

FALL 2023

SHRINE NEWSLETTER



Shrine-Parish Update

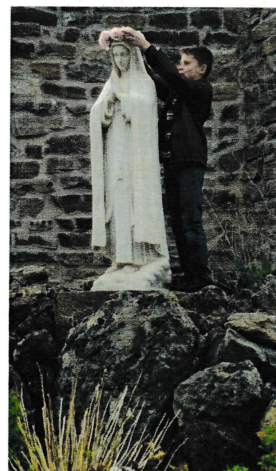


— The 15 tons of additional stone purchased this past December was put to use this season. As you can see, Restoration work this season focused on completing the front face of the Shrine. The work was initiated in June, with activities ending mid-July. Work on the Shrine face that still needs to be done includes repair of the waterfalls and ponds. Discussions regarding the timing of those activities are ongoing. Plans for next year will focus on the plaza and steps. Rededication of the OLWS is tentatively scheduled for 2025, which will be the 70th anniversary.

When OLWS was dedicated in 1955 it reflected the faith of Catholics all over the State. The restoration of OLWS is a symbol of the faith and generosity of the many, many donors who have supported the ongoing restoration activities.

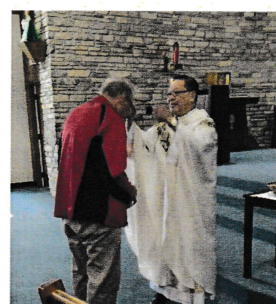


— The weekend of May 13th & 14th, The K of C and Knights on Bikes sponsored the **Silver Rose** Devotional event highlighting **Our Lady of Guadalupe** at St. Mary-Mio and OLWS.



— May 21st, we celebrated May Crowning, with youth of our Parish crowning **Our Lady of Fatima**. Spring was in the air, and the beds around OLWS were perking up with new growth.

— June 10th, our parish hall welcomed the 79th Mio Irisarians show. The Mio Irisarians are an affiliate of the American Iris Society.



— July 16th we celebrated **Our Lady of Mt. Carmel** with an outdoor rosary, scapular enrollment for attendees, followed by Mass and a breakfast by our K of C to support their activities and the emergency food pantry.

— September is always a busy month. The week of September 11th brought 12 tour buses to OLWS. We ended the week with a celebration for **Our Lady of LaSalette (Our Lady of Sorrows)** at OLWS on the 17th. The Our Lady of Sorrows Rosary is a beautiful version, stressing the sorrows Our Holy Mother experienced.

Continued on page 4.



— In May, Restorations Plus completed both the cleaning and repair work for the remaining marble statues at OLWS as well as completed the work on the plaques for the Stations of the Cross. The detail visible now that the layers of paint are gone is wonderful.

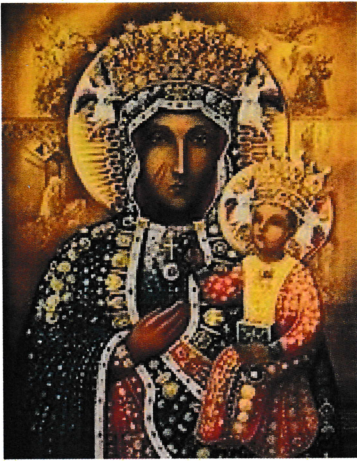


— For those of you with children or "older folk" coming to Mass that use the drop off, a generous donor has provided a bench for their use while they wait for you to park your vehicle.

OBSERVATIONS



2024 Our Lady of Czestochowa



Looking forward to 2024, OLWS will be focusing our attention on the miraculous image of **Our Lady of Czestochowa**. The image at OLWS is a beautiful mosaic located in the southern grotto (AKA Polish Grotto) of the Shrine. The image was donated in 1957 by "The Americans of Polish Extraction." Photos taken during the installation are shown below. Note that the grotto did not exist at the time of the installation and was built around the image.

The **Black Madonna of Czestochowa** is a venerated icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary housed at the Jasna Góra Monastery in Czestochowa, Poland. It is also known as **Our Lady of Czestochowa**. This painting of the Mother of God holding the Child Jesus in her arms, bears the title, Our Lady of the Bright Hill (Jasna Góra). She is the Patroness and Protectress of the Poles; the Queen of the Crown in Poland.

Tradition holds that this picture of Mary was done by St. Luke the Evangelist on a piece of wood cut from the table of the Last Supper. It was the Christians of Jerusalem who presented this picture to St. Helen, the mother of Constantine. She in turn gave it to her son.

The icon is venerated by both Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians. The origins of the icon and the date of its composition are still contested among scholars. One difficulty in dating the icon is due in part to its original image being painted over after being severely damaged by robbers in 1430.

The wooden panel backing of the painting was broken, and the image slashed. Medieval restorers unfamiliar with the encaustic method, found that the paints they applied to the damaged areas "simply sloughed off the image," according to the medieval chronicler Risinius. Their solution was to erase the original image and repaint it on the original panel.



