

MARY'S SHRINE

VOLUME 86, No. 2

FALL/WINTER 2025



Mother of Good Counsel

Mary's Shrine

BY REVEREND MONSIGNOR WALTER R. ROSSI, J.C.L.



“Time flies!” This expression speaks to all our lives. It is also said that the older one gets, the faster time seems to go by. I am definitely in the “faster” age group!

When the new year begins, we have a full twelve months ahead of us. No matter how much we plan, none of us knows what any given day might bring, let alone the year.

At the beginning of 2025, who would have thought that during this year we would witness the passing of Pope Francis and the election of Pope Leo XIV. Those unexpected days were filled with a spectrum of emotions. In sadness we tolled the bells of the Knights Tower and hung black crepe from the façade of Mary's Shrine as we mourned the death of Pope Francis. Then seventeen days later, we pealed the bells and unfurled the papal colors of yellow and white, rejoicing in the election of Pope Leo XIV.

During that more than two-week period, the staff at the National Shrine was kept quite busy, especially in the departments of Liturgy, Communications, and Music.

On the day Pope Francis died, we quickly organized a Memorial Mass which was celebrated by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, and Cardinal Robert McElroy, the Archbishop of Washington and chair of the National Shrine Board of Trustees, together with Cardinal Wilton Gregory, and Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop emeriti of Washington.

As the Church observed the official nine days of mourning, the *Novendiales*, at Mary's Shrine, we offered special prayers for the eternal rest of Pope Francis. Then in union with the Catholic Church throughout the world, we prayed for the election of a new pope, eagerly waiting to see the billowing white smoke from the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel. For me, this was an exciting time. I have never been so glued to the



television, the internet, and the radio!

When Pope Leo was elected on May 8, 2025, we rejoiced in our new Pope, and were awestruck by the fact that he was born in the United States! We could only marvel at the workings of the Holy Spirit. For the next ten days we offered prayers of gratitude and asked God's blessing on our

new Supreme Shepherd. Then, on May 18, the day of the inauguration of the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV and the formal beginning of his Petrine ministry, a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated in the Great Upper Church by Archbishop Timothy Broglio, of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and member of the National Shrine Board of Trustees. All who attended the celebration received a remembrance prayer card of the pontificate of Leo XIV.

Mary's Shrine is also a familiar place to Pope Leo. I write this because on August 8, 2023, then Archbishop Robert Prevost, while on his way back to Rome, came to Mary's Shrine and quietly celebrated Mass in a side chapel. I would imagine, too, that as a member of the Augustinian Order, the Archbishop paused to offer a prayer in the Augustinian Chapel of Our Mother of Good Counsel, a gift of the Augustinian Community in 1965. This Marian devotion is “dear to the order” of Augustinians. As a matter of fact, on May 10, two days after his election, Pope Leo made a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano, which has been under the care of the Augustinians since the 13th century. Pope Leo told those gathered at the shrine, “I wanted so much to come here in these first days of the new ministry that the Church has given me” to seek Mary's help “to carry out this mission as Successor of Peter.” The Holy Father spoke of his “trust in the Mother of Good Counsel,” who has been a companion of “light, wisdom.” Pope Leo told the people gathered outside the church that “just as our Mother never abandons her

children, you must remain faithful to her.”

When explaining his choice of name, Pope Leo XIV said “There are different reasons for this, but mainly because Pope Leo XIII in his historic Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution. In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labor” (Address to the College of Cardinals, May 10, 2025).

This encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, “new things,” is depicted on the west face of the National Shrine, which is devoted to themes and symbols of Christian charity. On the north exterior wall of the west porch, *Rerum Novarum*, a tympanum sculpted in relief by Adolph Block, shows the promulgation of this encyclical, which has been the foundation for the social doctrines of the Catholic Church. The idea, positions, and thoughts presented in the encyclical have been expanded upon by succeeding popes. It seems that Leo XIV may be among them.

As you can imagine, ever since Pope Leo was elected, I am frequently asked when the Holy Father is going to visit the Shrine! My standard response is “soon, I hope!” Rest assured, when plans are announced for the first pastoral visit of Pope Leo to the United States, I will invite the Holy Father to visit this preeminent Marian shrine and patronal church of the United States! In the meantime, let us pray for Pope Leo, that God will bless and make fruitful his ministry.

“Time flies.” We are now three quarters of the way through the ordinary Jubilee Year 2025. The special year of grace is meant to be a time of spiritual renewal and blessing, especially through the ancient practice of pilgrimage, where the faithful seek “a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus” who alone gives us the “hope that does not disappoint” (*Spes Non Confundit*, 1).

“*Pilgrimage* is a fundamental element of every Jubilee event. Setting out on a journey is traditionally associated with our human quest for meaning in life.” “Jubilee Churches,” which Mary’s Shrine is for the Archdiocese of Washington, “serve as an oasis of spirituality” where pilgrims “can drink from the wellsprings of hope.”

Marian Shrines throughout the world “are sacred places of welcome and privileged spaces for the rebirth of hope,” where all those who implore Our Lady’s protection and assistance, “come to know Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children” (SNC, 5).

The Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has designated the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception a special place of pilgrimage for the Church in the United States.

A Plenary Indulgence is attached to any pilgrimage one undertakes. During this Jubilee Year of Hope, the Apostolic Penitentiary in Rome, has granted a specific Plenary Indulgence to all those who visit Mary’s Shrine in the form of a pilgrimage and participate in the jubilee rites “to increase the religious devotion of the faithful and the salvation of souls” provided that the necessary conditions for obtaining the indulgence are fulfilled. (Protocol No. 00111/2025-1315/24/I).

If you have not made a pilgrimage to the National Shrine during this Jubilee Year of Hope, I invite you to do so, because “time flies!” In a few fleeting months the Jubilee Year will conclude and the Holy Doors in Rome will be closed, but the doors of Mary’s Shrine will still be open, always welcoming pilgrims from throughout the United States and beyond.

