

Fall 2024 Issue #73





Rector's Window

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we enter into the season of Autumn, the Church has blessed us with months specifically dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary: September is the month of our Lady of Sorrows and October is the month of the Holy Rosary. In addition to these devotions, the Church here in the United States has started the last phase of the Eucharistic Revival, entitled the "Mission Phase." Thus, here at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, we are blessed to not only have our usual Champion Solemnity on October 9 but also have a Youth Day dedicated to Blessed Carlo Acutis, who had great devotion to the Eucharist through the Blessed Mother. On October 12, our Conference titled "Highway to Heaven" welcomed over 300 high school students who sought to encounter Christ in the Eucharist. Blessed Carlo insisted that holiness was impossible without Mass, the Rosary, and time before the Blessed Sacrament.

Also, I would like to introduce, Fr. Anthony Stephens, CPM, who will be taking my place as Rector of the Shrine (already beginning from September1, 2024). I have been assigned by my Superior General to be a full-time missionary preacher. If anyone is interested in having one of us Fathers of Mercy preach a Parish Mission, Conference, or Retreat, please don't hesitate to contact our Mission Director at fathersofmercy.com. At this time, I would like to not only say goodbye to all of you but, most especially, thank you for all your prayers and support. It has been a blessing being here for a little over two years, and I know the Shrine will always have a special place in my heart.

May God bless you and the Blessed Mother keep you!

Sincerely in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

tr. Joseph autona, CPM

Fr. Joseph Aytona, CPM



A Warm Hello from Fr. Tony Stephens

It is a great joy to be assigned to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. When I heard that I would be assigned here, I admit there was a little apprehension at the prospect of a new assignment. Anything "new" brings with it a certain number of "unknowns." I had been working as a traveling mission preacher with the traveling missionary apostolate of the Fathers of Mercy. That meant visiting a different parish every other week or so and meeting new pastors and new parishioners who I would serve for the duration of the weeklong parish mission. Then, at the end of the week, I would move on to the next mission or head back to the Fathers of Mercy house in Kentucky to recuperate and be with my brothers in the community. It is the life of the itinerate preacher.

I had previously visited the Shrine on a number of occasions. I had always had great visits, but they were always brief. I knew my confreres had great experiences serving the pilgrims who came to pray at the spot where Our Lady appeared to Adele in 1859. I had heard of both physical and spiritual miracles for those who had come here. When I arrived on the evening of September 3rd, I saw the quote on the bottom of the sign which welcomes pilgrims to the Shrine. It says, "I am the Queen of Heaven....Go and fear nothing. I will help you." These were the words Our Lady spoke to Adele, giving the young woman the confidence to go and teach the children in this wild country what they need to know for salvation.

Knowing of Our Lady's guidance of Adele, any apprehensions that I had subsided.

The fruits of Adele's obedience have been apparent over the past 165 years since she appeared. The Shrine has grown from a simple chapel that survived the Peshtigo Fire in the 1870s to today having a variety of buildings and staff to serve the needs of the thousands of pilgrims who come to honor the Mother of God.

I visited the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in April of 2000, and it was an intense experience that aided me in answering my call to religious life and the priesthood. I was edified by the faith of so many people gathered there to pray. The sacraments were offered, and pilgrims gathered at the Grotto to pray and light candles. Most significantly, seeing the multitude of people lined up to bathe in the healing waters of the miraculous spring that bubbled up when Our Lady first appeared to St. Bernadette in 1858.

On my first visit to the Shrine over a decade ago, I had the sense of Our Lady's presence here in Wisconsin, as she was present at the Lourdes sanctuary in France. Now that I have been serving here for two months, my initial impression has been reconfirmed and deepened: Our Lady appeared here in 1859, and that She is true to her promise that "I will help you." There may not be a miraculous spring like the one at Lourdes, but this is certainly a spring of spiritual fruit. Pilgrims come to light candles, pray the Rosary, and seek healing for their physical and moral wounds. A pilgrim who comes to the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion with an open mind will not leave unaffected.

