



Heart of the Nation.
CATHOLIC MASS

MONTHLY BULLETIN

September 2026

At Home with the Lord

As a winemaking hobbyist, I marvel at the making of Port wines from the ground up. Made exclusively with grapes from Portugal's Douro River Valley, the wonders actually begin with the ground in which the grapevines grow.

Jesus told a parable of sowing seed that did not always land on good ground. He told the Disciples to consider the Word of God as seed intended for planting in hearts that embrace it.

Some people choose a path of disbelief. For others, when things get rocky in life, faith withers. Among the thorniest issues, worldly goals can overwhelm goodness.

Slated for Growth

In the Douro vineyards, grapevines take root on ground with shallow topsoil atop plates of rock. Unlike the rocky ground in Jesus' parable, though, the hillsides

Excellent Vintage

have revealed hidden potential to nurture the famed Port grapes.

While horizontally layered plates would stop



Fr. Mark Payne
Chaplain

the growth of grapevines, the nearly vertical layers in the Douro vineyards allow grapevine taproots to wend their way to water that has seeped between the plates.

God sees our potential and wants us to tap into Jesus' words as we seek to slake our thirst for fulfillment. Wherever we find ourselves planted, faith in Him gives us good grounds for hope. Looking deeply into the lessons of Jesus' parables, we can

grow in holiness.

In the Douro vineyards, some of the centuries-old stone walls built by hand to make the steepest hillsides useable still exist. Step-like terraces in the Douro River Valley reflect the wisdom of taking one step at a time.

Aged to Perfection

We face some steep, uphill climbs in the challenges of our lives. Believers taking the Word of God to heart "bear fruit through perseverance" (Luke 8). Doggedness of the Holy Spirit provides the grace we need to persevere.

Douro vineyards produce a variety of grapes, which get crushed to extract the juice. Halted fermentation and proper aging achieve the menu of choice Port wines brought to tables.

God has chosen each of us to gather around His Table. As we age, we seek to use the variety of talents we have to serve fruitfully.

Snowbird Address

Do you move to a warmer climate before winter arrives? The post office will not automatically forward your bulletin or *Prayer & Worship Guide*. To contact Heart of the Nation with your winter address, please see page 4.

Grandparents' Day

Sunday, September 13, 2026

Please invite grandparents and others who cannot get out to church to join Heart of the Nation for Sunday Mass on TV or online. For times and channels on broadcast, cable, and satellite TV, visit www.HeartoftheNation.org.

***“From Kampala,
Uganda, I am
writing to express
my gratitude to
Heart of the Nation
for the online Mass,
which I and my
family participate in
every Sunday.”***

— Godfrey



***“I feel like Sunday
isn't complete
without adding
Heart of the Nation
Mass to my day.”***

— Cynthia



***“God bless all of
you for allowing
those of us who
can't make it to
our parish to still
feel a part of Heart
of the Nation's
community.”***

— Margaret

Unwrapping the Gift

On the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows (September 15), readings at Mass begin with the image of Church members as the Body of Christ. In the Gospel, we see Mary at the Cross. Later, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea do their part to honor Jesus. Linen burial cloths they used for the Lord's Body provide a sign of all that the Father wrapped into His plan for our salvation.



Cultivated in the Jordan Valley and Galilee, flax plants have an outer skin, a filament layer, and a woody core with a hollow center. Workers in Biblical times dried harvested flax plants in sunlight and then extracted the lustrous filaments used to weave linen.

Joy and Sorrow

When Mary and Joseph presented the Child Jesus in the Temple, a holy man named Simeon called Him “a light for revelation.” Next, however, Simeon expressed the sorrowful warning of opposition.

King Herod wanted Jesus destroyed, and Mary experienced the sorrow of fleeing to safety in Egypt.

She again feared for Jesus when, at age 12, He stayed behind after the Passover festival in Jerusalem. As Mary and Joseph anxiously searched for their Son, we also envision sorrow for failing to watch over Him more closely.

Moral Fiber

Pounding flax stalks detaches silky flax fibers from the inner core. Ultra-fine filaments verge on invisible until woven into linen cloth.

Scribes and Pharisees saw the Lord's human skin. Jesus taught with evident authority, but detractors pounded Him with accusations as they refused to see Him as the Son of God.

Jesus' responses to

accusations revealed the Divine fiber of His Being. He wove together the threads of parables, other lessons, and miracles in the holy Gospel message.

At the Core

On the Cross, the Lord commended Mary and a beloved Disciple to one another. Tradition has her saying farewell to Jesus beforehand, cradling His Body, and visiting His tomb in a string of piercing sorrows.

Jesus' sacrifice on a wooden Cross atoned for the sins that hollow human hearts at the core. Freed from linen burial clothes, He unwrapped the way to resurrected life for us.

Harvest Fund Drive

Saint Paul's Letter to the Philippians confirms his desire to labor for the Lord in fruitful ways. That meant serving others in his missionary work for as long a lifetime as God gave him.