Through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Hope, I pray that the door of your heart will always remain open to the “hope that does not disappoint” and fill your heart and life, with every grace and heavenly blessing! 🙏

MISSION STATEMENT

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, a Catholic church dedicated to the patroness of our nation, is a place of worship, pilgrimage, evangelization and reconciliation. It offers visitors the occasion for a deepening conversion, a step forward in the journey to God, with Mary as the model for that journey. This monumental church, raised by Catholics of the United States because of their devotion to Mary the Mother of God, gives visibility to their faith and Catholic heritage. Mary’s Shrine invites people from across the country and beyond into the saving moment of faith, hope and charity, so that they may be reconciled and transformed into living symbols of Christ’s presence in the world. It is here that the faithful gather to worship God, give honor to Mary, and are sent to spread God’s word wherever they go. 🙏

Pope Francis: Requiescat in pace

Early Easter Monday morning, April 21, black crepe was draped over the façade of the Basilica as the faithful and media gathered outside the National Shrine. Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, somberly stated, “This morning we join the world in sadness at the news of the passing of His Holiness, Pope Francis. We also join in the chorus of prayers for his eternal rest.”



Pope Francis in the Chancel with the Basilica Choir

Monsignor Rossi continued, “In a particular way, we at Mary’s Shrine are saddened because we knew the Holy Father personally. As the first Pontiff from the Americas, the Holy Father himself came on pilgrimage to the Basilica in 2015 to canonize Fray Junípero Serra, marking the first canonization on United States’ soil. His visit left a lasting impact upon us at Mary’s Shrine, this city of Washington D.C., and this nation.”

Within hours of the news, a Memorial Mass for Pope Francis was celebrated by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Cardinal Robert McElroy,



Archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Wilton Gregory and Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop Emeriti of Washington, Auxiliary Bishops Roy Campbell and Juan Esposito-Garcia of Washington, Father Michael Fuller, General Secretary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Monsignor Rossi, and other priest concelebrants.



Pope Francis waving to the crowds outside Mary’s Shrine

On April 26, the day of the Holy Father’s Funeral Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica and interment in the Basilica of St. Mary Major, a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Life of Pope Francis was held at Mary’s Shrine. Bishop Michael Burbidge of Arlington served as the principal celebrant and homilist.



Monsignor Rossi greeting Pope Francis

In opening remarks, Monsignor Rossi said, “We give thanks to God for his 55 years as a priest, his 32 years as a bishop, and his 12 years as Pope. A life of service to the Church and to God’s people, we remember him and strive to ‘go out to proclaim the merciful embrace of the Father’ as he urged in his 2015 homily at the Basilica. May he rest in peace and Our Lady usher him into the presence of her Son.”

The Memorial Mass and the Mass of Thanksgiving for Pope Francis, as well as video highlights of his 2015 visit to Mary’s Shrine for the Canonization of St. Junípero Serra, are available for viewing on the National Shrine’s YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/@marysshine. 🙏

» PRAYER FOR POPE FRANCIS

Almighty ever-living God, who made Pope Francis a wise teacher of your people, a gentle shepherd of your flock, and a faithful pastor of your Church, grant in kindness that your humble servant, who in this life believed in you and loved you, may now receive your mercy and rejoice in your presence forever in the glory of the Saints. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. 🙏

Habemus Papam: Pope Leo XIV



Papal colors adorn Mary's Shrine upon the election of Pope Leo XIV

Less than two years before becoming pope, then Archbishop Prevost, who served as Prefect of the Dicastery of Bishops under Pope Francis, celebrated a private Mass at Mary's Shrine on August 8, 2023.

On May 18, the day of his inauguration at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the National Shrine held a Mass of Thanksgiving Upon the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Timothy

Broglia of the Archdiocese of the Military Services, USA, who also serves as the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (To view this Mass online, please visit the National Shrine's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@marysshine.)

Monsignor Rossi and twenty other priests, including Monsignor Veceslav Tumir, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature to the United States, concelebrated the Mass of

Thanksgiving. In remarks, Monsignor Rossi stated, "As Pope Leo began his papacy invoking the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception place

Pope Leo XIV and his papacy in the care of Mary Immaculate. May she intercede for the Holy Father and for each of our needs." 🙏

On May 8, the second day of the Papal Conclave, "*Habemus papam!*" was proclaimed from the Loggia of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. At Mary's Shrine, the papal colors of yellow and white replaced the previous black crepe of mourning. Instead of the somber tolling of the Mary Bell at news of Pope Francis' death, the bells of the Knights Tower pealed in jubilation with news of a newly elected pope. Once the Chicago-born Cardinal Robert Prevost was announced as Pope Leo XIV, the American flag was proudly unfurled from the Knights Tower.

Monsignor Rossi, the Rector of the Basilica, exclaimed, "It is with great joy that I extend my warmest congratulations to His Holiness, Pope Leo XIV, on his election as Supreme Pontiff and Successor of Saint Peter... As America's patronal church, we are delighted that Pope Leo is from the United States!"



Mass of Thanksgiving upon the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV

» PRAYER FOR POPE LEO XIV

Lord, source of eternal life and truth, give to your shepherd Leo a spirit of courage and right judgment, a spirit of knowledge and love. By governing with fidelity those entrusted to his care, may he, as successor to the Apostle Peter and as the Vicar of Christ, build your Church into a sacrament of unity, love, and peace for all the world. Amen. 🙏

Basilica Choir Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome



The Basilica Choir at the Papal Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome during the Jubilee Year

The Choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception traveled to Rome on pilgrimage to bring sacred music to the Eternal City during the Jubilee Year of Hope.

Under the direction of Dr. Peter Latona, Director of Music, and with the accompaniment of organist Benjamin LaPrairie, Associate Director of Music, the Choir provided sacred music during liturgies and performed concerts at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major on March 18 and the Basilica of Saint Peter in Chains on March 20.

During an interview conducted by EWTN while in Rome, Dr. Latona said the Choir of the Basilica is primarily dedicated to “providing

beautiful music in the context of the liturgy at the National Shrine,” but said that sharing sacred music in concert is also a “form of evangelization,” adding, “what better place to do so than in Rome during a jubilee year.”