In addition to my arrival, I'd also like to introduce Fr. Nathaneal Mudd, CPM to the National Shrine. He



Fr. Nathaneal Mudd

will assist me and Fr. Michael French in serving all pilgrims in the Sacramental life here in Champion.. Please be sure to say hello if you get a chance to see him.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike need a place like the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. It is a place to come to pray and be refreshed. All that is going on in the world is outside of our control. It is possible to come to Champion to encounter peace, practice the faith, and express it in a simple way. I look forward to helping provide the Sacraments in Mass, Confession, and Anointing of the Sick. I hope to stir people's faith with preaching and the blessings given. Finally, I cannot wait to pray with people as they look for a miracle and ask Our Blessed Mother to pray for them.

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Fr. anthony M. Dtephens, CPM

Fr. Tony Stephens, CPM



Volunteer Spotlight

Getting to Know Our Volunteers: Carol Konetzke

By Katie Rice, Champion Shrine Communications

For the past several years, Texas native Carol Konetzke and her husband, Steve, have chosen to spend five months of the year in Northeast Wisconsin. Why? To escape the heat! However, due to a newfound devotion to Our Lady, it has become much more for Carol.

In 2016, after years of caring for her mother, Carol lost her to Alzheimer's Disease. Losing her earthly mother was a time of great sorrow for Carol, but it afforded one silver lining and that was the opportunity to draw closer to Mother Mary.

"For years, we drove by the sign for the Shrine on Hwy 57," explains Carol, "but it wasn't until the death of my mother that I finally got around to visiting it."

Carol was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, where she also attended St. Mary's University - a Marian school where she received her undergraduate degree on a basketball scholarship and then earned her law degree. Carol's parents raised her in the Catholic faith, and she had a prayerful relationship with Jesus, as well as a strong affinity for the Holy Spirit, but she did not feel a strong connection to Our Lady in her early life.

"Both my parents had a special devotion to Mary. My mother did, and my father carried his rosary throughout Europe while serving in WWII. But my relationship with Mary did not form until after the death of my mother."

On a beautiful fall day in 2016, with the autumn foliage revealing vibrant colors and the cool air providing a welcomed release from the summer heat, Carol decided it was time to visit the Shrine.

"I was drawn here out of grief, dealing with my mom's death. But I have thought



"Cool air and fall leaves, that's something special for a Texan!"

about it, and I believe that after I lost my earthly mother, Mary became my mother."

Carol began visiting the Shrine as a pilgrim, and like many pilgrims before her, she began to feel a tremendous sense of peace on the holy grounds at Champion Shrine.

"I was drawn in here and had a sense that I belong, a sense that I was meant to be here, a sense of home—which didn't make sense because I was away from home. I am a proud Texan, but this place gives me a sense of peace and home and a feeling that Mary wants me here."

Desiring to grow closer to Our Lady, Carol recalled a friendly Shrine staff member, Kathy Chia, who invited her to become a volunteer. In 2020, with her family grown and both her and Steve in retirement, Carol began her volunteer career at the Shrine. She started in the café and now serves in the gift shop five months out ofthe year. "We aren't just a retail store in the gift shop. We are all sharing the Mary experience together: staff, volunteers, and pilgrims. We all leave with a glow!"

As the cooling comfort of the fall air gives way to the harsher Wisconsin winters, Carol and her husband travel back home to the sunnier state of Texas. However, as the years had brought Carol closer to Our Lady, she decided to help bring Champion Shrine home with her!

"Back home, when I explain this place and how it was when Mary appeared to Adele, they are surprised!" To spread the word

in her home parish that yes, Mary has appeared in the U.S., Carol began to act as a local Ambassador on behalf of Champion Shrine. After overhearing a pilgrim from Boston asking for brochures to hand out when she returned home, Carol determined she should do the same thing when she returned to Texas.

"It's going to take time, but I'm working with my local parish, as well as reaching out to our Archbishop for permission to give out more information about the Shrine throughout the Diocese."

