

# MARY'S SHRINE

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*America's Catholic Church  
100 Years*

# Mary's Shrine

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



Bachrach

As we prepared to say goodbye to 2019 on New Year's Eve, one of my collaborators commented that 2020 was going to be a great year! I have reminded him several times so far this year that he was dead wrong! Who would have ever thought that in 2020 we would experience the coronavirus pandemic, civil unrest, and uncontrolled violence in our cities.

When I was ordained more than thirty years ago, I would never have anticipated a time when we would close our churches to the faithful, let alone have to wear masks at Mass, be socially distant, and limit the number of people who could congregate in one place.

As is the case with every part of society, the National Shrine was also affected by the coronavirus pandemic. We closed our doors to the public on March 17 and on Monday, June 22, we began Phase II of re-entry from the coronavirus. At that time, we welcomed the faithful once again for Mass, private prayer, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. However, because COVID-19 restrictions are still in place we have been limited to the number of persons we are able to accommodate. I look forward to the day when Phase IV is announced, and we return to "normal" operations in whatever capacity our "new normal" will be.

During the twelve-week closure, our full-time staff continued to work and our housekeeping staff disinfected and cleaned the Shrine from the very top, to the very bottom, literally, so when we reopened we were as "immaculate" as our name! We also spent a lot of time "redoing" things to accommodate the coronavirus restrictions, such as livestreaming Mass each Sunday. This Mass has been extremely well received! From the Third Sunday of Lent to the Third Sunday of August, through social media alone we have reached more than three million households or individuals. This new aspect of our ministry would not have been possible without the generous assistance of the Knights of Columbus. We have been able to continue this ministry through the goodness of our donors, who wanted to make certain that those who must remain at home continue to be spiritually nourished.

In an address to the priests of Rome, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, spoke of the coronavirus as an "impalpable presence" that "has been able to disrupt and overturn" what we see as a priority, causing a type of suffocation and devastation of society. The Holy Father encouraged, "let us not fear...the presence of the Risen One traces our path, opens horizons and gives us the courage to live this historic and unique moment" (Address, May 31, 2020).

Courage is something we have witnessed during the coronavirus pandemic, beginning with those who contracted the disease, those who lost their lives, and loved ones who suffered the pain of not being physically present, especially at the time of death. The courage expressed by first responders and health care workers, who at the risk of their own safety, placed their lives at the service of others is truly heroic!

Courage, also known as fortitude, one of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, has also been exemplified by each one of us, who in the face of uncertainty, lived this "historic and unique moment" and continued to move forward, looking for the bright light at the end of this dark period.

At the early stages of the coronavirus, Pope Francis advised, "think about when we will return to the street...when we will hug again... when it will be all a memory [and] normality will seem like an unexpected and beautiful gift... Every second will be precious" (March 18, 2020).

I believe that among the many lessons learned during the pandemic is how precious life is and how life can change in a fleeting moment. I pray that as we return to whatever the "new normal" will be, we do not forget this important lesson. "Every second will be precious."

While 2020 has been a most unusual year, it is also a centennial year for Mary's Shrine. May 16 marked the 100th anniversary of the blessing of the land on which the Shrine is built, and September 23 will mark the 100th anniversary of the placing of the Foundation Stone.

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, Chairman of the National Shrine Board of Trustees, is

scheduled to be the celebrant at the noon Mass on Sunday, September 20, which will begin our centennial year. However, we have postponed all other anniversary events until Washington, D.C., enters Phase IV of its reopening process and the coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

As we celebrate *A Century of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, may God bless all those who have sustained Mary's Shrine for 100 years. May God continue to bless our ministry for the next 100 years and may Mary Immaculate keep us all in her tender care! 🌹

## Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick

*Composed by Pope Francis amid the COVID-19 pandemic*



Photo of Our Lady of Lourdes by Matthew Barrick.

### O Mary

*You always shine on our path  
as a sign of salvation and of hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you,  
Health of the Sick,  
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain,  
keeping your faith firm.*

*You, Salvation of the Roman People,  
know what we need,  
and we are sure that you will provide  
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,  
we may return to joy and to feasting  
after this time of trial.*

*Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
To conform to the will of the Father  
and to do as we are told by Jesus,  
who has taken upon himself our sufferings  
and carried our sorrows  
to lead us, through the cross,  
to the joy of the resurrection.*

*Under your protection, we seek refuge,  
Holy Mother of God.  
Do not disdain the entreaties  
of we who are in trial,  
but deliver us from every danger,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen. 🌹*

Prayer translation by Catholic News Service.

## 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. 🌹

## Reconsecrating Our Nation to Mary, Our Mother

On the first day of May, bishops from across the United States joined together from their respective dioceses in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic to renew the consecration of our nation to the care and powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary under her title Mother of the Church.

The Most Rev. Wilton Gregory, Archbishop of Washington and Chairman of the National Shrine Board of Trustees, led the liturgy for the renewal of consecration from the Basilica's Great Upper Church.

Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, expressed his gratitude to Archbishop Gregory for leading the consecration renewal at the Basilica since, "it was here in 1959, on the day the National Shrine was dedicated, that the bishops of the United States consecrated our nation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her title of the Immaculate Conception."

During the May 1 liturgy, Archbishop Gregory prayed, "Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, in this time of pandemic we come to you, our sign of sure hope and comfort. Today we renew the act of consecration and entrustment carried out by those who have gone before us."

He continued, "Accept with the benevolence of a Mother the act of consecration that we make



The United States is reconsecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

today with confidence and help us to be your Son's instruments for the healing and salvation of our country and our world."

Archbishop Gregory concluded the renewal of consecration imploring, "Mary our Mother, bring everyone under your protection and entrust everyone to your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Due to local and federal mandates, the Basilica, and therefore the consecration renewal, were not open to the public. However, the liturgy was livestreamed to the faithful with more than 4,000 virtually participating in the event. The video *Renewal of the Consecration of the United States of America to the Blessed Virgin Mary* remains available for viewing on the Basilica's YouTube channel at [YouTube.com/MarysShrine](https://www.youtube.com/MarysShrine). 🇺🇸

## Supporting Frontline Health Care Workers

From May 6 through May 11, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was illuminated in blue as part of the nationwide "Light it Blue" campaign to show support for frontline healthcare workers in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

The light display, which coincided with National Nurses Week, was a joint effort of the Basilica and The Catholic University of America to pay tribute to doctors, nurses, and frontline workers who put their lives at risk to care for and protect others during the coronavirus pandemic.

Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, said, "The display is intended to shed light in this moment of COVID-19 darkness as well as serve as a tangible sign of gratitude to health care workers and first responders who have been a



Basilica illuminated in blue to support pandemic frontline workers.

light to so many during these unsettling days."

Throughout the Basilica's closure, the priests of Mary's Shrine celebrated Mass daily and especially remembered frontline health care workers and those suffering from the coronavirus in their prayers. 🇺🇸

## Feeding Those in Need during COVID-19

Though closed to the public, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception opened its parking lot on May 19 to serve as a massive food distribution site for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington.

That day, in an effort to mitigate the significant food insecurity caused by the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 800 meals and 800 boxes of groceries were distributed to needy families and individuals who arrived by car and on foot. Nearly two months later, on July 10, an additional 500 boxes of food were distributed once again by Catholic Charities.

“We are grateful to have played a small role in helping to provide physical sustenance to those in need simply by opening our parking



Catholic News Service/Tyler Osborne

lot,” Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, said. He continued, “While we eagerly await the day when we are able to more fully open the doors of Mary’s Shrine, we hope that our continued prayers will further sustain all those affected during these difficult times of coronavirus.”

“We are grateful to have played a small role in helping to provide physical sustenance to those in need simply by opening our parking

## Praying the Rosary with Pope Francis

At the close of the Marian month of May, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception joined Pope Francis in praying the Rosary to “bring the trials and tribulations of people around the world to the feet of Mary” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pope Francis called for this time of prayer in union with all the shrines of the world “as a sign of nearness and consolation for those affected by the coronavirus, in the certainty that our Heavenly Mother never refuses our pleas for protection.”

Organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, the event was titled “Devoted with one accord to prayer, together with Mary” (Acts 1:14) and took place on May 30, the day before Pentecost.

Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, and the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, the sacristans of the Basilica, prayed the Rosary from the Great Upper Church at the same time the Holy Father led the Rosary from the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican Gardens in Rome.

Live video of the recitation of the Rosary from the Basilica and other participating shrines from



Joshua Macey

Monsignor Rossi prays with Pope Francis via livestream.

around the world, including Lourdes, Fatima, and Guadalupe, was transmitted to the Vatican where it was sequentially displayed on monitors in the Vatican Gardens for the Holy Father to view. The event was also broadcast worldwide by Vatican Television, connecting the faithful in this global prayer effort.

More than 7,000 people tuned into the National Shrine’s livestream of *Praying the Rosary with Pope Francis* via its website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. For those interested in viewing the event or praying the Rosary virtually with Mary’s Shrine during these continued difficult times of pandemic, please visit [YouTube.com/MarysShrine](https://www.youtube.com/MarysShrine) and look for the video *Praying the Rosary with Pope Francis*.