The Choir of the Basilica provides sacred music in the Great Upper Church of the National Shrine each Sunday during the Solemn Mass at noon. For those unable to attend in person, the Mass is livestreamed every Sunday at 12pm ET on the Basilica’s website at www.nationalshrine.org/mass. While on the website, please sign up for email alerts that provide information on upcoming events and livestreams, including choral meditations, seasonal concerts, and other solemnities that feature sacred music from the Basilica Choir. 🙏

UPCOMING PILGRIMAGES TO MARY’S SHRINE

September 6	Indian American Catholic Association	October 17	Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown
September 13	Diocese of Pittsburgh	October 18	Archdiocese of Newark
September 13	First Catholic Slovak Union & Slovak Catholic Federation	October 24	Conventual Franciscans
September 14	Croatian Catholic Community	October 25	Diocese of Brooklyn
September 20	Diocese of Metuchen	October 28	Archdiocese of Philadelphia
September 27	Dominican National Rosary Pilgrimage	November 8	Brazilian Apostolate Pilgrimage
October 1	Diocese of Scranton	November 15	International Day of Prayer and Fasting
October 7	Diocese of Allentown	December 6	Haitian Catholic Community
October 11	Diocese of Wilmington	December 13	Archdiocese of Washington – Walk with Mary

Relics of St. Thérèse Return to Mary's Shrine

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is honored to once again host the reliquary of St. Thérèse of Lisieux for veneration by the faithful, November 20-22, 2025.

The reliquary of St. Thérèse of Lisieux returns to Mary's Shrine 26 years after its first historic visit in 1999. Then, thousands of the faithful came to venerate the relics of this beloved saint and Doctor of the Church.



Now, in 2025, during the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the canonization of St. Thérèse, which coincides with the celebration of the Jubilee Year, the faithful are invited to make a pilgrimage to Mary's Shrine

to venerate the relics of "The Little Flower" and take the opportunity to obtain a Jubilee Indulgence, under the usual conditions, at this specially designated national Jubilee site.

The reliquary of St. Thérèse will arrive at the Basilica on Thursday, November 20, at 9 a.m. and will remain in the Great Upper Church until its departure on Saturday, November 22, immediately following the 12:10 p.m. Mass. Veneration will be available throughout the reliquary's stay, except during the celebration of the 12:10 p.m. Mass each day.

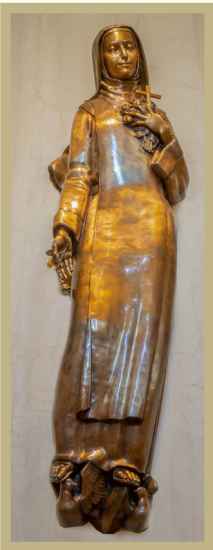


Reliquary of St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Cardinal Wilton Gregory, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, will celebrate the Mass on Thursday, November 20; Cardinal Seán O'Malley, Archbishop Emeritus of Boston, will celebrate the Mass on Friday, November 21; and Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, will celebrate the Mass on Saturday, November 22.

Following each of these Masses, the Blessing of Roses will take place in honor of St. Thérèse who said, "When I die, I will send down a shower of roses from the heavens; I will spend my heaven doing good upon the earth."

For more information, please visit <https://www.nationalshrine.org>. 🌹



UPCOMING BASILICA BROADCASTS ON EWTN *(all times Eastern)* ALSO LIVESTREAMED AT NATIONALSHRINE.ORG/MASS

September 4	AMS Father Capodanno Memorial Mass	6:30pm
September 27	Dominican National Rosary Pilgrimage Mass	4:30pm
November 1	Solemn Mass of All Saints	12:10pm
November 2	Choral Concert for the Commemoration of All Souls	7pm
December 8	Solemn Mass of the Immaculate Conception	12:10pm
December 24	Choral Meditations on the Nativity	10pm
December 24	Solemn Mass of Christmas Eve	10:30pm
December 25	Solemn Mass of Christmas	12 noon
January 22	National Prayer Vigil for Life Opening Mass	5pm
January 23	National Prayer Vigil for Life Closing Mass	8am
January 28	Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas Mass	12:10pm

Cardinal McElroy: New Archbishop of Washington

“Welcome to this city and to this Archdiocese!”

Cardinal Christophe Pierre, the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, said to Cardinal Robert McElroy, former bishop of San Diego, who was installed as the eighth Archbishop of Washington in the Great Upper Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on March 11, 2025.

The same sentiment was echoed by Cardinal Wilton Gregory, who would become Archbishop Emeritus of Washington immediately upon Cardinal McElroy’s acceptance of Apostolic Mandate announced by Pope Francis on January 6, 2025. “With jubilant hearts, we say welcome!”



Installation Mass for Cardinal McElroy

During the Rite of Canonical Possession, Cardinal McElroy accepted the Metropolitan See of Washington and was escorted to the throne by Cardinal Pierre and Cardinal Gregory, where he was seated and received his crozier, the sign of his new pastoral office.

In accepting his new office, Cardinal McElroy also assumed the role of Chair of the National Shrine Board of Trustees.

Expressing his heartfelt gratitude to those present at the Installation Mass, he said, “I thank the People of God in this beautiful local church to which the Lord has led me. May the Lord bless us always.” 🙏

25th Anniversary of Mary’s Garden

Located on the north lawn of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Mary’s Garden is a gift of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) and was dedicated during the Great Jubilee Year 2000.

Twenty-five years later, during the Jubilee Year of Hope, the NCCW celebrated the 25th anniversary of Mary’s Garden on June 7, 2025, with Mass, the blessing of a new Madonna and Child statue, as well as the rededication of the



Mary’s Garden: Madonna & Child

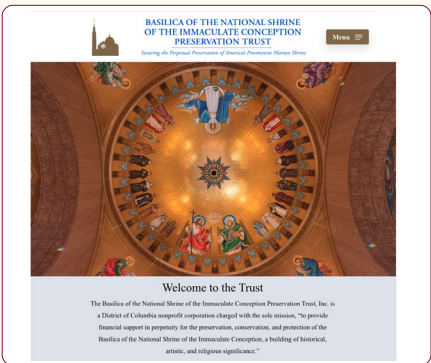
garden that had been recently refurbished.