Carol finds great comfort and purpose in her volunteer work here at Champion Shrine, strengthening her dedication to sharing this special place with those she loves back home and other faithful families in Texas. As Carol has come to learn, building a relationship with Our Lady paves the road to a fruitful relationship with Jesus Christ.

"You get to Jesus through Mary; she has a lot of blessings and graces to bestow if people would just go to her."

The shrine looks forward to more years of seasonal help from our volunteer, friend, and ambassador, Carol Konetzke.

PILGRIMAGE CORNER

By Kathy Ciha, Pilgrimage Coordinator

Pilgrim groups at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion will finish in 2024, with over 250 groups visiting Our Lady's Shrine. Of the 250 group pilgrimages, 130 Church groups and 30 Schools visited the Shrine. 17 major Shrine events also occurred with thousands of people attending the events.

As we start preparing for the Jubilee Year in 2025 – Pilgrims of Hope, we encourage you to consider if your parish or community will make a pilgrimage to Our Lady's Apparition Site next year. If you are, here is an example of a wonderful pilgrimage group that traveled from Jackson, Tennessee, this past April with a bus of 42 pilgrims:

After Don read about Our Lady of Champion, he was compelled to organize a pilgrimage group from his parish in Tennessee to Our Lady's Shrine in Wisconsin. He worked with our team at the Shrine to develop the itinerary for the day, plan hotel accommodations, and coordinate their lunches for the two days.

What did you do to get the pilgrimage going? Fr. Kaump, Don's parish priest, was his biggest

supporter and was tremendous in helping to promote the pilgrimage to the parishioners. Fr. Kaump joined the group as its Spiritual Leader for the journey and celebrated two Masses at the Shrine.

Don's next project was to secure a bus for traveling. He worked with his local bus company to set a time schedule for their route to the Shrine.

Working with Kathy, the pilgrimage coordinator at Champion Shrine, Don was able to put an itinerary together for the group and ensure they were fed with a great lunch of sandwiches, chips, cookies, and a drink from the Schoolhouse Café.



One of the best parts of the trip was visiting with the people who traveled on the bus. The group was very engaged in learning more about the Shrine, their faith journey, and each other.

Comments from their pilgrimage to Champion included how peaceful of a place it was to visit and pray, how they loved the gift shop and the local items they could find there, and how the lunches were very good.

As you think about visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in 2025 – now is the time to start thinking about what you need to do to organize a group visit. Please call the Shrine and ask for the pilgrimage coordinator to begin planning today! We hope to see you in 2025!



CHAMPION SHRINE IS HIRING! Volunteer and Events Coordinator

If you enjoy working with others and being part of a team for Jesus and the Blessed Mother, this position may be for you!

This Full-Time (40 hrs. per week) position is primarily responsible to work with Shrine staff to coordinate and invite volunteers to participate in Shrine events and activities. This position will also coordinate and plan events and activities at the Shrine and provide backup to the Pilgrimage Coordinator for planning and execution of pilgrimage visits.





Looking Back



August 15, 2024 Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

2,500 pilgrims from all over the country came to commemorate the Feast of the Assumption at Champion Shrine, celebrated by Cardinal James Michael Harvey. A picnic lunch was served after the Eucharistic Rosary Procession and it was wonderful seeing all the many families with young children finding space on the grounds of the Shrine to share in a meal and be in the presence of Our Lady of Champion. Overall, it was a beautiful day to celebrate Our Blessed Mother!

October 7 & 8, 2024 | Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and Anniversary of the Great 1871 Fire

The Shrine's weekend leading up to the Solemnity of Our Lady of Champion welcomed thousands of visitors to the Shrine. On the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, many pilgrims were newly enrolled in the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, and a beautiful rosary procession was led by the Shrine's Rector, Fr. Tony Stephens CPM.

On October 8, the Shrine partnered with the Belgian Heritage Center to commemorate the anniversary of the Great 1871 Fire. They gave wonderful presentations of the history of the Belgian people and the impact the fire had on the communities surrounding the Shrine. In the evening, Fr. Tony Stephens read the history of the Miracle of the Fire followed by all-night candlelit rosary processions around the grounds. Miracle of the Fire candles, representing prayer intentions shared with the Shrine from around the world, lined the rosary path for pilgrims to see and pray with.