# Bringing the Basilica to You

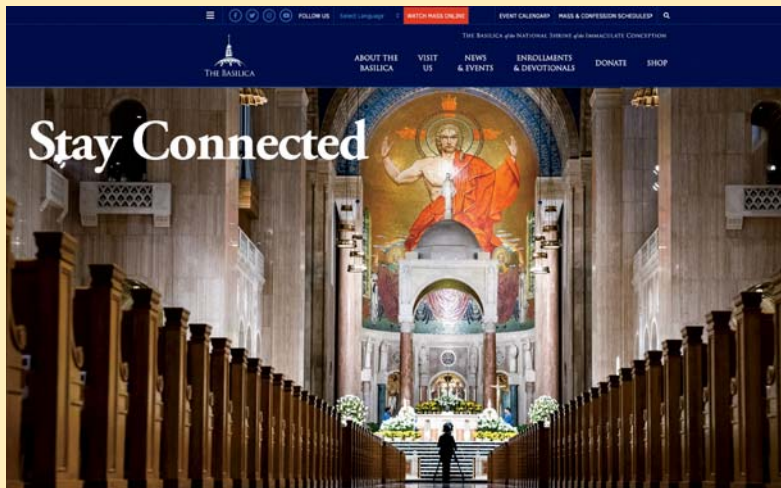
In a typical year, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the largest Roman Catholic church in North America and one of the ten largest churches in the world, welcomes nearly one million people. 2020 is certainly not a typical year!

On March 17, the National Shrine closed to the public for what is believed to be the first time in its nearly 100-year history for a non-weather-related event. The closure extended through June 21. Since June 22, the Basilica has been in a state of limited reopening with adjusted schedules and operations.

Despite the unprecedented closure and current limitations on the number of people allowed onsite at any given time, the Basilica has welcomed more visitors online than ever before.

Thanks to technology—our website, social media platforms, livestreaming and broadcast capabilities, the National Shrine has reached millions across the nation and around the globe—more than it might have otherwise were it not for COVID-19 quarantines, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing measures.

If you haven't done so already, we encourage you to visit our website at [www.nationalshrine.org](http://www.nationalshrine.org)



Stay connected with us online at [nationalshrine.org](http://nationalshrine.org) and on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter.

where you can stay informed of the latest news and events, take a virtual tour, submit prayer requests, light a candle, order enrollments and devotional items, shop for religious gifts, and make online donations.

We also invite you to follow us on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. Watch livestreamed Masses and other events, participate virtually in the Sunday Mass, learn more about the Basilica—its art and architecture, chapels and oratories, history and heritage, and deepen your Catholic faith through our posts on solemnities, saints, and more.

While we long for the day when we can once again more fully open our doors to the faithful, please know that the priests, religious, and staff of the Basilica continue to work tirelessly to bring Mary's Shrine to you. Thank you for staying connected with us! 🙏

## UPCOMING BASILICA BROADCASTS ON EWTN *(all times Eastern)*

September 20	100th Anniversary Mass of the Placing of the Foundation Stone	12 noon
September 26	Marian Rosary Congress Mass	2 pm
October 2	Worldwide Children's Eucharistic Holy Hour	2 pm
November 1	The Solemn Mass of All Saints	12 noon
November 2	Choral Concert for the Commemoration of All Souls	7 pm
December 9	The Solemn Mass of the Immaculate Conception	12 noon
December 24	Choral Meditations on the Nativity	10 pm
December 24	Solemn Mass of Christmas Eve	10:30 pm
December 25	Solemn Mass of Christmas Day	12 noon
December 25	Spanish Christmas Mass (EWTN Español)	2:30 pm
January 28	National Prayer Vigil for Life Opening Mass	5:30 pm
January 29	National Prayer Vigil for Life Closing Mass	7:30 am

# Help Us Build a New Century of Faith



Robert Isaacson

Through a gift to the Centennial Fund, you can help Mary's Shrine build a new century of faith at *America's Catholic Church*.

Standing in the heart of our nation's capital, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception has served as the nation's preeminent Marian shrine for one hundred years.

As we celebrate the centennial anniversary of the placing of the foundation stone for this magnificent Basilica dedicated to Our Lady, we look forward to building a new century of faith and service to the Church in the United States with the Blessed Mother by our side.

In preparation for the next 100 years, the Centennial Fund has been created to ensure Mary's Shrine will continue to fulfill its 100-year-old mission to serve as America's Catholic Church, uniting all Americans with Our Lady and her Son.

The Centennial Fund also answers the critical need created by the sharp decrease in our weekly offertory collection due to the pandemic and subsequent mandatory shuttering of the doors of Mary's Shrine. Since it is not a part of any individual diocese, Mary's Shrine operates through the generosity of thousands of faithful pilgrims who visit each week. But the canceled Masses and pilgrimages have meant a temporary halt to giving from the pews and a significant unanticipated revenue shortage.

As we celebrate our centennial anniversary, we are asking the readers of Mary's Shrine newsletter to consider a special gift of \$100 or more to the Centennial Fund to celebrate each of the 100 years since its founding. This will greatly help

to fill the significant budget shortfall due to lost offertory revenue.

This year, thanks to the "CARES Act" passed by Congress, there are some special tax benefits you can take advantage of when you support the National Shrine with a gift to the Centennial Fund. Most importantly, for this year only, everyone can deduct up to \$300 for charitable gifts—even if you do not itemize your taxes. In other words, a gift of \$100 or more to the Centennial Fund can serve as a tax deduction for you on your 2020 tax return.

