



## If Not at the North Pole

Children imagine Santa, Mrs. Claus, and elves living at the North Pole, where no land even lies beneath the ice cap. At the South Pole, however, a barbershop pole topped with a silver ball really does exist. Scientifically speaking, that striped pole at the Amundsen-Scott Station for scientific research doesn't mark the exact location of the South Pole on Antarctica's tundra. (A decidedly less whimsical plaque serves as the Geographic Pole Marker.) The striped pole simply reflects remembered joys of childhood Christmas dreams.

Many of us have beloved Christmas memories and traditions. At the South Pole, where people live at the research station for three-year stints, the annual "Race Around the World" on Christmas Day has become a tradition handed down. The race crosses every longitudinal line of the globe—the lines that converge at the geographic poles. The Christmas race laps total a couple of miles.

In the Gospel of Luke, Joseph and Mary set off from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the City of David, to enroll in a worldwide census. We can easily imagine their race to get there and back before the birth of Jesus. As they dutifully made the 90-mile trip to Joseph's ancestral hometown, things didn't work out as they planned, even as God's plan for salvation unfolded.

Christmas at the South Pole comes in the middle of summer, a six-month season when it never gets completely dark. Jesus, who came as Light for the world dispelled the darkness in our world.

Kids find out that Santa and his workshop exist only in imagination. They also learn that gifts under the Christmas tree come from people who love them and happily do more for them than they realize. Even better, Jesus came with unimaginable love—a treasured gift to all who believe. Our Savior has also given us the task of spreading the joyful tidings made known to shepherds on the first Christmas. Your Christmas gift for Heart of the Nation's TV and online Mass will spread Christmas joy to the world!



**Fr. Mark Payne**  
Chaplain

### NEW! TV MASS: Green Bay, WI

WCWF ch. 14 (CW) at 8:00 a.m.  
(also on WBAY ch. 2 at 5:30 a.m.)

### NEW CHANNEL: Harrisburg, PA

GHP ch. 21.3 (CW) at 7:30 a.m.

### TIME / CHANNEL CHANGES

In the viewing areas listed below, Mass will no longer air on local broadcast TV. Please join us for Mass on the WGN America cable and satellite network. See your TV listing guide for channel numbers.

#### WGN America – Cable TV

**8:00 a.m. ET & PT / 7:00 a.m. CT**

Birmingham, AL

Charleston / Huntington, WV

Chattanooga, TN

Hartford / New Haven, CT

Huntsville / Decatur / Florence, AL

Oklahoma City, OK

Paducah, KY / Cape Girardeau, MO

Tulsa, OK

#### WGN America – Satellite TV

**8:00 a.m. ET / 7:00 a.m. CT /  
5:00 a.m. PT**

DirecTV ch. 307 / Dish ch. 239

### HOLY DAY MASSES

Mass will be online throughout the day at [www.HeartoftheNation.org](http://www.HeartoftheNation.org) on **Dec. 25, 2019** (Christmas) and **Jan. 1, 2020** (Mary, the Holy Mother of God).

#### Christmas TV Masses

Los Angeles: KDOC ch. 56 at 9 a.m.  
St. Louis: KPLR ch. 11 (CW) at 10 a.m.

All other Christmas TV Masses will be announced by e-mail and listed at [www.HeartoftheNation.org](http://www.HeartoftheNation.org).

*Fr. Mark*

***“A friend of mine who isn’t even Catholic watches every Sunday. One never knows the impact, but you are reaching people.”***

*~Sandy*



***“I stumbled on the Heart of the Nation Masses on YouTube. I wanted to go to Mass locally but was unable to do so.”***

*~Joel*



***“Your Mass is a lifesaver for me. I work 12-hour shifts, so I can only come to church every other Sunday. The other Sundays, I watch it on TV so I don’t get left out.”***

*~Karen*

# Keep the Advent Wheels Turning

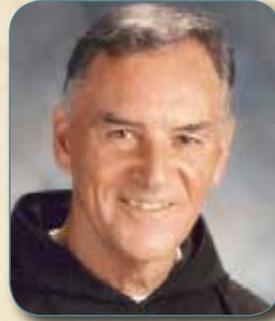
Getting into the Advent spirit might start with the inspiration of an Advent wreath. While wreaths had a long history as crowns of glory, the pastor and headmaster of a 19th-century children’s home created an Advent version to shield himself from the repeated question, “How many days until Christmas?”

Using four large, white candles for the Sundays of Advent and small, red candles for the rest of the days, Johann H. Wichern attached them to a wooden wheel. Advent wreaths already existed, but the originality came with lighting one more candle each day. The children could count the unlit candles and then focus on their biblical and other studies.

Wreaths of greenery crowned ancient athletes and victorious warriors. Advent wreaths call to mind the victory won by our loving Savior.

Using a cart wheel mimicked the shape of a crown. The wheel placed on a table had a flat rim—an ideal spot for the inventive headmaster to set a circle of candles. For

us, that wheel provides a wonderful image of Jesus coming into the world as a newborn. He became the center of life in the Holy Family. As the family of God, we rejoice!



**Fr. Tony Scannell**  
Chaplain

When the time came, Jesus chose the Twelve. Think of them as the spokes of the wheel. Attached to Jesus as the hub, their lives revolved around Him.