October 9, 2024 | The Solemnity of Our Lady of Champion

This year, the Shrine celebrated the 165th Anniversary of Our Lady of Champion's 2nd and 3rd apparitions to Adele Brise. Honored as a Solemnity on the grounds of the Shrine, Bishop Ricken led a beautiful Mass and a decade of the rosary for Hurricane Milton. Many noticed the Marian-blue sky without a cloud in the sky the whole day! That evening, Relevant Radio presented the Family Rosary Across America from Champion Shrine, with many families sharing their prayer requests. Everyone had a blessed and beautiful day honoring our Lady of Champion!

October 12, 2024 | Highway to Holiness - A Blessed Carlo High School Youth Day

This year's Blessed Carlo Acutis Youth Day gathered 400 high school students and youth leaders from around the Green Bay Diocese and beyond for a day of friendship, fun, and faith! Students heard from great speakers such as Pete Burds and a panel of people with various vocations – clergy, religious, young adults, married couples, and seminarians. The event is offered annually for high school-aged students – to stay up to date on the next conference, visit **championshrine.org/youth-day.**

Upcoming Events

Last Saturday of Each Month

Eucharistic Healing Service

After 11 am Mass every last Saturday of the Month, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and presented among the faithful. This is followed by the Anointing of the Sick for those needing the Sacrament. The upcoming Eucharistic Healing Services will be held on Nov. 30, Dec. 28, and Jan. 25.

On the 9th of Every Month Anniversary Day of the Apparition

Every 9th of the Month, the Shrine celebrates the day that Mary appeared to Adele with an Anointing of the Sick blessing for those who need the Sacrament. Mass begins at 11 am.



Before making any plans to visit, please check the "Latest News" Section of our website at **www.championshrine.org** for the most up-to-date schedule and current guidelines.

November 28, 2024

Thanksgiving Day Mass

Join Champion Shrine on a day of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings. Mass begins at 11 am!

December 14, 2024

Rorate Caeli Mass – Advent Candlelit Mass and Breakfast

Rorate Caeli, Latin for "Drop down, ye heavens," is an ancient liturgy celebrated in Advent to honor Our Lady. Mass begins at 6:30 am with candles lighting the Chapel and continues as the sun rises, representing Mary, who brought light into the world. A hot breakfast and a special talk by the Fathers of Mercy will follow Mass. It is a wonderful opportunity to gather loved ones and share in a meal, Advent reflection, and special tradition! To sign up to host a table for 10, please email **kciha@ championshrine.org.**

December 17 – 25, 2024 Novena for the Nativity of Our Lord

Join the Shrine in praying its annual Novena for the Nativity of Our Lord. Enclosed in this newsletter, you will find the prayer to Our Lady of Champion and a card in which you can include your prayer intentions for this Novena. Those interested in receiving a daily novena prayer reminder via email can visit **championshrine.org/novenas**.

December 24 – 25, 2024

Christmas Eve and Day Masses

The Shrine's celebration of our Lord's birth begins on December 24 with the National Shrine's midnight Mass, beginning at 11:59 pm. The next day, Christmas Day Mass will be celebrated at 11 am.





RORATE CAELI MASS & BREAKFAST

WHEN

Saturday, December 14

what тіме 6:30 AM	Mass
7:30 AM	Rosary
8:15 AM	Hot Breakfast
9:15 AM	Advent Reflection
10:00 AM	Closing

What is a Rorate Caeli Mass?

Rorate Caeli is Latin for "Drop down, ye heavens" and are the opening words from Isaiah 45:8.

A Rorate Caeli Mass is traditionally celebrated just before dawn in Advent as a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Mass is only lit by candles, representing Mary's role in bringing the Light of the World into the darkness of the world.