Furthermore, donors wishing to make larger gifts before December 31, 2020, will be able to deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income. This is an increase from 60% in most years, enabling donors to give more of their income to help nonprofit organizations in this difficult time. If you are able, please consider making a generous gift to support the National Shrine and take advantage of this one-time tax benefit.

For 100 years, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception has promoted devotion to Our Lady and brought the saving message of Christ to Catholics and non-Catholics alike in the United States. With your continued prayer and support, Mary's Shrine will stand strong for another one hundred years.

We hope you will consider making a special gift to support the Centennial Fund today. For more information, or to make a donation to the Centennial Fund, please visit, [www.nationalshrine.org/CentennialFund](http://www.nationalshrine.org/CentennialFund). 🇺🇸

# THE CHRONICLE OF THE FOUNDATION STONE

Geraldine M. Rohling, Ph.D., M.A.Ed.

Archivist-Curator

On 16 May 1920, as the festivities for the blessing of the land came to a close and evening settled over the white-corded outline of the National Shrine, there lingered a faint whisper, not of a hope or a dream, but of an actuality. The land had been blessed and on September 23, the foundation stone—not a “corner” stone but the actual *first* stone—would be laid.



Sexton Business Card

**James Joseph Sexton**, a Connecticut monument maker, and a Knight of Columbus, had heard of the plans for the dedication of a foundation stone for the National Shrine. Writing to his pastor and brother Knight, Rev. Michael J.

O'Connor, Sexton asked for his assistance in securing the honor of donating this first stone:

*As a fitting tribute to Almighty God for His goodness to me during the last fifty years of my business career I wish to present in the name of my family and myself the [foundation] stone of polished granite suitable for the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, to be laid September 23rd, 1920. I ask you to convey my request ... to His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons through the Right Reverend Thomas Joseph Shahan, D.D. (27 April 1920).*

With his offer accepted, Sexton went prospecting for “the largest and most beautiful” piece of granite. He found it in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, “right in the mountain side.” Not leaving anything to chance, he had the granite block “taken out while [he] was there.”

The return trip to Stratford, Connecticut, was more than just a delivery; it was the first leg of a hallowed pilgrimage. The 300-mile route followed “part of ... the road Paul Revere rode.” Upon arrival in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the truck “circled the very spot where General Washington took command of the Continental Army in 1775.” In part, this was a tribute to his “Great Grand Uncle, General [John J.] O’Sullivan [Sullivan], one of the Green Mountain Boys, [who] was on Washington’s staff at the time.” From there, they traveled to Lexington, site of the famous “shot heard around the world,” then on to Woburn, Massachusetts, whose militiamen fought and died at Lexington. Woburn was also the home of the tile factory of the Rafael Guastavino

Co., creator of the “timbrel arch construction,” which, in the coming years, would be used in the construction of the Crypt Church. As they traveled the Boston Post Road, they “viewed all of the granite markers placed on the route of the Continental Army” (14 Sept 1920).

Back in his shop, Sexton shaped the block of black New Hampshire granite into a 3.3-ton quadrangular stone (5 ft. x 3 ft. and 2.4 ft. deep). Sexton was more than pleased, “I believe it is the finest stone ever placed in any building in America for [this] purpose.” With the remnants, 100 small samples were cut and polished as mementos for the attending dignitaries. Larger “handsome pieces” were prepared for Cardinal Gibbons and Bishop Shahan. The largest “sample” was for the Vatican museum.

In mid-June, Sexton was ready to cut the inscription into the stone. He wrote to Shahan stating it would be cut in Roman lettering “just as you suggested,” a Latin text written in the finest prose of early Church and Roman epigraphs:

*D[eo] \* O[ptimo] \* M[aximo] / Lapidem  
Istum Primarium / Ecclesiae Beatae Mariae  
Virginis Immaculatae / Posuit Feliciter /  
Jacobus Cardinalis Gibbons / VIII [ante  
diem] Kal[ends] Octobris An[no] MCMXX  
/ Benedicto XV Pontifice Maximo / Praeside  
Stat[uum] Foed[eratorum] Am[ericae]  
Woodrow Wilson / Rectore Cath[olica]  
Univ[ersitatis] Americae / Thoma Joseph  
Shahan / D[one] D[edit] Jacobus Joseph  
Sexton.*

That is to say:

[To] God, the Best, the Greatest / This First Stone / of the Church of Blessed Mary, Virgin Immaculate / Happily placed by / James Cardinal Gibbons / on the 8th Day [before] the Kalends [1st] of October [i.e., on the 23rd of Sept] in the Year 1920 / Benedict XV, the Supreme Pontiff / the President of the United States of America / Woodrow Wilson / the Rector of Catholic University of America / Thomas Joseph Shahan / the donor of this gift [stone] James Joseph Sexton.

It bears noting that some authors and publications have mistakenly stated that the date is wrong. *The date on the foundation stone is correct.* The inscription was misread.

