



MONTHLY BULLETIN

April 2024

At Home with the Lord

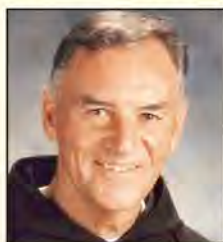
In Meghalaya, India, roots of a type of fig tree grow partially above ground and form bridges that span river valleys. Monsoons drench this place with up to 700 inches of rain each year. Still, the living foot bridges remain and even grow stronger, literally rooted in place.

On the first Sunday of this month, Psalm 118 describes a person “hard-pressed and falling,” yet finding strength in the Lord. In our lives, we can feel swamped by loss of health, ability, or loved ones. Our Risen Lord wants us to have firmly rooted faith that keeps us from falling into deep valleys of despair.

In India, fig trees’ roots provide the structural material to form bridges, but the process takes work, too. Jesus came among us

Bridge of Faith

like a bridge builder to help us traverse the challenging terrain of life on Earth. He gives us hope of crossing to eternal life in Heaven.



Fr. Tony Scannell
Chaplain

With fig tree roots firmly in place on each side of a valley, the next step in forming a living bridge requires cutting down some tall trees and hollowing out the trunks. People tie and push intertwined root ends into the hollows, resulting in growth toward the opposite side of a valley, instead of spreading in all directions.

Over time, the fig tree roots further interlace, lengthen, and reach the other side, where they burrow into the soil.

When circumstances in our lives leave us feeling hollowed out, a time has come to channel our faith. Spiritually, we want to reach a new place in our lives, closer to the Lord. We pray because God will guide us in getting through hard times.

Packing fallen leaves into spaces between roots creates humus that feeds the fig trees and strengthens the bridge. We come together for Mass, eager for the Word, Eucharist, and prayer for one another to strengthen and replenish us.

Wooden planks added to the floor of a root bridge make it easier for people to cross. When we look to the wood of the Cross, our faith in the Risen Lord remains on firm footing.

Prayer & Worship Guide



Seven issues yearly provide the readings, responses, and prayers for Sunday Mass, plus content to use in prayer and reflection throughout the week. To order a free subscription,

please send the recipient’s name and address to Heart of the Nation.

Mother’s Day Spiritual Bouquet



Heart of the Nation’s chaplain will remember your beloved mother, grandmothers, and other special mothers at Mass. Please send their names on the enclosed spiritual bouquet card.

“I don’t feel so alone when I participate in Mass with the Heart of the Nation community.”

– Catherine



“I just got home from the hospital, and your YouTube channel was a great help while I was there.”

– Deacon Leslie



“I had the honor of watching Mass. I have strayed from the Lord. This morning has given me the urge to return to the Church.”

– Joseph

More Than a Museum Piece

One thing led to another. Seeing a Rosary as part of the habit worn by religious sisters led to a hospital patient’s interest in Catholicism, conversion to the faith, his vocation as a Dominican brother, and a museum collection of Rosaries.



Suffering from pneumonia, Donald A. Brown noticed strings of beads swinging at the sides of Sisters of Mercy caring for him. Although not a Catholic, he began to collect Rosaries. As the collection grew, so did the young man’s sureness of God’s call.

Catholics celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Good Shepherd Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Easter (April 21 this year). Everyone has a vocation, whether called by the Lord to ordained or religious life, sharing God’s love in marriage and family, or serving God as a single layperson. Vocations give work (paid or not) holy purpose.

Brown became a Dominican lay brother. He worked to catalog nearly 4,000 Rosaries he received,

noting a description of each, any history, and the donor.

Rather than simply counting prayers, touching Rosary beads expresses counting on Jesus and Mary for spiritual help needed by people in all vocations and circumstances. Materials used in the collection’s Rosaries range from seeds to stone to Styrofoam, reflecting diversity in color and culture among the faithful worldwide.

Saint Lúcia, one of the children visited by Mary at Fátima, made a 15-decade Rosary, using beads carved from bone. Attaining even greater length, schoolchildren in Massachusetts created a 16-foot Rosary with Styrofoam balls. Brown handmade a

Rosary, combining catalpa seeds and staurolite stones that naturally form in the shape of a cross.

Wooden beads form a Rosary carried by John F. Kennedy in World War II. From the former war-torn Yugoslavia came a Rosary pieced together with inert bullets.

Embracing a shepherd’s vocation, Jesus promised to lead sheep into His fold as one flock. To partake in that mission, Brown gave his Rosary collection to his home county for public display.

Housed at Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center Museum, in Washington, the collection now shares a thousand-fold the inspiration that Brown received from seeing a few sisters’ Rosaries.

SPRING FUND DRIVE

Flowers emerge as ground thaws in the spring. Through the TV Mass, homebound and other Catholics in a new season of life can experience faith flowering anew. For Catholics who left the Church, hearts begin to warm in the presence of the Lord and Heart of the Nation’s faith community.