Observations (Cont.)



Infant of Prague—

Also included in the Polish Grotto at OLWS is the **Infant of Prague** a 16th-century wax-coated, wooden statue of the Child Jesus. The original is located in the Discalced Carmelite Church of Our Lady of Victories in Malá Strana, Prague, Czech Republic. The statue was donated to the Carmelite friars by Princess Polyxena of Lobkowitz in 1628.

In 1630, the Carmelite novitiate was transferred to Munich, where the Carmelite friary was plundered and the image of the **Infant of Prague** was thrown into a pile of rubbish behind the altar where it lay forgotten, its hands broken.

In 1637, it was found by Father Cyrillus and placed in the church's oratory. One day, while praying before the statue, Cyrillus heard a voice say, "Have pity on me, and I will have pity on you. Give me my hands, and I will give you peace. The more you honor me, the more I will bless you."

Since then, the statue has remained in Prague and has drawn many devotees worldwide to honor the Holy Child. Claims of blessings, favors and miraculous healings have been made by many who petitioned before the Infant Jesus.



St. Cardinal S. Wysynski —

Flanking the Mosaic are two hand-carved wooden plaques commemorating the Millennium 966-1966, a thousand years since the introduction of Christianity in Poland.

To the left is a plaque honoring **St. Cardinal Stefan Wysynski**, (1901-1981), who was the Archbishop of Warsaw and Primate of Poland from 1948—1981. His home cathedral was St. John in Warsaw and appears in the background.

Cardinal Wysynski served as the spiritual leader and as a strong intermediary between the Communists and Polish Catholics. He is credited with the survival of Polish Christianity under the Communist regime.

The case for his canonization and beatification was opened in 1989, and he was beatified on September 12, 2021.



St. Maximilian Kolbe —

The plaque to the right, honors **St. Maximilian Kolbe**, (1894—1941) a Polish Priest and Conventual Franciscan Friar who gave his life in exchange for that of a fellow prisoner at the Auschwitz Nazi concentration camp during World War II.

He was declared Blessed in 1971 and canonized as a Martyr in 1982.

There is no doubt that the Polish Community played a role in the development of OLWS as a place of pilgrimage for all of us.

The many immigrant communities that have populated our country have built truly beautiful churches and shrines reflecting their Christian Faith. Well worth the time to visit and reflect.

Shrine/Parish Update (Cont.)



— **The Feast of the Assumption**, (August 15th) is by far the largest event held at St. Mary –Mio and OLWS. This year we were blessed to have the Mass celebrated by Bishop Jeffrey Walsh, with concelebrants Fr. Al Pillarelli (St Francis, Lewiston, MI) and our own Fr. San. The number of attendees was over 250 making it probably our largest attendance to date. Though it rained the night before, there was beautiful weather for the day.

Following Mass, everyone enjoyed a tasty lunch prepared by the best cooks in Oscoda County, and had the opportunity to expand their knowledge of our Catholic faith by attending presentations on the Devotion to the Holy Face of Christ, by Ms. M. Mutti and Our Lady of Guadalupe by Homero Ortiz.

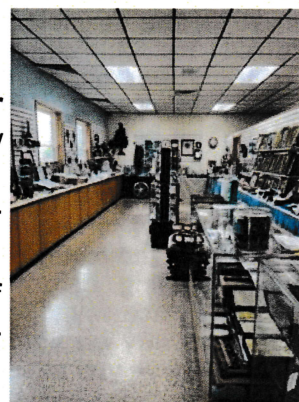
Our Holy Mother must truly have been pleased with the event, and our thanks goes out to all who worked on, donated to and/or attended the event. Without all of you, it would not have been the success that it was.

With the continued popularity of our summer lawn chair Masses, and growth of the annual Feast of the Assumption, OLWS is evaluating construction of a permanent structure to replace the temporary platform on the south side of the Shrine. So if you have enjoyed a Saturday lawn chair Mass, or the outdoor Feast of the Assumption, we hope you will consider donating towards the construction costs.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Our **Gift Shop** is manned by volunteers and will be transitioning to being open only after weekend Mass sometime in October. It will be opening again on a daily schedule come May 2024. We are continuing to add new OLWS items to our inventory. This summer we added OLWS holy water bottles and devotional candles. Next summer we hope to add to our selection of OLWS ornaments and stock a selection of T-shirts.

If you have suggestions, or know of potential sources for personalized items that may be of interest to visitors to OLWS, please contact the rectory. Maryanne will make sure the information gets passed to the proper party.



Saturday Masses have moved indoors at 4 PM to allow for the shorter winter days ahead. 6 PM Saturday Masses will (weather permitting) move outdoors for the summer next **Memorial Day Weekend**. The second Saturday Mass of each month is for the intentions of our generous donors. Thank you for your past, present and future support.