Sexton was extraordinary in his sense of history. The trip to Washington, D.C. became a continuation of the historic pilgrimage begun





Geraldine M. Rohling

Foundation Stone

on the mountain in New Hampshire. Sexton intended to deliver not only a “first stone” but also a touchstone of American devotion and of Americana. To that end, he wanted as many people as possible to see the stone, “the many thousands who may never again have a chance to see it.”

**The Pilgrimage to Washington** began on Wednesday morning, September 15, with a high Mass sung by Father O’Connor at the parish church of St. James in Stratford. The truck and stone, decorated with silk American and Papal flags, was parked in front of the main entrance for all to see and touch. For this “credible trip” of distance and tonnage, Sexton acquired a “new [Nash] truck, all highly painted in green, and gold.” A placard on the side of the truck said it all: “From the White Mountains of New Hampshire to Washington, D.C. Ceremonial Stone for the Shrine.” The following morning, they left for Washington.



BNSIC Archives

19 Sept 1920, Sexton, Pace, Shahan, McKenna

Among the many stops, the reception in New York City was the most enthusiastic. The

newspapers and “Moving Picture Photographers of New York City” reported the arrival of the stone on Saturday, September 18. The truck was escorted by a bicycle squad of police as it made its way down 5th Avenue towards the Cathedral of St. Patrick. People lined the avenue blessing themselves, some tried to touch or even kiss the stone as it passed in front of them. At the cathedral, Archbishop Patrick J. Hayes and Mayor John F. Hylan welcomed the pilgrims to New York City and the Archbishop blessed the stone. The reception was particularly remarkable considering the Wall Street bombing just three days earlier. The original plan was for Archbishop Hayes and Mayor Hylan to receive the stone on Wednesday at twelve-noon in front of the Sub-Treasury (Federal Hall National Memorial), and to lay a wreath where Washington took his first oath of office, across from the J. P. Morgan building—the exact date, time, and place of the explosion. Thirty-eight people were killed, and the wounded were in the hundreds. The perpetrators were never found. It was later learned that a scheduling conflict saved the stone from destruction and the participants from certain injury or death. Many days later, while reflecting on the trip and the tragedy in NYC, Sexton wrote to Shahan, “This really proves that we were under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Our Heavenly Father.”

In Philadelphia, the stone passed in front of Independence Hall before arriving at the cathedral where Archbishop Dennis J. Dougherty, chairman of the National Shrine Building Committee, gave his blessing. Sunday, September 19, the last day of the journey began in Baltimore with the reception by Cardinal Gibbons. Sexton had acquired this “new truck” specifically for this trip. So later that afternoon,

# THE MYSTERIOUS TERRACE HOUSE

outside of Washington, Sexton met the two sales managers of the area Nash dealership and they “piloted” the “gigantic motor truck” to its destination. The foundation stone arrived at the site of the National Shrine and was received by Bishop Shahan around 4:30 that afternoon.

It was calculated that during this four-day journey, over one million people viewed the stone, including 100,000 “children of the schools, public and parochial.” The trip was quite an accomplishment.

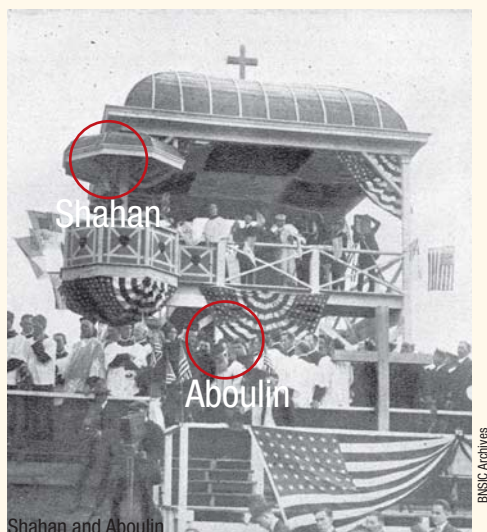
**The Day of Dedication** was an event of historic proportions for the Catholic Church. As noted in the dedication program, even before the Civil War, Catholics had envisioned a “splendid church ... at the heart of the nation.” With the beginning of such a church now at hand, an invitation ran on three successive days in the local newspapers inviting the public of “Washington and Vicinity ... to be present at the laying of the foundation stone” of the National Shrine, which was to be erected “in memory of our soldiers and sailors and as a glorious tribute to the Blessed Virgin” (*Washington Post* 20-23 Sept 1920). News account would later estimate a gathering of 15,000 people.

Early in the day on September 23, people began gathering at the newly excavated grand basin. Bouquets of gold and white flowers and silk flags provided as much elegance as an excavation site could muster. In the center of the basin, where the walls of the north and east apses would one day meet (Oratory of Antipolo), the foundation stone was suspended by a steel rigging within a white A-frame wooden derrick decorated with American and Papal flags.

