

BLESSING OF THE TRINITY DOME WORKSITE AND WORKERS



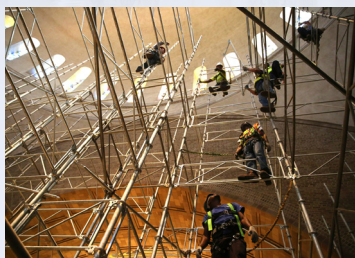
Jaclyn Lippelmann/Catholic Standard

Atop an elaborate scaffolding structure suspended 150 feet above the nave of the Great Upper Church, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington and Chairman of the National Shrine's Board of Trustees, and Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, blessed the worksite and workers in the apex of the Trinity Dome, the central and largest dome of the Basilica.

The interior of this great dome awaits mosaic ornamentation that will complete the National Shrine according to its original architectural plans and iconographic scheme. Nearly a century in the making, the National Shrine has been a work in progress since the placing of its foundation stone in 1920.

Fabricated by hand by artisans in Italy, the dome mosaic will be composed of more than 14 million tesserae (pieces of Venetian glass) and will feature representations of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception, the Patroness of the United States; and a procession of Angels and Saints. The Nicene Creed will encircle the dome's base while its four pendentives will depict the Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The Trinity Dome will be one of the largest mosaic installations of its kind in the world



Workers assemble the dome scaffolding.



Artisans craft the dome mosaic by hand.

— a magnificent feat of art, architecture and engineering, and the fruit of much labor. During the blessing of the worksite and workers, Cardinal Wuerl exclaimed that, once complete, the Trinity Dome will be “a wonder to behold.”

In the name of Christ, “who was pleased to be known as the carpenter’s son,” Cardinal Wuerl asked God to bless “your servants bearing the tools of their trade” and “protect and sustain them as they work for the installation of the Trinity Dome and the completion of this Great

Upper Church.” He added, “Grant that their hard work may contribute to the perfecting of your creation, the beauty of this National Shrine, and the glory of your name.” For their part, during the responsorial psalm, the workers prayed, “Lord, give success to the work of our hands.”

After sprinkling the workers, worksite and yet unadorned dome with Holy Water, Cardinal Wuerl imparted the final blessing, marking the the beginning of nearly round the clock work to install the mosaic.

The Trinity Dome is scheduled to be unveiled and dedicated on December 8, 2017, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast day of the United States and the National Shrine. ☩

Tyler Orsburne/Catholic News Service

Paul Haring/Catholic News Service

TRINITY DOME NATIONAL COLLECTION



The blessing of the Trinity Dome work site and workers also served as the official launch of a nationwide fundraising effort to support the mosaic ornamentation of the Trinity Dome, the last piece to completing the Great Upper Church and ultimately the National Shrine itself, in preparation of the one hundredth anniversary of the placement of its foundation stone in 2020.

Monsignor Walter R. Rossi, Rector of the Basilica, noted that for more than a year he and Cardinal Wuerl have been in the “silent fundraising stage,” building support and seed money for the project. However, he explained, “Now that the scaffolding is in place and the mosaics are being fabricated, we need to move full steam ahead to ensure that we complete this great work.”

In this regard, Monsignor Rossi announced the launch of *trinitydome.org*, a website dedicated to the National Shrine’s Trinity Dome where the faithful can learn more about the project, stay up to date on its progress, and make online donations to support this monumental effort.

In support of this project, the Bishops of the United States have approved a special one-time in-pew second collection to take place in parishes across the country on May 14, 2017, Mother’s Day, in honor of our Blessed Mother to whom our nation and the National Shrine are dedicated. Posters, bulletin inserts, prayer cards, and envelopes will be made available to parishes in support of this collection.

The last time a nationwide collection was taken for the National Shrine was in 1953 when the Great Upper Church was just being built. Now, the Catholic faithful are asked once again to offer their prayerful and financial support to help bring to completion our nation’s preeminent Marian Shrine and patronal church, often referred to as *America’s Catholic Church*.

Monsignor Rossi reflected, “As the largest Roman Catholic Church in the United States, we have perhaps the most diverse congregation in the country as we welcome guests from every nationality and walk of life who themselves are truly a mosaic—a mosaic which reflects not only the face of our nation but the face of the world and the face of the entire church.”

He continued, “I often tell guests that this National Shrine is their parish away from home.” “Now,” he said, “in addition to supporting

their parish church at home, we are asking our friends to also support their parish church in Washington, DC.”

Concluding his remarks, Monsignor Rossi noted, “This National Shrine has been a century in the making and exists today because of the generosity of American Catholics and the dedicated work of the artisans and laborers who have built and continue to build it.” He asked for the faithful’s prayers “most especially for the safety of our workers” and for the success of this capstone project, the Trinity Dome, that will be the crowning jewel of Mary’s Shrine.” ☪



Monsignor Rossi asks for your prayerful support.

Jaclyn Lippelmann/Catholic Standard