



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2020

Basilica Closed to the Public on March 17 at 12 Noon Until Further Notice
Mass to be Livestreamed Sundays at 12 p.m. ET

Effective at 12:00 p.m. today, March 17, 2020, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception closed its doors to the public. This action is believed to be the first time in nearly 100 years since the National Shrine's founding that the Shrine has closed for a non-weather-related event. The decision to close the doors of the National Shrine was made in response to recent CDC and District of Columbia guidelines and to support the efforts of authorities to minimize the spread of COVID-19, otherwise known as the novel coronavirus.

"This was a difficult decision because we know that the faithful rely on Mary's Shrine for the peace and solace that is found in this sacred place. Still, we also recognize that we must listen to scientific and medical experts and do our part to help prevent the spread of this virus. The decision to close the doors to Mary's Shrine was made not out of fear, but out of concern, trusting that Our Lord and His Blessed Mother will use this action to protect Shrine staff and visitors. We encourage everyone to heed the advice of Church and government authorities while placing our trust and hope in God. We look forward to the day when we can reopen our doors and resume our ministry, most especially the celebration of Mass and Reconciliation," said Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the National Shrine.

"Even with this action to close our doors to the public, the National Shrine intends to continue to celebrate the solemn Mass every Sunday at 12:00 p.m. and livestream it at www.nationalshrine.org/mass. This livestream has quickly become a national and international online community of faith and support during the coronavirus pandemic, with thousands of viewers tuning in to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with other faithful from across our nation and around the world. We are committed to continuing the livestream for as long as possible while ensuring that the dedicated staff and volunteers here at Mary's Shrine are kept safe."

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, often referred to as America's Catholic Church, is the largest Roman Catholic church in North America, and it is one of the largest churches in the world. A national symbol of the Roman Catholic faith, the Basilica provides a place of prayer and pilgrimage to nearly one million visitors from around the world every year.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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