REFLECTION FOR 2023-AHEAD TO 2024

As I am sure you can appreciate, over the past few years St. Mary Parish (as many others) has lost parishioners, people have moved, health issues have arisen, etc. and people have had to step down from positions in the Parish and OLWS. We were blessed to have had the opportunity to know them and work alongside them. However, through Our Lady, another steps in to take-on what others no longer can. As the busy summer season winds down and things slow-down, we look toward the coming year to see how we might better serve our fellow parishioners as well as visitors to OLWS; some of whom pilgrimage to OLWS for a special intention be it for someone they know or themselves.

Our Lady of Czestochowa protected her children in Poland in times of need. We know that she will protect us as well if we are strong enough to ask Our Holy Mother for help.

So as we focus on Our Holy Mother as Our Lady of Czestochowa this coming year, we can't help but look forward a little to 2025, the 70th anniversary of the Shrine's Dedication. The present plan is to celebrate with a rededication of the Shrine. But before that can happen, we need to complete the restoration activities to the plaza, waterfalls, ponds and apply sealant. The Shrine Restoration Committee will be busy this winter obtaining bids and scheduling contractors. Please keep them in your prayers. As always bless you for your generosity and support. We could not do it without you.

Did you know?

The embellishment of sacred images with precious metal was a widespread religious practice throughout the Byzantine world over many centuries. The cladding of Christian images in precious metal has long been an act of piety on the part of the faithful, representing their gratitude to their heavenly protectors for performed assistance. Georgian medieval icons encased in revetments of precious metal that carry their donors' supplicatory inscriptions, throw additional light on the ways in which such icons were used and venerated. For an example see page 2, top left image.

SUPPORTING SHRINE RESTORATION

There are many ways to support Shrine Restoration. Be they big or small.

Below are just a few :

- Commemorate a special event or person with a **Legacy Paver**. (forms available on line and in Gift Shop)
- Bequeath Our Lady of the Woods Shrine in your will or trust. We are a **501 (c)(3)** organization.
- Set up an automatic donation or make a one-time donation using the **QR code**.
- Donate **time or resources** to Shrine events.
- **Pray** for the continued success of the Shrine Restoration Activities.
- **Tell a friend** about the Shrine and events.
- Make a donation using the **Blue Envelopes** in the church pews, gift shop and grottos.

To those of you who have donated to past and present OLWS Restoration activities, and those of you who will give in the future, know that we are grateful and that through your donations OLWS remains a symbol of faith and a place of prayer for us all.

Donate Here



VISIT THE SHRINE



Upcoming Events—2024

We have a number of events in the works for the 2024 season including:

- **Date to be determined:** Silver Rose Devotional
- **May 19th,** May Crowning— Our Lady of Fatima
- **July 21st:** Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Devotional.
- **August 15th :** Feast of the Assumption Celebration.
- **September 15th:** Our Lady of LaSalette Devotional
- **December 8th:** Our Lady of Guadalupe Devotional



Please visit the Shrine website - www.olwshrine.org - to check on the calendar and Schedule of events -

Tour groups are always welcome—Contact the Church Rectory to schedule your group large or small for 2024.



St. Mary Catholic Church and Our Lady of the Woods Shrine
PO Box 189, 100 Deyarmond Street, Mio, MI 48647 Phone: 989-826-5509

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and Our Lady of the Woods Shrine
PO Box 189, 100 Deyarmond Street, Mio, MI 48647

Donate Here



VISIT HERE



St. Mary Parish-Our Lady of the Woods Shrine

SHRINE RESTORATION FUND

We want to preserve the history and integrity of our Shrine-a mountainous structure of stone honeycombed with grottos and niches. The very name, Our Lady of the Woods reflects the thousands of acres of God's beautiful and majestic timberlands. It began with the inspired vision of a parish priest; dedicated over sixty-five years ago to honor Our Lady; and it stands as a monument to our faith and community.

Would you help our parish with this major project?

Yes, I want to join in the Shrine Restoration!



- I am interested in volunteering my time and energy.
- I am committing to an annual pledge of:
- \$150 \$600 \$1200 Other _____
- I am making a one time gift:
- \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other _____

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____

E-MAIL: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

Phone: 989-826-5509

website: www.olwshrine.org
mail: P.O. Box 189 Mio, MI 48647

In northern Michigan Midst the deer and the pine,
 Man created a monument Our Lady of the Woods Shrine.
 With heart and with hand Man molded the stone.
 A symbol of His Love. Reaching towards Mary's throne.
 Four apparitions of Our Lady To be seen and not forgot
 They are the Lourdes, Fatima, Guadalupe and LaSalette.
 There is the Holy Family and St. Anne DeBeaupre
 And patrons of all hunters, St. Hubert to show the way.
 Beckoning to the ever faithful one, kneel and pray.
 Mary a weary traveler Regardless of his creed or clan
 Stops here to pause and worship To join in the brotherhood of man.

Will you help our parish preserve the shrine?

GOD'S WONDERLAND



www.olwshrine.org

Our Lady of the Woods Shrine
SHRINE RESTORATION FUND

P.O. Box 189
 Mio, MI 48647-0189