Thanking NCCW’s president, board of directors, and members for their generosity, Monsignor Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, said, “I am so very grateful to the NCCW for underwriting the refurbishment of Mary’s Garden. With a smile he added, “It is thanks to you that we were able to give Mary’s Garden a ‘face lift’ after 25 years!” 🙏

National Shrine Preservation Trust Website Launched

The National Shrine Preservation Trust has been established as an independent nonprofit corporation to provide lasting financial support in perpetuity “for the preservation, conservation, and protection of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.”

Monsignor Rossi, President of the Preservation Trust and Rector of the Basilica, is pleased to announce the official launch of the Trust’s website, www.nationalshrinetrust.org. The website offers information about the sacred mission of the Trust and provides a secure means of making online contributions to



ensure the preservation of Mary’s Shrine for generations to come. 🙏

Leaving a Legacy that Endures

By Rob Silbaugh, Director of Development



Mary, Mother of Mankind, stands amidst pillars of faith in Memorial Hall

During a recent homily at the Basilica, Monsignor Rossi offered a phrase that has stayed with me ever since: “I am pleased when I have what we call — or I call — ‘found money,’ when someone unexpectedly sends a generous donation our way.”

That simple reflection captures something very real about the quiet and surprising ways God works through people. Time and again, we witness acts of generosity that come unexpectedly—gifts of faith that sustain the mission of Mary’s Shrine.

I think about that sentiment every time I walk through Memorial Hall. The names engraved in granite are lasting testaments to the people who included the Shrine in their final plans — people who made it possible for this sacred space to endure long after their lifetimes.

But not every act of generosity is etched in stone. Let me tell you about Anne.

Anne was a loyal and faithful supporter of the Shrine for more than three decades. She gave quietly, never seeking attention. She simply loved this place—its holiness, its mission, its beauty.

Not long ago, we learned that Anne had passed away. In her will, she left a generous gift to the Shrine.



It was unexpected. It was humbling. It was devotion, rediscovered—through a simple, beautiful act of faith that came to light only after she had gone home to God.

And it brought me sadness, too. Because I never had the chance to say thank you.

Anne never told us she had made this sacred decision. Her name isn’t on the wall. Her story wasn’t shared during her life. And so we never had the opportunity to look her in the eye, express our gratitude, and tell her what a blessing she truly was.

We pray for Anne, and for all our generous benefactors, every day. But I share her story now in the hope that it might touch your heart—and perhaps inspire you to take the simple, loving step she did.

If you’ve already remembered the Shrine in your estate plans, please consider letting us know. Not for recognition. Not for attention. But so we can honor your generosity—now, while you are still with us.

There are many ways to create a lasting legacy at the Basilica.

Some write us into their will. Others name us as a beneficiary of a retirement or insurance policy. Still others set aside a portion of their blessings to ensure Mary’s Shrine will always be here for future generations of pilgrims and faithful souls.

Every act of generosity makes a difference. Every gift tells a story of faith and hope.

If you are discerning how to leave a legacy of faith through the Shrine, I would be honored to talk with you. Together, we can ensure your love will live on here, at Mary’s Shrine. 🌹

To reach out to Rob, you may contact him at:

Rob Silbaugh
Director of Development
(202) 281-0638
rsilbaugh@bnsic.org

MANY PARTS, ONE BODY

Geraldine M. Rohling, PhD, MAEd, DSG
Archivist-Curator Emerita

“But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

(1 Corinthians 12:20, NABR)

When I began drafting this article, it was the pontificate of Pope Francis. *Sede vacante*, “vacant chair” or the period without a pope, was only in the film *Conclave*. At that time, I had been thinking about a commentary on the diversity of chapels, oratories, and Marian devotions in the National Shrine. I began my first draft based solely on the first letter from Paul to the Corinthians, chapter twelve. I had no idea that within a few weeks, the theme of this article and the architectural aspects of the National Shrine, would also be reflective of the motto of Pope Leo XIV, the first Augustinian pope, the first North-American-born pope (Dolton, Chicago, Illinois), and the second pope from South America (missionary priest and 4th Bishop of Chiclayo, Peru). Truly, an “American” pope.



Geraldine M. Rohling

Augustine of Hippo, East Façade, National Shrine

His papal motto, *In Illo uno unum* (In the One, we are one), which was also his episcopal motto, is from the *Exposition on Psalm 128*, by Augustine of Hippo: “When I speak of Christians in the plural, I understand one in the One Christ” (§2). Consequently, this article concerning the National Shrine will also serve as a salutation to a new pontificate.

Barque of Peter

One of the oldest and most ubiquitous symbols of the Church, the people of God, is a “*barque*,” a masted sailing vessel. The image shown here is known as the *Barque of Peter*, a sailing vessel with an unfurled sail



Geraldine M. Rohling

Barque of Peter, South Façade

emblazoned with a cross, sculpted in bas-relief on the south façade of the National Shrine near the main entrance. This image is a “ship” not a “boat.” The main difference between the two is size. By definition, a “boat” is a *small* vessel, and a “ship” is a *large seagoing* vessel. While a ship can carry several boats (e.g., lifeboats), a boat cannot carry a ship. At the stern of this ship,

perched on the raised quarterdeck, the position of authority from where the captain or master commands his vessel, is a dove: the Holy Spirit, guiding the captain, guiding the vessel. Peter or any of his 266 successors would be the captain.

Although the Barque of Peter is tossed about on the secular seas of persecution, disbelief, and conflict, it is never shipwrecked. Hippolytus of Rome (second-third century bishop and theologian) wrote, “The Church is like a ship on the high seas; it is standing in wuthering wind and waves but does not sink.” We, who are secure within the Barque of Peter, do not fear the tempest around us. We weather the stormy seas in this mystical Ark of the Church in anticipation of reaching the shores of the New Jerusalem.

