycrossvictoria.org

Office Hours

Tuesday-Friday: 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Saturday-Monday: closed

WEEKLY MASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday and Thursday: 9:00 am

Saturday: 4:00 pm

Sunday: 9:00 am

CONTACT US

Pastoral Administrator: Tanya Taft

ttaft@rcdvictoria.org

Administrative Assistant: Sloane Secord

office@holycrossvictoria.org

Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries & RMSE: Joanie Bidlake

officeassistant@holycrossvictoria.org

Parish Council Chair: Catherine Davis

UVic & Camosun Chaplin: Father David Shulist SJ

dshulist@rcdvictoria.org

Hospital Emergency Chaplain: Father Sean Flynn / 250-889-3761

Pastor: Position not filled at this time

From: Multifaith Administrator <multifaith@uvic.ca>

Date: December 5, 2025 at 12:06:02 PM PST

Subject: In appreciation



To Members of the Food Security Committee, Holy Cross Parish

Dear Mary-Anne,

Another big THANK YOU on behalf of the University of Victoria student community who use the Food Share program at Multifaith Centre. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

It was wonderful to open boxes and boxes and boxes of “everything”; non-perishable food and toiletry filled our distribution tables.

Please pass on our note of appreciation to others in your Food Security Committee and all parishioners of Holy Cross Catholic Parish.

Wishing you all a healthy and joyous holiday season. Happy New Year!

Warm regards,

Anna



Anna Fodchuk, *she/her*
Multifaith Admin
Wellness, Recreation, and Athletics
Division of Student Affairs
T: 250-721-8338
multifaith@uvic.ca

We acknowledge and respect the Lekwə̱ən (Songhees and Xwsepsem/Eskwimahl) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lekwə̱ən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.