Join the National Shrine in Champion for its celebration of the Rorate Caeli Mass, an ancient liturgy honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary! The event begins in the darkness of the morning and, as Mass is celebrated in candlelight, the Sun rises and illumines the chapel. The Rosary will be prayed together after Mass, with a hot breakfast and a special Advent reflection to follow!

The Breakfast following Mass is a time to invite your loved ones and treat them to a special Advent meal. To host a table for breakfast, please contact kciha@championshrine.org. Decorating tables is encouraged! You may also attend as an individual.

Hosting a Table

If you would like to host a table by inviting family and friends (8 to 10 people) – to reserve your table, please email kciha@championshrine.org before December 6th.

Breakfast Table Theme

If you are interested in hosting a table, we encourage you to decorate it with Adventthemed items!

Individuals Welcome!

If wishing to attend on your own - a small fee per person is appreciated. Please register by email to kciha@championshrine.org by December 6th!

GIFT SHOP AND CAFÉ

Advent and Christmas Gifts from Champion Shrine

By Andy Herson, Champion Shrine Operations Manager

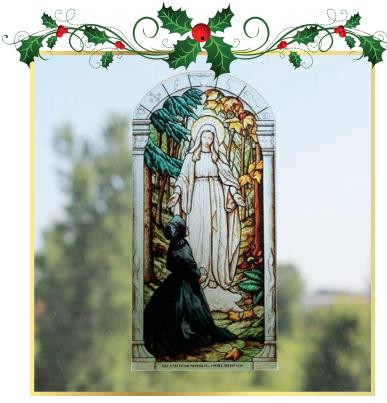
As we celebrate the season of Advent and Christmas we are reminded of the true meaning of Christmas and the wonderful story of Jesus' birth in a simple manger among shepherds and animals. We are also reminded that we are to spread the joy of the good news of Jesus becoming Man and living among us.

We have many items in the National Shrine's gift shop that help us to remember what Christmas is truly about. Some of those items are a nice selection of Nativity sets, tree ornaments and books about Christmas.

A couple of items we would like to highlight that are available to be shipped are an assortment of Champion Shrine Christmas cards. This assortment consists of 12 cards featuring 4 beautiful designs featuring Our Lady's Shrine with matching white envelopes.

Another gift that has been very popular is our suncatcher acrylic stained-glass window of Our Lady of Champion, as seen in the Shrine's Mother of Mercy Hall. The suncatcher depicts the apparition of Our Lady of Champion to Adele that occurred on these sacred grounds in 1859. This item would make a great addition to any Christmas tree or as a window ornament that captures the light beautifully.





From all of us at Champion Shrine, we wish you a blessed Advent Season and a very Merry Christmas!

The Gift Shop and Café Hours

Monday - Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sundays 12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

CLOSED

Thanksgiving Day Friday after Thanksgiving Christmas Eve & Christmas Day New Year's Eve & New Year's Day

Fund Development

Advent: A Season of Hope, Faith and Generosity

By: Kelsey Dorner, Development Director

Advent is a time of joyful anticipation as we prepare our hearts and souls for the coming of the greatest gift we can receive, Jesus. It's a season filled with hope, reflection, and the call to deepen our faith. As we prepare for the birth of our Savior, Advent also reminds us of the importance of giving. Just as God gave us the ultimate gift—His Son—we are called to share our blessings with others. Through the support of so many generous individuals, the Shrine continues to be the refuge, helping people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother.

Volunteer At The Shrine_

We want to thank all the generous individuals who have supported the Shrine this past year in so many ways. A big thank you to our volunteers; through their love, dedication, and passion, the Shrine can welcome pilgrims 365 days a year. Volunteers help in many different areas here at the Shrine, such as in the Gift Shop and Café, serving at Mass, and helping maintain the various gardens.

Share the Shrine

Over this last year, it has been common to hear first-time pilgrims say they learned about the Shrine from a relative or friend. Thank you to those sharing the story of Our Blessed Mother and Adele and their experiences at the Shrine with others. When you share the Shrine with others, you are taking an active role in our mission to help people strengthen their relationship with Jesus through Our Blessed Mother.

