



Important Notes from Mrs. Luzzo February 14, 2025

Don't forget to ROAR!

Happy Friday and happy St. Valentine's Day, HTCS families. Please see below for lots of important information. See you at noon for our half day dismissal! Have a great weekend!

2025-2026 School Year - Open enrollment for new families and re-enrollment for current families (except current 5th graders moving onto middle school) has begun online via FACTS! The \$100 registration fee has been waived for all returning families who re-enroll by **February 28**. **If your child is currently in K3-4, you must go into FACTS enrollment by February 28 and indicate whether or not your child will be re-enrolling for the 25-26 school year.**

Tuition Assistance/Scholarships - All families who will be seeking tuition assistance and/or scholarships next year **MUST** complete the 2025-2026 Application for Tuition Assistance Consideration form by **February 28**.

ESTF/ESLF Grant - All SC families with students going into Kinder and up who will be seeking tuition assistance and/or scholarships for the 25-26 school year **MUST** apply for the ESTF grant by clicking the link: [ClassWallet](#). When applying, you should be able to select "other" for your current school. If necessary, you can upload a report card, but I have been told by the Diocese that families should be able to select "other" as an option.

Please see this update from the Diocese regarding the ESTF/ESLF grant: *We wanted to provide a legislative update. By a vote of 31-9 last Tuesday, the South Carolina Senate passed school choice legislation that would restore the payment of tuition and fees at private schools like ours. Additionally, the legislation would expand the scholarship amount to 90% of SC statewide per pupil spending. Next year, that would be around \$7,700, up from \$6,000. Perhaps most notably, the legislation removes the eligibility requirement that a student have been in public school last year. Also note that the legislation shifts the source of funds from the General Fund to the South Carolina Lottery. The legislation now goes to the SC House, where the first hearing has been scheduled for Committee next week. **While we expect changes in the House, we do not expect the restoration of private school tuition and fees or the prior public enrollment eligibility criteria to be changed from the Senate bill.** This presents a moment of opportunity for the students in our schools. Any students in SC resident families whose incomes fall below 300% of the federal poverty level ([HHS Chart here](#)) will now be eligible for the program. As a reminder – the student participation cap for 2025-26 is currently*

set at 10,000 students – and that is likely to stay in the final legislation. **That means there should be a sense of urgency among our families to get their 2025-26 applications in now before the cap fills up.**

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Grant - All *Catholic* families with students going into grades K3-5 next year who will be seeking tuition assistance and/or scholarships MUST complete the attached St. Elizabeth Ann Seton grant application and return it to school by **February 28**.

First Steps Grant - All families with current K3 students going into K4 next year who will be seeking tuition assistance MUST apply for the First Steps grant by **February 28**.

No School - School will be closed on **Monday, 2/17**, in recognition of President's Day. We will reopen on **Tuesday, 2/18**, at our normal time.

13th Annual PTO Golf Tournament - Please see attached information about the PTO's annual golf tournament taking place at The Long Bay Golf Course on **Saturday, 2/22**. This is the PTO's largest fundraiser and your support is greatly needed to make it a success.

Car line on 2/26 - Due to anticipated repairs on the mechanical unit in the back of the church, our morning and afternoon car line, as well as aftercare pick up will take place in the front parking lot on **Wednesday, February 26**. For arrival and dismissal, please stay in your cars and we will bring the children out to you. For aftercare, please park in a spot and come to the front office to sign your child out. Thank you.

Family Lenten Literacy Event - Be sure to RSVP for our next family after school event scheduled for **Thursday, February 27**. We hope as many families as possible will be able to join us in the multipurpose room for this event focused on Lent and literacy.

Yearbook - The last day to purchase a yearbook for \$35 is **February 28**. After that, the price increases to \$40. Place your orders soon!

Hot Lunch - Because **March 5** is Ash Wednesday, we will have vegetable soup versus chicken noodle soup for hot lunch that day.

FACTS - Per Diocesan expectations, we have moved to a completely cashless school. Please do not send in cash or checks for incidental expenses, sports, clubs, and/or tuition and fees. All expenses should be handled via a FACTS account.

School Website - As always, please refer to the school website for all the information you could ever need regarding the calendar, school events, clubs, sports, etc. [Holy Trinity Catholic School | North Myrtle Beach, SC](#)

Catholic Faith Formation - *Six Reasons Catholics Make the Sign of the Cross*

Catholics often make the Sign of the Cross casually, just as a nice gesture for beginning and ending their prayers. But when we learn to take this act seriously, signing ourselves frequently with faith and reverence, remarkable results can take place. We find ourselves doing measurably better in our Christian life: praying with more passion, resisting our bad inclinations more effectively, and relating to others more kindly. The Sign of the Cross, after all, is not merely a pious gesture. It is a powerful prayer, a sacramental of the Church. Scripture, the Church Fathers and saints, and Catholic teaching offer six perspectives on the Sign of the Cross that reveal why making it opens us to life-transforming graces. Once we grasp them, we can make the gesture with more faith and experience its great blessings.