Now picture the outer wheel rim as the Church—a bigger circle of people connected to the Lord

we serve as “one holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.”

Three purple candles on our Advent wreaths remind us of St. John the Baptist’s preaching of repentance. Being human, we still count the weeks, and a rose candle on the Third Sunday of Advent offers encouragement at the halfway point.

People began placing evergreen sprigs on a wheel hub, or they used branches to form their Advent wreaths. The greenery symbolizes hope of everlasting life crowned in glory. Candles represent the Light of the Lord growing brighter for us.

How will you get into the Advent spirit? An Advent wreath can get the wheels of prayerful thought turning.

## Season of Sharing

“Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,” St. Paul advised in his Letter to the Romans. Your gift or pledge to Heart of the Nation in the Season of Sharing fund drive will enable us to welcome viewers to Mass. “We come together to pray for one another and share our faith with each other,” said Fr. Mark Payne, chaplain for Heart of the Nation. “During Advent, a blessed time of preparation, your generosity will prepare the way for lifelong Catholics, lapsed Catholics seeking a way back, and viewers discovering the Catholic faith for the first time to come together in prayer and worship of our Savior.”

Heart of the Nation welcomes prayers and gifts in any amount. Offerings to the Lord give Him glory that we celebrate on Christmas with rejoicing.

## Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus,  
The celebration of Your birth  
is near;  
Help me to draw nearer to You.  
You came to share our  
humanity;  
Please come into my heart anew.  
Advent is a time of waiting  
But of preparation, too.  
Thank You for this time in prayer,  
Given with love to You.  
Amen.



## Christmas Rejoicing

Lord Jesus,  
*I rejoice!*  
For on the night You came to  
dwell on Earth,  
Divine but given birth by the  
Virgin Mary,  
You fulfilled the promise  
long awaited  
And now celebrated with hope  
and joyous praises.

Newborn Savior,  
*I rejoice!*  
That through glory to lowly  
shepherds shown  
And glad tidings made  
known of what had taken  
place—

They found the Infant in a  
manger laid  
In a world to be saved  
through God's Love brought  
to Light.

Most Holy Child,  
*I rejoice!*  
In the humanity You  
humbly shared  
As a Child cared for and  
nurtured as You grew  
To teach, to heal, to answer with  
love  
My prayer for faith enough to  
bring You Christmas joy.

Amen! *Gloria in excelsis, Deo!*

# The Humbly Made Masterpiece

Make a simple paste of flour and water. Attach 14 million pieces of glass in about a thousand colors to paper patterns. It sounded like an overwhelmed elementary student's description of a school art assignment. For the central dome of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, pasting millions of pieces of handmade Venetian glass to paper patterns allowed workers to then cement the mosaic, paper side up, to the dome in sections. Wiping away the paper patterns and paste readied the masterpiece for unveiling in "America's Church," located in Washington, D.C.

Starting with homemade paste seems like something the Virgin Mary might have done to keep the child Jesus busy during playtime in their humble home. Later in life, Jesus provided the pattern for our lives. Although Baptism wipes away original sin, things can still get sticky because of the sins people personally commit.

From the moment of conception in her mother's womb, Mary's soul remained free from original sin. Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Immaculate Conception as an infallible teaching in the Catholic faith. The proclamation further explains that Mary remained "ever absolutely free of all stain of sin" [*Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854]. She didn't mess up.

In 1846, the U.S. Bishops had already entrusted the country to the patronage of Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception. Pope Pius IX approved. It took until 1920 to get the land, funding, architectural design, and, finally, the cornerstone in place. Culminating the work, unveiling of the central dome of the National Shrine occurred just two years ago, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

While identified as the Trinity Dome, the mosaic also prominently depicts Mary. Using well-known symbols of the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin wears a white tunic and blue cloak, has a crown of stars, and stands upon a crescent moon with a trampled serpent underfoot [Rev. 12:1]. Smaller depictions of saints and angels complete the circle of figures around the dome. The saints include canonized U.S. citizens; St. Damien of Moloka'i, a Belgian priest who cared for people with leprosy in Hawaii; St. John Paul II, the first Pope to visit the shrine; St. Junípero Serra, the first saint canonized there; and others connected to the United States and the National Shrine.



*Because Dec. 8, 2019, falls on a Sunday, celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary transfers to Dec. 9. There is no Holy Day obligation this year, but Heart of the Nation will have Mass for this blessed occasion online at [www.HeartoftheNation.org](http://www.HeartoftheNation.org) on Monday, Dec. 9.*





With gratitude, Heart of the Nation welcomes new members to the Circle of the Heart monthly giving club. As a member, you will be included in prayers placed before the altar for every Sunday TV Mass. To join, please mark the box on your donation reply card, and indicate the amount of your pledge. (If you need to change or cancel your pledge, just contact Heart of the Nation.) **Thank you!**

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**Heart of the Nation.**  
CATHOLIC MASS

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[www.HeartoftheNation.org](http://www.HeartoftheNation.org)

or  
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**Heart of the Nation**  
P.O. Box 14428  
Milwaukee, WI 53214  
**Toll-Free: (855) 855-6277**  
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