The genesis of this ecclesiastical symbol is uncertain, though in ancient pagan religions, the boat ferried the souls of the dead to the hereafter. The Greek myth of Charon and the River Styx is one that immediately comes to mind. For our purposes, however, let us turn to Scripture, particularly the gospels, where the story of the Church and its symbolism as the “little ship of Peter” (*Navicula Petrus*) have their beginning.

After Jesus was forced out of Nazareth (Luke 4:16, 28-30), he “went down to Capernaum,” a fishing village on the northern shore of the freshwater Sea of Galilee (Matt 4:18-19), also known as Lake Gennesaret [Genezareth] and Lake Tiberias, in the region of Galilee and Judea, where fishing was the main industry. There, Jesus met Peter and his brother Andrew, who were fishermen. Peter owned his own fishing boat, a sign of success in the trade, and something that was helpful to Jesus and his ministry. One might say that it was helpful not only for fishermen but also “fishers of men” (cf. Matt 4:19).

The Relic Master, an adventuresome tale by Christopher Buckley, recounts the escapades of a sixteenth-century relic hunter named Dismas and his best friend, Albrecht Dürer (yes, the renowned painter). This tale begins with Dismas considering the purchase of “an entire boat avouched to have belonged to

Saint Peter in his pre-apostolic Galilean fishing days.” After careful inspection, Dismas deems it a fake. Centuries later, in real time, 1986 to be exact, an “Ancient Galilee Boat” or “Jesus Boat,” a fishing boat of the first century, was discovered on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee. The remnants of this boat, buried deep in the mud, became visible during a period of drought. This artifact was in remarkable condition because the mud had impeded the decomposition of the wood. Of course, there is neither written nor physical evidence linking this boat to either Peter or Jesus. There is, however, the mention in the gospels, approximately fifty times, of a boat such as this. The discovery is important because it shows the size (27 ft x 7.5 ft) and the raw material (wood) of a small boat used on the Sea of Galilee, the type that Peter might have used and in which Jesus might have sailed. The size of the boat, also speaks of the stature of people at that time.



Berthold Werner, Public Domain

Galilee Boat, Yigal Allon Centre, Kibbutz Ginnosar, Israel

The average height of a Jewish man was five feet and between 1 to 5 inches; women were smaller, hovering at 5 feet or less. Scripturally, Isaiah (53:2) tells us the “Servant of the Lord” was no different in physical appearance than other men of his day. In the gospel story of the storm at sea, at least three people are in the boat: “[Jesus] got into a boat with his disciples.” Artistic depictions usually show three disciples and Jesus.

In 2023, a true reproduction of this “Galilee Boat” became part of the collections of the Vatican Museums and it was blessed by Pope Francis.

At Sea

In the ceiling of the west apse of the Crypt Church, there is a Pewabic panel of a monstrous sea creature and the prophet, Jonah.



Jonah and the Great Fish, West Apse, Crypt Church

Geraldine W. Rohling

Scripture does not identify the species and neither does this ceramic. In Jewish tradition, the terrifying primordial sea monster was the Leviathan. The creature in this image is odd-looking, but then too, so was the Leviathan.

Within Judaism there was a belief that the sea was the only part of Creation that God had not tamed; great monstrous creatures and demons inhabited the waters, but God still had authority over the waters and the creatures therein. In the book of Jonah, we read of a “great fish,” swallowing the prophet, but at the command of the LORD. Without a doubt, it took great courage and trust in God to sail on the waters, particularly in a small wooden boat. If we follow this maritime theme further, we arrive at the gospel story of the Calming of the Storm (Mark 4:35-41; Matt 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25).

The Sea of Galilee is a small freshwater body of water surrounded by sloping hills, which cause atmospheric changes, which cause sudden storms. It is thirteen miles long and eight miles wide and fed mainly by the Jordan River, which flows through it north to south. Notably, the three gospels describe this storm quite differently. In Luke, what is a “squall” or a sudden strong gust of wind, heavy rain, and hail, is recorded by Mark as a major “whirlwind,” a tornado over the water. In Matthew, it is a “violent storm,” though scholars say a literal translation is an underwater “earthquake.” What is important in all three gospels is the fierce event of nature and the authority and power of Jesus over the forces of nature. In each version Jesus “rebukes” the wind and the waves. This is a verb usually associated with the expulsion of demons. As previously stated, the untamed sea or waters were obedient only to God. That Jesus can “rebuke” these forces of nature cause the disciples to ask, “who then is this,” “what sort of man is this” who has authority over that which is obedient only to God? This is the question that the entire gospel passage tries to answer, and a revelation that Jesus is giving to his disciples, “Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?” Do you not yet know who I am?

During the years of persecution of the Church, when the ship of faith was severely battered and tormented, the miracle story of the tempest and the authority and saving presence of Jesus was often recounted. Tertullian, an apologist of the second century, when writing on Baptism, offered this insight: “That little boat represented



Jesus Teaching by the Seaside, Crypt Church, National Shrine

the figure of the Church, which is troubled ‘in the sea,’ that is, in the world, ‘by waves,’ that is, persecutions and temptations, while the Lord, through patience, sleeping as it were, until, awakened by the prayers of the saints, he restrains the world and restores tranquility to his people” (*De Baptismo*, 12).

As the navigation of the high seas grew, so did the use of celestial navigation. Depictions of the Barque of Peter now included the North Star, *Polaris*, the brightest star in the constellation of the “Little Dipper” (*Ursa Minor*) in the northern sky. The North Star became the symbol for Mary, the “Star of the Sea,” helping to guide the voyage of the Barque of Peter. Bonaventure, a 13th-century Franciscan theologian and bishop, when speaking of Mary as the *Maris Stella*, he emphasized her role “as a star above the sea,” for she “guides to a landfall in Heaven those who navigate the sea of this world in the ship of innocence or penance.”



Our Lady Star of the Sea, Southeast Narthex

Among the Christian armadas, secured on the quarterdeck along with the national and religious colors or flags, was a crucifix, and a shrine, very often in honor of the Virgin Mary. As a sign of respect, it was customary when boarding a vessel, to render a salute – a genuflection, a doffing of a cap or hat, or a hand salute – towards the quarterdeck, a custom still

in practice today, though its intent and method has changed.

