

# Holy Manners for Holy Cross\*

*We believe that Holy Manners will enable us to better serve God, our church, our family, and everyone He places in our path. Holy Manners are promises that we make to each other, that is, shared expectations of Christian behavior that we strive to offer to each other. When practicing Holy Manners, people feel safe, are more likely to experience healthy relationships, and are best able to create or renew meaningful friendships. As children of God, we are striving to make the following Holy Manners a grand reality as God continues to fill us with his Holy Spirit and love.*

We promise to **respect** one another.

We promise to create a “**safe place**” where a person’s thoughts, feelings, and insights are appreciated and valued.

We promise to use “**I**” **statements** that share our personal thoughts and to discourage bringing anonymous complaints.

We promise to step back in the midst of difficult issues and “**get up on the balcony.**”

We promise to value different ideas coming together, and to **manage conflict** in a beneficial way.

We promise to **love** one another, as God has loved us.

We promise to practice **forgiveness** with one another.

We promise to demonstrate **patience** in each situation.

We promise to show **compassion** and **kindness** to everyone in need.

## Customized Holy Manners for Your Group

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# Guidelines for our Life Together

Our “Holy Manners” are the norms that guide our life together at Holy Cross. We pray that they would be honored as we spend time together “growing in faith, caring for others, experiencing community.”

The whole congregation is blessed as each person, group, and household embraces the daily practice of offering these Holy Manners to one another. Each group and household is invited to discuss “Holy Manners for Holy Cross” and how they can be lived out in your midst.

## What Does This Mean?

- We **respect** one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, and all people as fellow human beings created in the image of God. We show respect with our words and actions.
- This respect fosters mutual trust, which creates a “**safe place**” for people to express themselves. When people feel safe, they do not need to hide their thoughts or concerns, but feel free to contribute their ideas to the group. The person’s ideas and feelings are valued and appreciated, while the group works for the common good.
- “**I**” **statements** share our personal thoughts while avoiding over-generalizations by saying “some people” or “everyone” in order to build our case, and discourage bringing anonymous complaints.
- “**Getting up on the balcony**” refers to mentally and emotionally stepping away from a difficult situation to see the *big picture*, while not getting entangled in personal issues. It means stepping back and asking what would be best for the whole group in the long run.
- When we realize that conflict is simply “two ideas at the same place and the same time,” then we understand that it is *how* we handle conflict that can help or hurt a community. If we **manage conflict** in a way that treats people with respect and yet keeps the good of the group in mind, then we can turn the conflict into a positive experience.
- **Love, forgiveness, patience, compassion, and kindness** are attributes of our God that we are to reflect in all aspects of our life. We strive to love in word and deed because He first loved us.

Remember, the beauty of Holy Manners is the spirit of kindness that leads us to offer these promises to each other, for the good of all.

## How to Customize Holy Manners

Your group or household may benefit by adding “Customized” Holy manners that apply specifically to your group. Other norms that specific groups might add to their “customized” Holy Manners may include: **confidentiality, punctuality (honoring people’s time), listening, honoring consensus, coming prepared, praying for others, encouraging one another, fulfilling responsibilities**, etc. These may take the form of “promises” (We promise to...), “strivings” (We will strive to...) or another appropriate phrasing.