During the Spring Fund Drive, your donation or pledge will give thanks to the Risen Lord for His mercy, kindness, and protection (Psalm 118). Please donate any amount that you can, and include your prayers to be placed before the altar for TV Mass.



Vocations Prayer

Lord Jesus, I pray:

For all who seek discovery of their vocations to take steps in the direction that follows You humbly;

For priests and deacons to be signs of Your compassion and mercy that give hope of life with You eternally;

For those called to religious life to fulfill holy purposes while serving with oneness in community;

For parents and children to know and cherish love uniquely theirs, here and in heaven, forever family;

For dedicated laypeople to carry hope and faith with them, ready to share at each opportunity.

Amen.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

– Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Sunday of Divine Mercy

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

Jesus appeared to an early 20th-century nun in Poland who had only three years of schooling and little artistic talent. Still, the Lord chose Sister Faustina Kowalska to help establish an annual feast of Divine Mercy and provide an image of Himself with the inscription, “Jesus, I trust in You.”



Jesus desired a feast on the first Sunday after Easter, when He would forgive sins and take away all punishment for them.



At first, the priest who served as Sister Faustina’s Confessor thought that her conversing with Jesus sounded a bit crazy, but a psychiatric evaluation deemed her sane. With help from the Holy Spirit to supplement her meager schooling, she took the priest’s advice to write down the things that Jesus told her. Painting an image of the Lord sounded crazy to Sister Faustina, but she used words to portray to an artist what she saw. The Lord promised to bestow graces through veneration of the painting, with its rays representing blood and water.



How to Seek Special Mercy

Jesus revealed His plan to forgive sins and fully take away the punishment for the faithful who prepared by going to Confession and then, on a Sunday of Divine Mercy, received Holy Communion. **If you do not have access to the Sacraments**, take heart in Jesus’ assurance that “the more a soul trusts, the more it will receive” (revelation to Saint Faustina, diary entry 1578). Pray the Act of Spiritual Communion, shown on this page, and ask for the Lord’s extraordinary mercy.

Although not Church doctrine, the Church allows belief in the revelations to Saint Faustina. On Divine Mercy Sunday, you may also seek an unlimited number of partial indulgences, asking God for remission of punishment for yourself or souls in purgatory. While free from mortal sin, ask for each indulgence. Then pray with a contrite heart, “Merciful Jesus, I trust in You.” (A full indulgence requires more, including complete detachment from all sin.)

New Word of Jesus' Way

Before Crucifixion, Jesus appointed the Twelve and promised Peter keys to heaven. Appearing in a locked room, the Risen Lord breathed the Holy Spirit upon disciples sent to continue the work that He began. Jesus provided structure to build the Church.

Catholicism introduced the new word *synodality* to the English language in a 2018 document called "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church." With no simple definition, the word comprises leadership and all Church members in a shared mission.

Next came the first of two sessions in the Synod on Synodality. Catholic Bishops, along with leaders of religious orders, meet in synods (assemblies) to formulate advice to the Pope on doctrinal and pastoral issues. Unlike other worldwide synods, the Synod on Synodality involves lay participants.

Input at the diocesan, national, and continental levels preceded the Synod on Synodality in Rome. The October 2023 session's report provides focal points for follow-up before and during the upcoming session in October 2024.

Sunday Mass, the report says, celebrates grace given to members of Christ's Body, tasked with witnessing to their faith in ways that build community. All of the Baptized have responsibility for their own spiritual formation and for using their talents in the vocations to which God calls them. Parents and grandparents serve as important mentors to children, who can then become "apostles" among their peers.

Synod members proposed increasing opportunities for group prayer beyond Mass. People who feel marginalized by society turn to the Church, and the synod suggested a trained ministry of listening and accompaniment.

In a cautionary note against stereotyping, the report affirmed the poor as people of dignity, not merely targets for charity. Likewise, the Church should promote understanding among people of different cultures and religious denominations, including the Eastern churches in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Social doctrines of the Catholic Church teach justice among people and responsibility in caring for the planet given to all of humanity.



MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 7, 2024
Second Sunday of Easter
(Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Sunday, April 14, 2024
Third Sunday of Easter

Sunday, April 21, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter
(World Day of Prayer
for Vocations)

Sunday, April 28, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Easter



Online Mass on Sundays and Holy Days:

Available all day at
www.HeartoftheNation.org

Thank You, New Members!

With gratitude, Heart of the Nation includes Circle of the Heart monthly giving club members in perpetual prayers placed at the altar for every Sunday TV Mass. If you do not already belong to this special group, please consider a pledge as a way to proclaim the Gospel to people in need.



 **Heart of the Nation.**
CATHOLIC MASS

For local time and TV
channel information,
please visit

www.HeartoftheNation.org

or

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