Maritime symbols can be found throughout the National Shrine: from the Pewabic cross-anchor with fish (Hope in Christ) in the Crypt Church, to the marble Hope in Christ, Crypt Church rondel of *Maris Stella* (Our Lady, Star of the Sea) in the Great Upper Church.



Hope in Christ, Crypt Church

The Nave

The largest maritime symbol in the National Shrine is the “*nave*,” the main part of the church where the people of God gather. It extends lengthwise from the main entrance to the chancel area. The word *nave*, common to church architecture, is used in several ancient languages, suggesting both a Christian and non-Christian appreciation. In Latin, *navis* means “ship,” not a boat. The diminutive *navicula* means “boat,” or, quite literally, the “lesser ship.” Also worth noting is the ecclesiastical use of the word *navicula* for the boat-shaped



Navicula or Incense Boat

incense-holder, commonly called the “incense boat.” The shift in symbols from a boat to a ship was the result

of a growing faith. No longer could the Church fit within the small ranks of a fishing boat.

The Apostolic Constitutions, a fourth-century

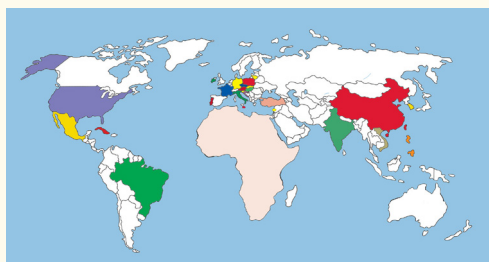
collection of eight books on the procedures of the Church, presents this change in practical, nautical terms. When the bishop, “as one that is the *commander of a great ship*,” calls an assembly of the Church, he is “charging the *deacons as mariners* to prepare places for the brethren *as for passengers*” (Book II, Section 7, “On Assembling in the Church”). In terms of a “boat,” remember that Jesus slept on a cushion or the helmsman’s seat, reserved for the person guiding the boat.

At one time, the nave had assigned seating. The section immediately inside the entrance and farthest from the altar was reserved for the *catechumens*, those studying the faith in preparation for baptism, who were required to leave after the sermon. The “nave proper,” the area nearest to the altar, was for “those who receive Holy Communion.” Today, of course, the “ship of faith” offers open seating.

Shipbuilders were also church builders. We see this in the oldest wooden churches in Christianity, the Norwegian “stave churches,” which presented ceilings like the frame of a Viking ship. In the American Colonies, shipbuilders were also active as church builders. The Mother of Africa Chapel of the National Shrine is an excellent example, with its rich mahogany vaulted ceiling and waterline with fish emblems etched into the marble wainscoting.



Mother of Africa Chapel



Nations of the National Shrine

Geraldine M. Rohling

Many Parts, One Body

So, what does all this have to do with the first letter from Paul to the Corinthians? It is quite simple. The nave, the ship, is the Church, “the one body.” The lateral chapels, the “lesser ships” or boats, are “the many.” They may serve as lifeboats, rescuing those caught adrift at sea or they may be a vehicle of evangelization or respite.

Gathered within the ship of faith, we are a “collective,” we are one body of believers. It is here where our strength lies. As Jesus taught his followers, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20; cf. 1 Cor 5:4).



Easter Sunday 2025

During the celebration of Eucharist at the National Shrine, we, the “one body,” standing in the nave, are flanked by a diversity of people, of nations, and of devotions; we, the “one body” are flanked by “the many.”

Paul writes:

“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves, or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body” (1 Cor 12:13, 20).

As Pope Leo XIV reminds us, “In the One, we are one.” Whether we stand in the nave of the National Shrine, our diocesan cathedral, or our home parish, we stand in the mystical Ark of the Church and are strengthened by the “one Spirit” because we are “one body.” 🙏

Geraldine M. Rohling

GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE

NATIVITY Christmas Cards by Elsie Anne Wood



300 Verse Inside: "Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year." Each Box has 10 cards and envelopes. **\$14.95**

Tiny PEARL ROSARY NECKLACE



303 3mm \$29.95

SCAPULAR with Pearls BRACELET beautiful 14K Gold Plated Double Strand



308 \$24.95

Olive Wood COMFORTING ANGEL

Guardian Angel to comfort, give you strength, hope, and carry your prayers to Heaven



Hand Made in Bethlehem

301 \$6.95

Cameo Collection Jewelry

VATICAN INSPIRED



304 Earrings 1"
\$69.95

305 Necklace
\$89.95

306 Bracelet
\$79.95

MADONNA and CHILD of the Roses PLAQUE



302 8" \$29.95

OUR LADY of GUADALUPE Crystal & Freshwater Pearls NECKLACE



14kt gold-filled

307 8" \$75.95



MIRACULOUS MEDAL ROSARY

Made in Italy



309 4mm \$29.95

NATIVITA Christmas Cards



310 Verse Inside: "May the blessings of Christ be with you now and throughout the New Year. Merry Christmas!" Each Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **\$22.95**

GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE

MADONNA & CHILD Christmas Cards



311 Verse Inside: "May you keep in your heart the miracle of Christmas today and forever." Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **\$22.95**

