



# MONTHLY BULLETIN

February 2024

## At Home with the Lord

**A**mong other décor, an armadillo graces the medieval Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Julian of Cuenca, in Spain. Native to Latin America, what Catholic symbolism could that displaced armadillo have?

On a cute-o-meter, an armadillo would not even register. Besides leathery scales, intimidating claws, and snouts used to grub in the dirt for food, some armadillos carry the microorganism that causes leprosy.

Although easily cured with modern medicine, leprosy still ravages lives in secluded leper colonies today. In Biblical times, Jesus' willingness to get close enough to touch lepers set Him apart.

Kneeling before the Lord, a leper believed that Jesus could make him clean. Instead of backing

## Lenten Mascot

away, our loving Savior reached out His hand and worked the miracle.

Unlike armadillos, which have extremely poor



eyesight, our Lord sees our every need. Word spread about the miraculous cure of the leper, and people found Jesus, even in out-of-the-way places.

Although an armadillo's scales atop bony plates give it a coat of armor, its underbelly remains largely unprotected. Jesus had the armor of divinity but chose

not to shield Himself from the vulnerability existing in His humanity.

Using smell and hearing to detect an approaching predator, an armadillo will run or quickly dig a hole to hide. (Armadillos actually run pretty fast.) Faith helps us to escape temptation.

When a predator suddenly gets close, an armadillo will jump four or five feet straight up. Sadly, that can cause its death from an oncoming vehicle.

Sin endangers us. Faced with approaching death on the Cross, Jesus revealed the height to which He would go to save us.

In a Spanish cathedral, the armadillo sculpture has a relevant message for Lent after all: With greater awareness of faults to overcome, prepare to celebrate Easter with joy-filled hope in our Savior.



## Prayer & Worship Guide

Seven issues yearly provide the readings, responses, and prayers for Sunday TV Mass. For use throughout the week, each booklet also contains reflections, where to find daily readings in the Bible, and seasonal prayers. **To order a free subscription** for yourself or someone you love, please send the recipient's name and address to Heart of the Nation.



Your generosity will bring the inspiration of Catholic faith to many. Please see page 3.

***“The Word of God and the homily uplifted my spirit. I am nourished and fully energized for my pilgrim journey.”***

– Peter



***“It is so nice to see young people participating.”***

– Debra



***“I receive your monthly news pamphlet and make a donation whenever possible.”***

– Cariline



***“I had been away from the Catholic church. I was ill and felt the need to attend Mass. I found Heart of the Nation.”***

– Karen

## **Our Supreme Architect**

*Past volcanic eruptions had left a lot of ash around, and ancient Roman builders put it to concrete use. The Pantheon, completed around 125 A.D., now serves as a Catholic basilica, where the faithful gather beneath its spectacular concrete dome. On Ash Wednesday (February 14), ashes mimic the stain of sin and challenge us to do something constructive during Lent.*

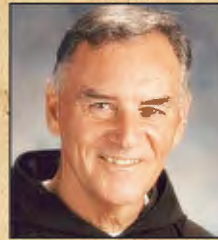


**T**hrough water poured at Baptism, we become spiritually cleansed from Original sin as new members of Christ’s body, the Church. During Lent, we recall the Baptismal promises to reject evil and have faith. Baptism and Lent remain intrinsically linked.

Lent gives us a blessed time to strive for greater love of God with the mix of heart, soul, mind, and strength that makes us human. Although Baptized, we still need to work on correcting our faults and weaknesses.

Ancient Roman concrete appears flawed by white fragments that did not dissolve when mixing the ash, water, and other components. Only

within the past year or so have researchers realized that the



**Fr. Tony Scannell  
Chaplain**

white fragments have purpose.

Romans superheated limestone in kilns to produce quicklime, the stuff of the white bits. In the rain, some of the pieces dissolve, fill cracked concrete, and harden again to repair it.

Day by day, we encounter challenges to our faith. Even small (venial) sins put chinks in our holiness, and the effects can spread like a lengthening crack. Blessedly, God

will rain all the grace we request upon us, no matter how fragmented our faith has become.

Even modern concrete cracks and crumbles. Architects design buildings with steel inserted within the concrete to give it extra strength. Still, the concrete deteriorates, and steel rusts.

Jesus recognized hardness of heart within scribes and Pharisees who steeled themselves against Him. He taught that nothing manmade lasts forever.

History did not reveal how ancient Romans created the Pantheon, with its concrete dome more than 140 feet across. God’s Word in Scripture does tell us that our Creator made us for everlasting life!



## **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 making a pledge in any amount that you can. (If you later need to change or cancel your pledge, just contact Heart of the Nation.)

On the first Sunday of this month, the Gospel describes Jesus at the home of Peter and Andrew. The whole town came to the door. Circle of the Heart pledges help to keep the doors to greater faith open through TV Mass and inspirational publications for the homebound and others in need.