Donations to Heart of the Nation provide TV Mass, prayer publications, online resources, and our one-to-one prayer line. Each gift joins in sharing the Gospel message that yields bushels of hope, faith and love.



Grandparents' Day Prayer

Gracious God,

Thank You for the gifts of grandparents and grandchildren, together blessed—loving with love overflowing, side by side or in reminiscence.

Thank You for everyday moments: old-fashioned mints in the candy jar, a stuffed toy hugged after its mend, muddy sneakers at the frog pond, favorite stories read before bed.

With thanks, I bring to You this prayer for all grandparents and grandchildren, their hearts reflecting Your delight, glad to share the ways they see things, assured of preciousness in Your sight.

Amen.



THANK YOU, Circle of the Heart members, for your monthly donations! In gratitude, Heart of the Nation includes members in perpetual prayers placed at the altar for every Sunday TV Mass.

On Track with Saint Paul

Among prestigious athletic contests in Biblical times, the Isthmian Games drew crowds and Olympic-caliber competitors to a stadium near Corinth. Saint Paul served as a missionary in the area as people came from all over Greece for the games and other festivities.

Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians told them that he had "become all things to all." Like a coach recruiting team members, Paul wanted "to win over as many as possible." Comparing himself to a runner in the race, he encouraged and inspired Church members to strive, as he did, for the imperishable crown of eternal life—not mere wreaths of laurel or pine awarded to winners in Olympia or Isthmia.



***"Persevere in running the race...
eyes fixed on Jesus."*** (Hebrews 12:1, 2)

Competitors in the elite games faced disqualification if they failed to abide by an oath to complete months of rigorous training. Paul cited the challenges of sticking to the training program that Jesus' lessons provided. For example, Paul encouraged persevering in prayer and enduring afflictions without losing faith. He realized that people face temptations to covet what others have or seek revenge when wronged. He knew that doing the right thing can take great spiritual strength.

Having met the training rule, athletes in the Isthmian Games could still face disqualification on race day for a false start (leaving the starting line too soon). In a spiritual non-starter, Pharisees believed that they could earn eternal life through strict obedience to the rules that they endorsed. Saint Paul, on the other hand, championed the Lord's message, summarized in the overarching rule of loving neighbors as oneself.

Disqualification from the Isthmian Games resulted in a loss far greater than crossing the finish line last. Spiritually, Jesus taught that the last come in first! In the events of our lives, each of us competes as an individual, striving to become our personal best and hoping to cross the finish line to eternal life.

Did You Know?

On Labor Sunday, the day before Labor Day in 1910, Catholic priests and Protestant ministers spoke about labor and spirituality. They promoted allowing workers time on Sundays for spiritual development, fair wages, the abolition of child labor, improved working conditions in factories, and compensation for injured workers.

What's So Great About Him

By popular demand of the clergy and people who voted for him in 590 A.D., a nobleman turned monk became Saint Pope Gregory the Great. Among his other qualities, Pope Gregory displayed a quick wit.

In an eighth-century book, the historian Saint Bede the Venerable wrote that he had it on "the tradition of older men" that Gregory witnessed youth with fair hair and complexions sold in Rome as slaves. Told that the youth came from Angles (Britain), Gregory punned that they looked angelic. Specifically, the boys came from the heathen people of Deiri, and Gregory quipped two Latin words, *de iri*—an expression of anger.



Gregory wanted to lead the heathens from God's wrath to Christ's mercy.



Desiring a missionary assignment, Gregory got turned down by Pope Pelagius II. He had experience as a government official before becoming a monk. Pelagius had tapped Gregory as one of seven deacons in Papal service and then sent him as a representative to Constantinople for about six years. When Gregory sought permission to go to Britain, the Pope still wanted his valuable skills in diplomacy and administration close at hand in Rome.

When Gregory became Pope, he dealt with the ongoing threat of military conquest, a plague, flooding, and famine in Rome. He used Church and familial resources to help the poor. Remembering the slave trading, he sent missionaries to Britain, led by Augustine (now Saint Augustine of Canterbury). Gregory initiated liturgical changes that resulted in the celebration of Mass much as we see it today. His writings include *The Book of Pastoral Rule* on the priestly attributes and responsibilities of bishops—a book still in print.



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 PRAYER LINE: (414) 475-4700

☐ I would like a Heart of the Nation prayer minister to call me.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

*"Cast all your worries upon Him
because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)*

Return this form in the envelope provided, or call to speak with a prayer minister weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time. (At other times, please leave a message for a call back.)

MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday, September 6, 2026
Twenty-Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Sunday, September 13, 2026
Twenty-Fourth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Sunday, September 20, 2026
Twenty-Fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Sunday, September 27, 2026
Twenty-Sixth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Online Mass on Sundays and
Holy Days:

Available all day at
www.HeartoftheNation.org



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For local time and TV
channel information,
please visit

www.HeartoftheNation.org

or

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