At 2:55 p.m., the choir intoned the processional hymn and the march of ecclesiastics, led by the friars of the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land, proceeded from Caldwell Hall towards the grand basin. Members of religious communities and diocesan priests followed, taking their place below the pulpit on the eastern rise of the basin. Next came the American hierarchy. The 4th degree Knights of Columbus dressed in their regulation silk hats, frock coats, sashes, and swords served as the honor guard for Archbishop Giovanni Bonzano, Apostolic Delegate, William Cardinal O’Connell, Archbishop of Boston, and James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. At the time, O’Connell and Gibbons were the only Americans in the College of Cardinals; Gibbons was the senior churchman. They took their places on crimson colored thrones on the western rise of the basin, surrounded by the American hierarchy.

Special seating was provided for the women who collected the funds for the Shrine, particularly the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, who helped organize this event. Their generous benefaction would span future decades and include the main altar in the Crypt Church and two rose windows in the Great Upper Church. At the ceremony, the Catholic women of America were hailed as “the principal builders of the National Shrine” and applauded for their devotional fervor and diligent fundraising.

From the pulpit, Bishop Shahan welcomed everyone, greeted the dignitaries, foreign and domestic, including Assistant Secretary of State V. S. Merle-Smith, representing the White House, high-ranking officers of the military, and introduced Cardinal Gibbons. Congratulatory telegrams from Pope Benedict XV and from Francis Cardinal Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, England were read. Shahan then announced the papal gift, the first of its kind to the Church in America, the *Immaculate Conception* mosaic, which would become the hallmark of the National Shrine. Below the pulpit, among the honored guests, was Abbé Jean J. M. Aboulin, C.S.B. (Detroit), who in 1909 took the first practical step towards building the National Shrine by making the first donation: \$1,000.



**The Blessing Ritual** began as Cardinal Gibbons made his way down the red-carpeted stairs flanked by the Knights of Columbus with their swords at salute. Vesting in a mitre of white silk embroidered in gold, a cope of white moire silk richly embroidered in gold, and the “Hibernian” crosier of Bishop Shahan in hand, Gibbons proceeded to a faldstool on a red and gold carpet. Following the opening prayers, he stood

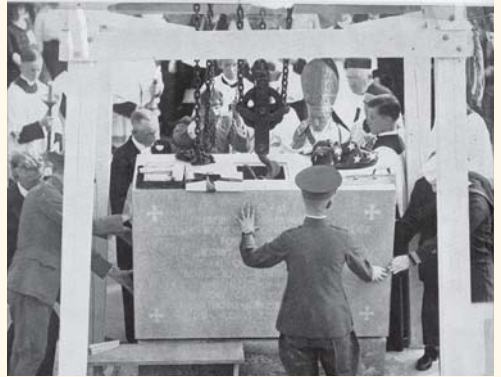


BNSIC Archives

Blessing the Foundation Stone

and faced the large wooden cross below the pulpit, symbol of the main altar, and sprinkled the ground with holy water. Turning towards the foundation stone, he read aloud the inscription and the prayer of blessing and sprinkled the stone with holy water. As the choir chanted the Litany of Saints, Gibbons traced three crosses on each side of the stone with the silver-plated ceremonial trowel made of donated jewelry, reciting each time: “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Then, placing his right hand on the stone he prayed, “In the faith of Jesus Christ, we place this first stone in the foundation.” The stone was lowered into place with the assistance of Sexton, his two sons, 2d Lt. Vincent (Air Corps) and Navy Seaman Leo, and nephew Pvt. William S. Fitzgerald. The Cardinal then spread the first trowel of mortar on the stone. The stonemasons permanently secured the stone to its base and inserted the copper box into the opening on

top. The copper box, the gift of Sexton’s wife, Elizabeth, contained the parchment of attestation, U.S. coins, and the membership rolls of Salve Regina. The final act of blessing was the chanting of *Veni creator spiritus*.



BNSIC Archives

Placing the Stone

From the pulpit Bishop John T. McNicholas of Duluth, a distinguished orator of the time, preached the sermon. Archbishop Dennis J. Dougherty of Philadelphia imparted the papal benediction and concluded with the *Te Deum*.

The following day, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, Msgr. Edward A. Pace, General Secretary of The Catholic University of America, celebrated Mass at the site for “our soldiers and sailors, living and deceased.” This concluded the two-day event. The foundation stone was then encased in a wooden crate until late 1922, when Bishop Shahan turned “the first sod” to mark the beginning of actual construction. 🙏



Geraldine M. Rohling

Ceremonial Trowel

# GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE



**2021 Mary and the Saints Calendar** contains special feasts and is marked with days of Fasting, special Saints Days, and the Sundays of the Liturgical Year for both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Calendars. **900 Mary and the Saints Wall Calendar \$14.95**



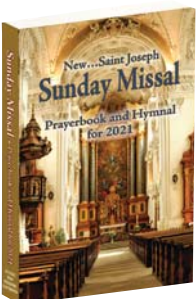
**Holy Family Icon** handmade in Greece in the most holy mountains. **904 5x4" \$59.95**



