

CELEBRATE!

A NEWSLETTER FOR VIEWERS AND FRIENDS OF THE SUNDAY TV MASS

FALL/WINTER
2024

1 Christmas at
the Basilica

2 St. Catherine
of Alexandria

4 Christmas at
the Basilica

The Sunday TV Mass airs
every Sunday morning on
WDCW-50 at 10:30 a.m.

Production Crew

Producer & Director:
John Capobianco

Technical Director:
Stefano Flori

Audio: Nathan Bark

Cameras: John Landers,
Karin Öhlund and Mark Irons

Engineer: Chris Vazquez

Editor: Brian Burgess

Floor Director:
Bob Hemmerich



The Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of
Washington

Trees, greens, poinsettias and Nativity scenes adorn the Basilica for Christmas



Christmas decorations are completed in time for the Basilica's annual Christmas Concert, this year on December 21, 2024. (Photo courtesy of Basilica of the National Shrine)

BY PATRICIA ZAPOR

The festive Christmas season décor in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception goes far beyond the simple trees, Nativity scene and poinsettias enjoyed by viewers of the TV Mass.

For logistical reasons, the weekly Mass shown on Washington-area broadcast and cable channels (and available later on YouTube) is filmed somewhat ahead of the dates when the liturgies are aired. When the Christmas Mass is involved, that necessitates carefully planned decorating ahead of time. After all, it wouldn't do to have a Christmas Mass in a chapel that still includes an Advent wreath instead of a creche.

Instead, the morning that the Christmas Mass is filmed, Advent decorations are removed, and Christmas trees, poinsettias, greenery and a manger scene are set up around the altar in the Crypt Church. Once filming is complete, the Christmas décor is removed and Advent colors and its four-candle wreath are returned.

Valencia Y. Camp, the regular lector for the TV Mass, also oversees the elaborate approach required to turn the Upper Church of the

Basilica into a vision of Christmas, along with dozens of side chapels and its Crypt Church, where the TV Mass is celebrated. The multi-day decorating process includes detailed maps for where Christmas trees, poinsettias and greenery are placed, Camp said.

"We have a diagram of every chapel, what number of plants are placed in each, where they are positioned and in which colors," Camp said.

With the help of 20-30 volunteers and a dozen or so Basilica employees, the work begins as soon as December 16 this year, which is when nearly 70 living Christmas trees are delivered. They are trimmed and set in stands by Basilica maintenance staff and set up around the two main levels of the Basilica. Some trees are adorned with lights but only one is fully decorated. It is set in the Crypt level Hall of Saints, a large open space.

A couple of days later, the first batch of more than 100 poinsettia plants is delivered. The volunteer crew wraps each of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

2 ST. CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA

St. Catherine of Alexandria, the saint who shelters the TV Mass

BY MIGUEL GUILARTE



The mosaic of St. Catherine in the east hemicycle of the rounded chapel, designed by John Louis Bancel LaFarge reflects the theme of her martyrdom. (Photo courtesy of Basilica of the National Shrine)

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is renowned as the largest Catholic Church in the United States and one of the ten largest churches in the world. It is also celebrated for the diversity on display in the numerous chapels, altarpieces, windows, murals and freestanding works of art that converge within it.

In addition to the main sanctuary, which can accommodate up to 6,000 people, the Basilica's Crypt Chapel on the lower level can seat up to 400 people. In the Basilica's two main levels, there are more than 80 chapels and oratories that honor the Blessed Virgin Mary and represent people from every corner of the globe, reflecting the unity and universality of the Catholic Church.

The TV Mass is broadcast from the Crypt Chapel. Its ornate altarpieces and murals honor saints of the Catholic Church and were constructed using the Byzantine mosaic technique. These mosaics recreate centuries of Catholic tradition as lived by those saints.

Those who participate in the TV Mass may be familiar with a few of the mosaics that are prominent in the background and regularly captured by the camera. The mosaic of St. Catherine of Alexandria is often shown from its location in what is formally

known as the east hemicycle of the rounded chapel. The golden mosaic was designed by artist John Louis Bancel LaFarge. It features a flaming wheel and an open book. The altar decorations beneath the mosaic also reflect the theme of her martyrdom.

