



MEDIA ADVISORY

January 19, 2021

Basilica to Join Nationwide Memorial & Tribute in Honor of the Lives Lost to COVID-19 3.6 Ton “Blessed Virgin Mary” Bell to Toll 400 Times at 5:30pm ET

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will join in this evening’s 5:30 p.m. Nationwide Memorial and Tribute to Remember and Honor the Lives Lost to COVID-19 by tolling its largest bell, the Blessed Virgin Mary Bell, 400 times.

Each toll will represent 1,000 lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic in the United States, now totaling 400,000.

The bell to be tolled, The Blessed Virgin Mary Bell, weighs 7,200 lbs. (3.6 tons) and resides in the Knights Carillon Tower that rises nearly to the height of the Washington Monument given its geographical location.

The bell will be tolled manually from the console of the carillon every 5 seconds and will ring out over the nation’s capital for approximately 20 minutes.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, prayers for all those affected by the coronavirus—those who are ill, those who have died, frontline workers, caregivers, and all from across our nation and around the world—have been included in the daily Masses and Devotions of the Basilica. As these prayers continue, so, too, prayers continue for a rapid end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 the United States and it is the nation’s preeminent Marian shrine and patronal church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception. The Basilica celebrated the 100th anniversary of the placing of its foundation stone in 2020.

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