## Celtic Cross Advent Wreath and Candles

**907** Celebrate the Advent Season with this Celtic Cross **9" \$21.95**

**908** Set of 4 tapers in traditional colors, 3 purple and 1 pink. **Boxed (not shown) \$7.95**



**2021 St. Joseph Sunday Missal** Sunday Missal with Prayers, Readings, and Masses for Holy Days. **910 \$5.95**



**Holy Family Glass Ornament** features traditional Catholic images on both sides. **901 4" discs \$14.95ea**



**Olivewood Nativity Bell Ornament** Handmade in Bethlehem, this detailed ornament makes a wonderful statement of the birth of Jesus **905 2 1/2" \$9.95**



**Murano Rosary**  
**902 8mm Murano Rosary \$99.95**  
**903 8mm Murano Clasp Bracelet \$29.95**

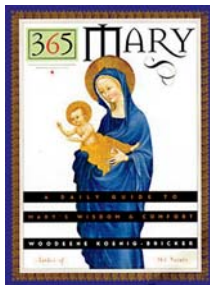
*Made in Italy*



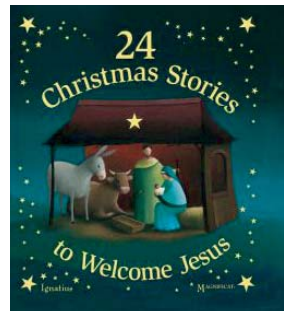
**Song of Angel Christmas Cards** with artwork by William Bouguereau. Verse inside: "In His birth we are blessed, in His name we rejoice at Christmas and all through the year." Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **906 \$18.00**



**11pc Nativity including Creche 3" scale 909 \$49.95**



**365 Mary**  
A daily guide to Mary's wisdom & comfort and an invitation to prayer, forgiveness, hope and love. **911 \$14.99**



**24 Christmas Stories to Welcome Jesus**  
Hardcover book to celebrate Advent and Christmas with the family. **912 \$16.99**

# GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE



**Relic Rosaries**  
**913 Blue Rosary \$39.95**  
**914 Burgundy Rosary \$39.95**



**Small but Mighty Glass Holy Water Bottle**  
**915 \$5.95**



**Madonna of the Roses Christmas Cards** with artwork by William Bouguereau. Verse inside: "At Christmas, we remember God's precious gifts of his own Son and of the Mystical Rose, His Mother." Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **916 \$18.00**



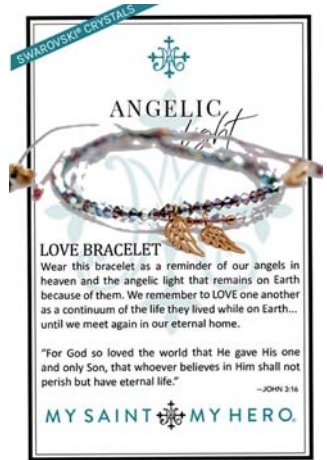
**Sterling Silver Florentine Cross**  
 Made in Italy 1/2" on 18" chain. Each one is slightly different.  
**917 \$49.95**



**ARCHANGELS ROSARY**  
 Michael, Gabriel and Raphael protect us  
*so much power in one rosary*  
**Archangels Rosary**  
 with descriptive card **918 \$29.95**



**Silver Scapular Necklace and Bracelet**  
**929 Necklace \$29.95**  
**930 Bracelet fits 7-8" \$21.95**



**ANGELIC Light Swarovski Crystal Bracelets**  
**919 Pink Crystal Angel Wing Bracelet – adjustable \$59.95**  
**920 Grey Crystal Angel Wing Bracelet – adjustable \$59.95**

Please visit our website at [nationalshrineshops.com](http://nationalshrineshops.com)



**Immaculate Waters Soaps & Lotions made with Lourdes Grotto Water**  
 Follow the words of Our Lady to St. Bernadette: "Go to the spring, drink of it and wash yourself there."

- 921 Lavender Bar Soap 4oz \$6.95**
- 922 Lavender Hand and Body Lotion 8oz \$12.95**
- 923 Lavender Liquid Soap 8oz \$12.95**
- 924 Rose Bar Soap 4oz \$6.95**
- 925 Rose Hand and Body Lotion 8oz \$12.95**
- 926 Rose Liquid Soap 8oz \$12.95**
- 927 Rose Spritzer 4oz \$9.95**
- 928 Lavender Spritzer 4oz \$9.95**

# GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE

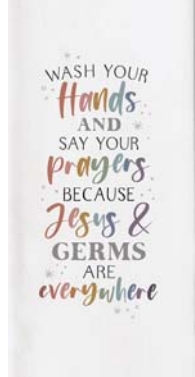
~ Stemless Wine Glass Gifts ~

The only intervention I need is *divine*  
 Forgive me Father for I have zinned  
 Give us this day our daily red



## Stemless Wineglasses 15oz.

- 931 Divine Intervention \$14.95
- 932 Our Daily Red \$14.95
- 933 Forgive me Father \$14.95