Support the Shrine

We also want to thank our generous donors from this past year. Your financial support has helped sustain this place of peace and prayer, the refuge where countless lives have been touched by the grace of Our Lady and her Son. On behalf of all the pilgrims who have visited over the past year, thank you for helping ensure the Shrine is ready to welcome pilgrims seeking Our Lady's love and mercy.

If you would like to help support the Shrine this Advent Season, please consider volunteering, sharing the Shrine with others, or donating. No matter how you support the Shrine, you are living out the spirit of generosity that Advent calls us to embrace. You are not just supporting a place; you are supporting a mission that helps people encounter Jesus's love and grace.



To learn how you can financially support the Shrine and its mission, please visit **championshrine.org/give**

Or contact our Development Director at 920-866-2571 x125







Adele's Wish List

Adele Brise was a visionary who had an unwavering faith in Jesus to help her carry out the mission entrusted to her by the Queen of Heaven here at Champion.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the countless stories of miraculous last-minute wishes for help and assistance granted to Adele. Be it food for the orphaned children, money to keep the school open for classes or to ensure the Chapel could be kept open and running, Adele would express her wish in the form of a prayer and put her faith in Jesus and His Mother to enlist foot soldiers in faith here on earth to provide.

In the spirit of that faith and trust, we humbly put forward "Adele's Wish List" for those items most needed by the Shrine at this time. To sponsor an item through a donation, simply send your check to our mailing address or go to our website and click "Make a Gift". If you would like to donate anonymously, please call (920) 866-2571 ext. 125.

Thank you and may God bless you!

Items Needed:

- Liturgical items for Mass (\$100)
- Rug and desk for chaplain's office (\$250)
- Chair and bookshelf for chaplain's office (\$350)
- Computer for the chaplain (\$1,175)
- Additional cash register for the gift shop (\$1,234)
- Lawn maintenance equipment (\$3,485)
- Floor cleaner for apparition chapel (\$3,888)
- Identification & Directional Signage Project (\$73,000)
- Generators for the Shrine grounds (\$100,000)

All donations made to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion are tax deductible, as permitted by law. Donations will be used, at the discretion of the organization, to further the purpose indicated by the donor.

DONATION FORM

Please fill out the following form and mail along with your check to:	
The Shrine of Our Lady of Champion 4047 Chapel Drive Champion, WI 54229	
Name	
Street Address	
City	
State Zip	
Phone Number	
Email	
Donation Amount \$	
General Donation	
Adele's Wish List	
Please contact me about including The Shrine in my will or estate plan, listing the Shrine as a life insurance beneficiary or the sale of stock	
How do you want to be acknowledged?	



HOURS AND INFORMATION

4047 Chapel Drive, Champion, WI 54229 920-866-2571 **www.championshrine.org**

Apparition Chapel, Apparition Oratory, and the Shrine Grounds Daily from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Mass

Daily & Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday & Saturday at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. Sunday (May-October) at 8:30 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Daily at 10:00 a.m., after 11:00 a.m. Mass, and 2:00 p.m. Saturday at 9:15 a.m.

Devotional Prayer

Rosary	Daily at 10:30 a.m.	
Chaplet of Divine Mercy	Daily at 3:00 p.m.	
Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament Daily from Noon – 3:15 p.m.		
Sacred Heart Devotions	First Friday after 11:00 a.m. Mass	
Fatima Devotions	First Saturday after 8:30 a.m. Mass	
Healing Service with Anointing of the Sick	Last Saturday after 11:00 a.m. Mass	
Outdoor Rosary Walk	Sundays (May-Oct) after 11:00 a.m. Mass	
Family Holy Hour with Guided Lectio Divina	Sundays (Nov-Apr) after 11:00 a.m. Mass	

Adele Brise Day - Anointing of the Sick

Ninth of Each Month, Immediately after 11:00 a.m. Mass

Gift Shop and Schoolhouse Café 920-866-2571 ext 101

Monday – Saturday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Sunday from 12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

History Center

May-October from 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. November-April from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.