St. Catherine of Alexandria is the patroness of philosophers, theologians, apologists, archivists, students, and all those who work with wheels. Tradition holds that the young woman converted to Christianity after her mother's death, dedicating herself to a life of study and prayer.

At the age of 18, she debated with 50 pagan philosophers at the court of Emperor Maxentius, who sought to marry her. Her intellect far surpassed that of her opponents. They ended up converting to Christianity, along with about 200 soldiers and members of the emperor's family, who were later martyred.

The emperor, angered by the young woman's superior intellect and her refusal to marry him, sentenced her to death on a spiked wheel. However, when she touched the wheel, it broke apart. She was subsequently beheaded, around the year 305 AD in Alexandria, Egypt.

She is also invoked as the patroness of students, teachers, librarians, and lawyers. Catherine is one of the 14 Holy Helpers, venerated especially in Germany and Hungary.

WATCH THE MASS ONLINE

3

Watch the TV Mass Online

The Mass is available to watch online on the National Shrine's YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/user/marysshine



National Shrine

@marysshine · 95.3K subscribers · 1K videos

The Basilica of the National Shrine is a National Sanctuary of Prayer and Pilgrimage as des...

nationalshrine.org and 5 more links

Subscribe

Home Videos Shorts Live Playlists Community



First Sunday of Advent - December 3, 2023

9,605 views · Streamed 4 days ago

Basilica Sunday Mass Livestream

First Sunday of Advent

Catholic Sunday Mass

December 3, 2023

Join us live from the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Sunday, December 3rd at 12:00 ...
[READ MORE](#)

CHRISTMAS DAY TV MASS

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, will celebrate this year's Christmas Day Mass. This special hour-long celebration will air at **11 a.m.** on WDCW50, on Wednesday, December 25. The Basilica choir will provide the music with a cantor, organist and the Shrine Quartet.

Charitable Giving from Your IRA to the Church



The IRA charitable distribution permits individuals who are 70½ to gift up to \$100,000 from their IRA to charity free from federal income tax. If you are 72+ years old, then an IRA distribution may qualify for your required minimum distribution, permitting you to lower your income and taxes for this year while helping our Church.

Contact us to learn more about how you can easily donate to the TV Mass, the Annual Appeal (which provides financial support for the TV Mass) and other archdiocesan programs through a distribution from your IRA and enjoy valuable tax savings this year.

For more information, contact
Joseph Gillmer
(301) 853-5375 Gillmerj@adw.org

CELEBRATE!

is produced by The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington.

Produced by
Patricia Zapor, Miguel Guilarte, Megan Novak and Georgina Wilkinson

For information, contact:
Office of Media and Public Relations
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
P.O. Box 29260
Washington, DC 20017
301-853-4516

CELEBRATE! Support the Sunday TV Mass

I would like to make a donation to support the Sunday TV Mass ministry \$ _____

THE NEW 2025 ST. JOSEPH MISSAL IS NOW AVAILABLE - ORDER YOURS TODAY!

Please send me _____ copies of the **NEW 2025 St. Joseph Sunday Missal**.

Suggested donation \$7 per copy (includes shipping)

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Please make your check payable to 'Archdiocese of Washington' and return this coupon to:
Sunday TV Mass - Office of Media and Public Relations,
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, PO Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260

(Continued from page 1)

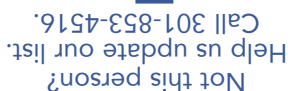


Garland and wreaths are also hung by the crew. The full display of the Christmas decorations is completed in time for the Basilica's annual Christmas

This year, the TV Mass will be broadcast at 11 a.m. on December 25. See channel listings elsewhere in this newsletter for your station.

<u>TV Provider</u>	<u>Channel</u>
Antenna/ no cable	50
Comcast	
DC and Montgomery	23
PG and Southern MD	3
Dish or Direct TV	50
Cox	
Northern VA	3
Fredericksburg	15
RCN	15
Verizon	3

PAID



CELEBRATE!
Office of Communications
The Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of Washington
PO Box 29260
Washington, DC 20017