## Jesus & Germs

Hand Towel "Wash your hands & say your prayers cause Jesus & germs are Everywhere"  
 5"x10" 934 \$9.95



**Good Morning This is God Mug** Reads "I will be handling all your problems today."  
 935 \$9.95



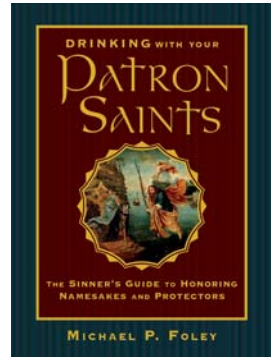
## Hummel Board Books for Children

- 936 Lessons from Jesus \$4.95
- 937 When Do I Pray \$4.95



## Nuns Pulling Sled Christmas Cards

6x4 cards in pack of 10 inside text  
 "Merry Christmas" 938 \$12.95



## Drinking with your Patron Saints

New hardcover by author of "Drinking with the Saints"  
 939 \$19.95



## Kneeling Santa Ornament

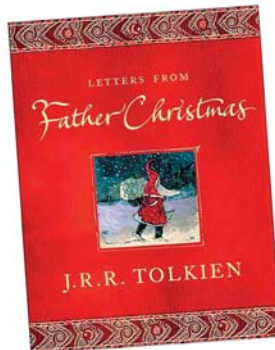
"That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow". This little ornament represents this scripture. 2 1/2"

943 \$12.95



## Fun Jesus Socks

- No Problem Llama 940 \$12.95
- Jesus Loves Ewe 941 \$12.95
- Wanna Taco bout Jesus 942 \$12.95



## Letters from FATHER CHRISTMAS

J.R.R. Tolkien

every December an envelope bearing a stamp from the North Pole would arrive for J.R.R. Tolkien's children. Inside would be a letter in a strange hand writing with a beautifully colored drawing or painting

## Letters from Father Christmas

by JRR Tolkien The letters were from Father Christmas and told wonderful tales with beautiful colored drawings or paintings. 944 \$23.99

Please visit our website at [nationalshrineshops.com](http://nationalshrineshops.com)

# GIFTS FROM MARY'S SHRINE



**L'Innocence Christmas Cards** with artwork by William Bouguereau. Verse inside: "May this Christmas season fill you with peace and touch you with God's Love." Each Box has 18 cards and envelopes. **945 \$18.00**



## Gold over Sterling Necklaces

Miraculous 14kt gold over sterling medal on 18" chain

**946 \$59.95**

Crucifix 14kt gold detail over sterling 18" chain

**947 \$74.95**



## Be Not Afraid JPII Signature Bracelet

Written in his own handwriting "be not afraid" became his motto.

**948 Gold \$29.95**

**949 Silver \$29.95**



## 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."

## Scapular Necklace and Bracelet

**950** 14kt gold plated Necklace 20" **\$29.95**

**951** 14kt gold plated Bracelet fits to 7 1/2" **\$21.95**



## ROSARY NECKLACE

## Tiny Bead Rosary

Necklace features Our Lady center. 24kt gold plated over sterling. **952 \$36.95**



## Madonna and Child Christmas Cards

Verse inside: "May you keep in your heart the miracle of Christmas today and forever." Box has 18 cards and envelopes.

**953 \$18.00**



## Sterling Silver Necklaces

**954** Crucifix on 18" chain **\$59.95**

**955** Miraculous Medal on 18" chain **\$49.95**



## Relic Olive Wood Comfort Cross

This small comforting cross features a relic that touched the Tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem. 3 1/2"

**956 \$12.95**



## Saintly Socks

## Saintly Socks \$14.95ea

**957** St Joseph

**958** St Francis

**959** St Therese

**960** St Michael

**961** Padre Pio

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](http://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  
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of the Immaculate Conception

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



Please visit our website for adjusted hours and operations due to COVID-19.



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**MARY'S  
SHRINE**  
\*\*\*\*\*

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

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#### Shrine Hours

7 am - 7 pm (April - October)  
7 am - 6 pm (November - March)

#### Sunday Masses

5:15 pm (Saturday Vigil)  
7:30 am, 9 am, 10:30 am  
12 noon (Solemn Mass with Choir)  
1:30 pm (Spanish)  
4:30 pm

#### Sunday Confessions

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

#### Monday-Saturday Masses

7 am, 7:30 am, 8 am, 8:30 am  
12:10 pm, 5:15 pm

#### Monday-Saturday Confessions

7:45 am - 8:15 am  
10 am - 12 noon  
3:30 pm - 6 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  
Sunday  
1:30 pm, 2:30 pm, 3:30 pm

#### Gift Shop & Bookstore

Open Daily  
Monday - Friday: 9 am - 5:30 pm (Year-Round)  
Saturday - Sunday:  
8:30 am - 7 pm (April 1 - October 31)  
8:30 am - 5:30 pm (November 1 - March 31)