PARDON CRUCIFIX NECKLACES

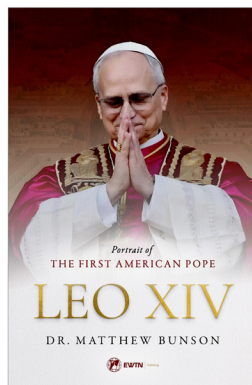


*beautiful
Non Tarnish
Gold and Silver
Made in
Italy*

312 Goldtone 18" \$29.95
313 Silvertone 18" \$29.95

Portrait of THE FIRST AMERICAN POPE LEO XIV

by Dr. Matthew Bunson



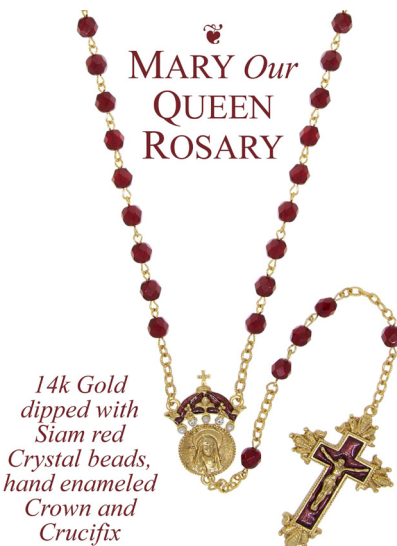
314 \$17.95

INFANT JESUS with GOLDEN HALO STATUE



315 6" \$59.95

MARY Our QUEEN ROSARY



*14k Gold
dipped with
Siam red
Crystal beads,
hand enameled
Crown and
Crucifix*

316 \$129.95

INFANT of PRAGUE STATUE



317 6" \$39.95

OUR LADY of CARMEL SACRED HEART of JESUS SCAPULAR NECKLACE



318 \$45.95

HOLY ICON ORNAMENTS Made in Ukraine



*Nativity of
Christ*

*Virgin &
Child*

*Virgin of
Vladimir*

319 Virgin & Child 6" \$14.95
320 Nativity of Christ 6" \$14.95
321 Virgin of Vladimir 6" \$14.95

MOTHER of PEARL Gold & Crystal CROSS NECKLACE



*14kt
gold dipped*

322 30" \$149.95

All proceeds from your purchases of Mary's Shrine directly support the mission and ministry of the Basilica. Thank you for your support!

VISIT OUR NATIONAL SHRINE SHOPS WEBSITE AT WWW.NATIONALSHRINESHOPS.COM

GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE

The HOLY FAMILY
Christmas Ornament
Made in Ukraine



323 5" \$14.95

DIVINO NINO STATUE
(Divine Child Jesus)



324 8" \$45.95

Vatican Inspired
SACRED HEART ROSARY

beautiful Siam
crystal beads
with an enamel
cross topping
the sacred
heart center
14kt gold
dipped



325 \$129.95



Made in Italy

Vermeil
Gold
over
Sterling

MIRACULOUS MEDAL
ROSARY BRACELET

326 24kt gold plated over sterling 7" \$49.95



327 \$14.95

OLIVE
WOOD
CROSS
for comfort,
with Relic that
touched the
tomb of
Jesus

OUR LADY of MT. CARMEL
SCAPULAR

Mary
appeared
to St. Simon in
a vision, held
out a scapular and
said to him,
'he who dies in
this will not
suffer eternal
fire'



328 \$15.95

L'INNOCENCE
Christmas Cards



329 Verse Inside: "May this
Christmas season fill you with
peace and touch you with God's
Love." Each Box has 18 cards
and envelopes. \$22.95

One decade
OLIVE WOOD ROSARY
with COMFORT CROSS



handmade
in Bethlehem

330 \$7.95



Scapular Necklace
& Bracelet

Mary appeared to St. Simon in a vision,
held out a scapular and said to him,
'he who dies in this will not suffer
eternal fire'.

331 14kt gold plated Necklace 20" \$29.95

332 14kt gold plated Bracelet fits up to 7½" \$21.95

MADONNA
of the STREETS
Christmas Cards



333 Verse Inside: "May
the Peace and Joy of the
newborn King be with
you this Christmas!"
Each Box has 18 cards
and envelopes. \$22.95

GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE



334 Mary and the Saints Calendar contains special feasts, marked with days of Fasting, special Saints Days, and the Sundays of the Liturgical Year for both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Calendars. **\$16.95**

GOLD over STERLING NECKLACES



335 Miraculous 18" \$99.95

336 Crucifix 18" \$74.95

337 Miraculous 18" \$74.95

BABY JESUS in Embroidered Pouch



A treasure for Christmas

338 2 1/2" \$9.95

the NATIVITY Christmas Cards



339 Verse Inside: "Wishing you peace, joy and many blessings this Christmas and all through the New Year." Each Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **\$22.95**

SACRED HEART of JESUS PENDANT NECKLACE



340 2 1/2" \$59.95

CELTIC CROSS Advent Candle Holder



341 Celebrate the Advent Season with this Celtic Cross 9" \$29.95

342 Set of 4 tapers in traditional colors, 3 purple and 1 pink. Boxed (not shown) \$12.95

HIS Eternal Love NECKLACE Monstrance Inspired



beautiful Opalite center

343 18" \$75.95

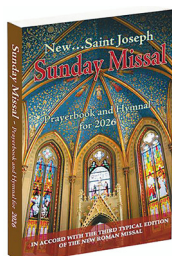
ICON CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT

Made in Ukraine



Nativity with Angels

344 5" \$14.95



345 2026 St. Joseph Sunday Missal is a complete annual Sunday Missal with each Sunday's Prayers, Readings, Responses for the calendar year and the Masses for Holy Days. **\$5.95**

VIRGIN MARY and CHILD PENDANT NECKLACE



14kt gold plated with clear crystals

346 \$89.95

SONG of ANGELS Christmas Cards



347 Verse Inside: "In His birth we are blessed, in His name we rejoice at Christmas and all through the year." Each Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **\$22.95**

All proceeds from your purchases of Mary's Shrine directly support the mission and ministry of the Basilica. Thank you for your support!