1. A mini-creed - The Sign of the Cross is a profession of faith in God as He has revealed himself. It serves as an abbreviated form of the Apostles' Creed. Touching our forehead, breast and shoulders (and in some cultures, our lips as well), we declare our belief in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are announcing our faith in what God has done — the creation of all things, the redemption of humanity from sin and death, and the establishment of the Church, which offers new life to all. When we sign ourselves we are making ourselves aware of God's presence and opening ourselves to His action in our lives. That much alone would be enough to transform us spiritually, wouldn't it? But there is much, much more.

2. A renewal of baptism - First-century Christians began making the Sign of the Cross as a reminder and renewal of what happened to them when they were baptized. It still works the same way for us. When we sign ourselves we are declaring that in baptism we died sacramentally with Christ on the cross and rose to a new life with Him (see Rom 6:3-4 and Gal 2:20). We are asking the Lord to renew in us those baptismal graces. We are also acknowledging that baptism joined us to the Body of Christ and equipped us for our role of collaborating with the Lord in His work of rescuing all people from sin and death.

3. A mark of discipleship - At baptism the Lord claimed us as His own by marking us with the Sign of the Cross. Now, when we sign ourselves, we are affirming our loyalty to Him. By tracing the cross on our bodies, we are denying that we belong to ourselves and declaring that we belong to Him alone (see Lk 9:23). The Church Fathers used the same word for the Sign of the Cross that the ancient world employed to indicate ownership. The same word named a shepherd's brand on his sheep, a general's tattoo on his soldiers, a householder's mark on his servants, and the Lord's mark on His disciples. Signing ourselves recognizes that we are Christ's sheep and can count on His care; His soldiers, commissioned to work with Him in advancing His kingdom on earth; and His servants, dedicated to doing whatever He tells us.

4. An acceptance of suffering - Jesus promised us that suffering would be a normal part of a disciple's life (see Lk 9:23-24). So when we mark our bodies with the sign, we are embracing whatever pain comes as a consequence of our faith in Christ. Making the sign is our taking up the cross and following Him (Lk 9:23). At the same time, however, it comforts us with the realization that Jesus, who endured the Crucifixion for us, now joins us in our suffering and

supports us. Signing ourselves also announces another significant truth: with St. Paul, we are celebrating that our afflictions as members of the body of Christ contribute to the Lord's saving work of perfecting the Church in holiness (see Col 1:24).

5. A two-edged move against the devil - When the devil watched Jesus die on the cross, he mistakenly believed he had won a great victory. Instead, the Lord surprised him with an ignominious defeat (see 1 Cor 2:8). From the first Easter morning through the present, the Sign of the Cross makes the devil cower and flee. On one level, then, making the sign is a defensive move, declaring our inviolability to the devil's influence. But, more importantly, the sign is also an offensive weapon, helping us reclaim with Christ all that Satan lost at the cross. It announces our cooperation with Jesus in the indomitable advance of the kingdom of God against the kingdom of darkness.

6. A victory over the flesh - In the New Testament, the word flesh sums up all the evil inclinations of our old nature that persist in us even after we die with Christ in baptism (see Gal 5:16-22). Making the Sign of the Cross expresses our decision to crucify these desires of the flesh and to live by the Spirit. Like tossing off a dirty shirt or blouse, making the sign indicates our stripping ourselves of our evil inclinations and clothing ourselves with the behaviors of Christ (see Col 3:5-15). The Church Fathers taught that the Sign of the Cross diffused the force of powerful temptations such as anger and lust. So, no matter how strongly we are tempted, we can use the Sign of the Cross to activate our freedom in Christ and conquer even our besetting sins.

Apply These Truths Now - Right now, you can imprint in your heart these six truths about the Sign of the Cross by making it six times, each time applying one of the perspectives. First, sign yourself professing your faith in God. Second, mark yourself remembering that you died with Christ in baptism. Third, make the sign to declare that you belong to Christ as His disciple and will obey Him. Fourth, sign yourself to embrace whatever suffering comes and to celebrate your suffering with Christ for the Church. Fifth, make the Sign of the Cross as a defense against the devil and as an offensive advance of God's kingdom against him. Finally, make the sign to crucify your flesh and to put on Christ and His behaviors. Go through these six signings often in your morning prayer — and watch the grace flow through this ancient sacramental in the days to come. *Bert Ghezzi is the author of numerous books, including "The Sign of the Cross: Recovering the Power of the Ancient Prayer" (Loyola, 2006).*

MISSION STATEMENT: *Holy Trinity Catholic School, a ministry of Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, offers to early childhood and elementary school students of diverse ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds a superior academic program based on Gospel values. Within a family atmosphere, the school strives to develop the spiritual, academic, personal, creative, and physical growth of each student.*

VISION STATEMENT: *Holy Trinity Catholic School students will be fully prepared to transition to middle school possessing critical thinking skills, an ability to work independently as well as collaboratively, and an awareness of what it means to actively live the Gospel values.*