## Prayer in Sickness

World Day of the Sick: Feb. 11

Blessed Virgin Mary,

In your gentle holiness,  
please join me in this prayer  
for hope in the Lord Jesus,  
who loves beyond compare.

In your closeness to the Lord,  
please ask that He bless me  
with grace in time of sickness,  
pain, or infirmity.

In your maternal care,  
may the comfort that I find  
help me in faith to seek Him  
with heart and soul and mind.

In your loving presence,  
may the healing meant to be  
or suffering endured become  
blessed for eternity. Amen.

## World Day for Consecrated Life

Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024

Consecrated life includes the Church vocations of priests, sisters and brothers in religious communities, members of Secular Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life, consecrated virgins and widows, and hermits in lives of prayer and penance. World Day for Consecrated Life provides an occasion to give thanks to God, encourage Church vocations, and celebrate men and women called to live these holy ways of life.

## LENTEN Q & A

**When does Lent begin and end?** Liturgically, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (February 14) and ends right before the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday (March 28). The Easter Triduum follows, concluding on the evening of Easter.

### **Must Catholics give up something for Lent?**

Lenten penitential practices traditionally begin on Ash Wednesday and conclude right before the Easter Vigil (March 30). Individually chosen practices, while not mandatory, recognize the need for devoted effort to improve.

### **Are fasting and abstinence required?**

Mandatory fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday applies from midnight at the end of a person's 18th birthday through midnight at the end of the 59th birthday. Health permitting, two small meals together should be less than the full meal on days of fasting.

Abstinence applies from midnight at the end of the 14th birthday onward. Health permitting, Catholics must not eat meat or poultry on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all other Fridays of Lent. (During the rest of the year, you may choose a Friday penance more personally meaningful for you.)



## INSPIRED FUND DRIVE

Imagine the daunting task that Jesus tackled as He taught, healed, and prepared His followers to respond with faith to the unimaginable events of His death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The Lord entrusted people to build the Church—a huge responsibility. Inspiration from the Holy Spirit continues to help.

Your donation during the Inspired Fund Drive will provide vitally needed funding as you share in Heart of the Nation's mission of spreading the Gospel message on TV, online, and in print publications. Jesus encouraged good deeds, especially when pursued without fanfare. He promised that the heavenly Father notices quiet generosity and rewards it.

# “Did You Know?”

Before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) allowed using other languages, celebration of Catholic Mass took place in Latin worldwide. At the conclusion, the priest declared, “Ite, missa est.” It means, “She (the congregation) was sent.” Gathering for Mass, people come for spiritual help. Dismissed, they have received the spiritual nourishment needed to further fulfill holy purpose in God’s plan.



*The word Mass comes from the concluding Rite. Sent forth, the congregation carries the blessings received through God’s Word, the offering of Christ’s Body and Blood, and prayer in oneness as Church.*



*Mission* and *Mass* come from the same Latin root word, meaning “send.” In the second reading for Ash Wednesday, Saint Paul counts himself among “ambassadors for Christ.” All Baptized Catholics have a share and purpose in the mission of spreading the Gospel message as ambassadors.

On Ash Wednesday (not a holy day of obligation), consider reading 2 Corinthians 5:20 to 6:2. You will find Saint Paul’s encouragement while opening your heart to receive and put God’s help to good use.

## Valentine’s Gate to Rome

Once called the Gate of Saint Valentine, today’s Porta del Popolo (“Port of the People”) allows travelers on a road into Rome to pass through an ancient defensive wall. Among the legends surrounding Saint Valentine, his burial occurred along that road during persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire.



Saint Valentine’s name has disappeared from the gateway and from the general Roman Catholic Calendar. Evidence points to more than one martyr with the name Valentine. Following the Second Vatican Council, the universal Church calendar no longer includes saints surrounded by tangled historical and legendary accounts.

Sending Valentine’s Day cards comes from the enduring legend of a third-century priest named Valentine. While imprisoned, he prayed over his guard’s blind daughter. She miraculously regained her sight, prompting Baptism of the guard and his family. Before Valentine’s execution, the unproven legend continues, he wrote the daughter a farewell note—the first valentine.

## MASS SCHEDULE

**Sunday, February 4, 2024**  
**Fifth Sunday**  
**in Ordinary Time**  
**(World Day**  
**for Consecrated Life)**

**Sunday, February 11, 2024**  
**Sixth Sunday**  
**in Ordinary Time**  
**(World Day of the Sick)**

**Sunday, February 18, 2024**  
**First Sunday of Lent**

**Sunday, February 25, 2024**  
**Second Sunday of Lent**

Online Mass on Sundays and Holy Days: Available all day at [www.HeartoftheNation.org](http://www.HeartoftheNation.org)

*February 14, 2024, Ash Wednesday, is a day of fast and abstinence but not a holy day of obligation to attend Mass.*

 **Heart of the Nation.**  
CATHOLIC MASS

**For local time and TV channel information, please visit**

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

or

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