VISIT OUR NATIONAL SHRINE SHOPS WEBSITE AT WWW.NATIONALSHRINESHOPS.COM

GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE

KNEELING SANTA Christmas Ornament



*That at the name of Jesus every knee
should bow - Philippians 2:20*

348 3" \$19.95

The CHRISTMAS CROSS PIN



349 \$19.95

CARDINAL ANGEL KRYSTAL ORNAMENT

*hold on
Christmas
morning
and..*



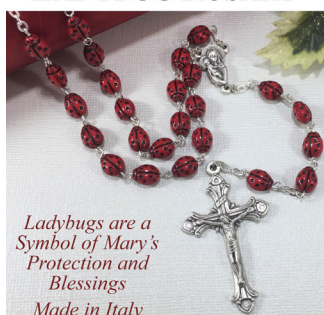
*remember
those we love*

350 15oz \$24.95



351 15oz \$14.95

LADYBUG ROSARY



352 \$59.95

SACRED HEART JEWELRY

*beautiful
Red Enamel
Sacred
Heart
surrounded
by crystals*

*14kt gold
plated*



353 Necklace 18" \$29.95

354 Earrings 1" \$29.95

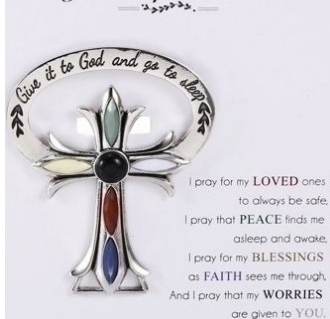
355 Stretch Bracelet \$29.95

CATCH UP with JESUS TSHIRT Blessed From My Head To-Ma-Toes



356 order SMLXL \$22.95

GIVE it to GOD and go to sleep BEDSIDE CROSS



357 \$16.95

KITCHEN PRAYER PLAQUE



360 7" \$29.95

ST ANTHONY GOLF BALLS just a little help with your game



set of 3

Patron Saint of Lost Items

358 \$16.95

Stemless Wine Glass



359 15oz \$14.95

GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE

NATIVITY STAINED GLASS Christmas Cards



361 Verse Inside: "Let peace and joy be your gift this Christmas and throughout the new year. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all." (Luke 2:14) Each Box has 15 cards and envelopes. **\$16.95**

GUARDIAN ANGEL BRACELET and ANGEL CHIME NECKLACE



*beautiful reminders that our
Guardian Angels are near*

362 Stretch Bracelet \$29.95 363 Necklace \$29.95



SCAPULAR Bracelet & Necklace

Mary appeared to St. Simon in a vision, held out a scapular and said to him, 'he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire'

364 Bracelet \$21.95 365 Necklace \$29.95



MURANO GLASS Florentine Cross NECKLACE

*One of a kind
Made in Italy*

367 \$89.95



*Our Lady
pray for
us*

*hand made
in Lourdes,
France*

Lourdes Miraculous MARY NECKLACE



366 \$89.95

NATIVITY Christmas Cards



377 Verse Inside: "May the Miracle of Christmas fill your heart with peace and joy" Each Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **\$22.95**



Immaculate Waters Lotions & Soaps

**368 Miraculous
Key Ring \$5.95**



Follow the words of Our Lady to St. Bernadette: **"Go to the spring, drink of it and wash yourself there."**

369 Lavender Bar Soap 4oz \$8.95

370 Lavender Hand and Body Lotion 8oz \$15.95

371 Lavender Liquid Soap 8oz \$15.95

372 Rose Bar Soap 4oz \$8.95

373 Rose Hand and Body Lotion 8oz \$15.95

374 Rose Liquid Soap 8oz \$15.95

375 Rose Spritzer 4oz \$12.95

376 Lavender Spritzer 4oz \$12.95

All proceeds from your purchases of Mary's Shrine directly support the mission and ministry of the Basilica. Thank you for your support!

VISIT OUR NATIONAL SHRINE SHOPS WEBSITE AT WWW.NATIONALSHRINESHOPS.COM

LEAVING A LEGACY

REMEMBERING THE NATIONAL SHRINE

IN YOUR WILL

For many, charitable giving is an act of faith grounded in confidence in God’s abundance and motivated by a desire to create additional resources for accomplishing God’s work.

Leaving a legacy gift to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception offers the opportunity to pass on not only your assets but also the values that have guided your life.

Remembering the National Shrine in your estate planning is a wonderful way to put your values into action, ensuring that Mary’s House is maintained for future generations as a center of worship and devotion as a personal legacy.

To remember the Basilica of the National Shrine in your will, you may contact your attorney or financial advisor for assistance in making a bequest. Or, you may simply include the following in your will:

I give, devise, and bequeath to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, a body corporate of the District of Columbia, and located in Washington, D.C., (the sum of _____) or (___ % of rest residue, and remainder of my estate) or (___ shares of _____) or all my right, title and interest in the following described property _____).

Please feel free to contact the Basilica at 202-526-8300 if we can provide you with further information or assistance.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration and continued support of Mary’s Shrine.

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Basilica of the National Shrine
of the Immaculate Conception

BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
400 Michigan Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20017



Please visit nationalshrine.org for the latest news and information.



♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
**MARY’S
SHRINE**
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

A publication of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Reverend Monsignor Walter R. Rossi
RECTOR

Reverend Monsignor Vito A. Buonanno
DIRECTOR OF PILGRIMAGES

Reverend Ismael N. Ayala
DIRECTOR OF LITURGY

Reverend Raymond A. Lebrun, O.M.I.
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Jacquelyn Hayes
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Location
400 Michigan Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20017
Tel: 202-526-8300
info@nationalshrine.org
www.nationalshrine.org

Shrine Hours
6 am - 6 pm

Sunday Masses
4:30 pm (Saturday Vigil)
7:30 am, 9 am, 10:30 am
*12 noon (Solemn Mass with Choir)
*2:30 pm (Spanish)
4:30 pm

Sunday Confessions
10 am - 12 noon
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm (Spanish)
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Monday-Friday Masses
7 am, 8 am, 12:10 pm, 5:15 pm
Saturday Masses
7 am, 8 am, 12:10 pm, 4:30 pm (Vigil)
Monday-Saturday Confessions
9 am - 12 noon
3 pm - 5 pm

Holy Days
Please contact the Basilica for Holy Day Schedules.

Guided Tours
Monday - Saturday
9 am, 10 am, 11 am, 1 pm, 2 pm, 3 pm
No Guided Tours on Sunday.

Gift Shop & Bookstore
Open Daily 9 am - 5 pm
(Closed Thanksgiving Day)
Shop Online Anytime at
www.nationalshrineshops.com

*Livestreamed at www.nationalshrine.org/mass

© 2025 Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception