



"I am the Queen of Heaven."



JUBILEE YEAR

Guide to celebrating the Jubilee Year alongside our Lady at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion P2

IMAGES OF MARY

Images of the Blessed Mother grace many places at her Shrine P3

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The Shrine survived a night of firestorms in October 1871 — the night of The Great Chicago Fire P6

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Your Guide to Celebrating the Jubilee Year Alongside Our Lady

BY SHRINE STAFF | FOR ON MISSION

CHAMPION — The Universal Church celebrates a Jubilee in the year 2025 and it is an incredible opportunity for the faithful to renew one’s life of prayer and receive special Jubilee graces along their journey to our heavenly home. Many Catholics choose to participate in these opportunities for grace by pilgrimaging to designated Jubilee Sites – from Rome to within their own diocese. These locations are usually holy sites, shrines or churches devoted to a particular saint that can help the faithful encounter the beautiful and spiritual nature of pilgrimage. Are you looking to learn more about celebrating the Jubilee year alongside Our Lady? This guide dives into everything you need to know!



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
Receiving our Lord in the Eucharist.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

This year’s Jubilee theme is titled “Pilgrims of Hope,” and it serves as a reminder for the Church to “fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and farsighted vision.” (From the Holy Father’s Letter to Archbishop Rino Fisichella about the 2025 Jubilee) In the Holy Father’s Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis states: “The coming Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God’s gift of creation. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfillment of the Lord’s promises.” (Spes Non Confundit, 25) Inspired by these words, let us be drawn to the hope that does not fade while on pilgrimage to our heavenly home, and may our witness to this hope spread to all who seek it.

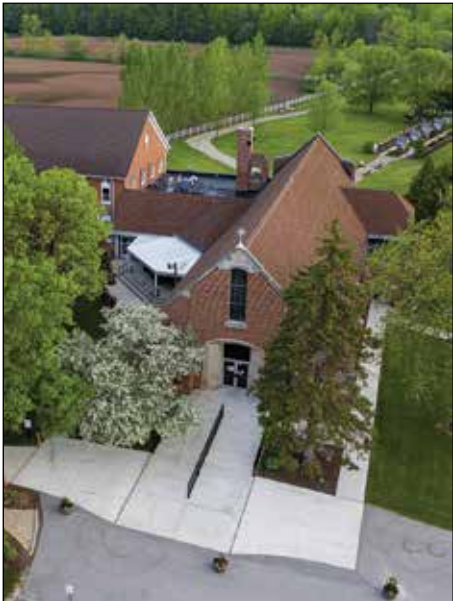
FINDING SOLACE IN MARY, OUR MOTHER OF HOPE

Turning back to Pope Francis’ Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year, he draws on a beautiful connection with Mary, the Mother of God: “Hope finds its supreme witness in the Mother of God. In the Blessed Virgin, we see that hope is not naive optimism but a gift of grace amid the realities of life. Like every mother, whenever Mary looked at her Son, she thought of his future. Surely, she kept pondering in her heart the words spoken to her in the Temple by the elderly Simeon: ‘This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too’ (Lk 2:34-35). At the foot of the cross, she witnessed the passion and death of Jesus, her innocent son. Overwhelmed with grief, she nonetheless renewed her ‘fiat,’ never abandoning her hope and trust in God. In this way, Mary cooperated for our sake in the fulfillment of all that her Son had foretold in announcing that he would have to ‘undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again’ (Mk 8:31). In the travail of that sorrow, offered in love, Mary became our Mother, the Mother of Hope. It is not by chance that popular piety continues to invoke the Blessed Virgin as Stella Maris, a title that bespeaks the sure hope that, amid the tempests of this life, the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust.” (Spes Non Confundit, 24)

It is the Holy Father’s hope that “Everyone, especially the suffering and those most in need, will come to know the closeness of Mary, the most affectionate of mothers, who never abandons her children and who, for the holy people of God, is “a sign of certain hope and comfort.” (Spes Non Confundit, 24) As you pilgrimage in hope, we hope that the many Marian Shrines around the world and, especially here in the United States, can be sacred places of welcome and spaces for the rebirth of hope through the intercession of Our Lady.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
Praying in the Oratory.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion with Stations of the Cross and Rosary Walk in the background.

CHAMPION SHRINE AS A DESIGNATED SITE

This Jubilee Year, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion has been selected as a Jubilee Site by Green Bay Bishop David L. Ricken, allowing the faithful – near and far – to travel to Champion and find spiritual refuge and hope at Our Lady’s Shrine. Through Adele Brise, Our Lady of Champion brought a message of hope to the faithful, “Go, and fear nothing, I will help you.” This is similar to Our Lady’s call to Juan Diego, “Am I not here, who am your mother?” These messages continue to touch the hearts of those who place their cares, sorrow and hopes in the holy Mother of God. As you enter these holy grounds of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, you have embarked on a pilgrimage journey that leads you to Christ through His most Blessed Mother.

HOW TO RECEIVE A JUBILEE INDULGENCE AT THE CHAMPION SHRINE

A plenary indulgence, or Jubilee Indulgence, might be obtained by devoutly visiting the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion during the Jubilee Year. An indulgence is a powerful gift to the souls of believers. Indulgences aid in healing the brokenness caused by our sins in this world and reduce or completely eliminate the temporal punishment due to our sins. Indulgences are either partial or plenary (complete), and may be obtained for oneself or for the souls of the deceased. One plenary indulgence may be received each day. To obtain this special Jubilee grace at Champion, those members of the faithful who are truly repentant of their sins and moved by a spirit of mercy are to:

1. Pilgrimage to Champion Shrine this Jubilee Year
2. Make a Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed or Apostles Creed)
3. Pray for the Holy Father’s Intentions for the Church and the World by reciting the Our Father
4. Receive Holy Eucharist
5. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation*

To receive these special graces, one must be truly free from all willful attachment to sin.

*Please note: the Sacrament of Reconciliation may be received 20 days before or after performing the prescribed acts.



CHAMPION EVENTS SURROUNDING THE JUBILEE YEAR

As you plan your pilgrimage to Champion this Jubilee Year, there are many opportunities to make the most of your time in Champion. Below are some featured events in 2025:

- Walk to Mary – May 3
- Champion Shrine Marian Conference: Mary, Mother of Hope – May 16-17
- Jubilee Mass at Champion Shrine with Bishop David Ricken – July 20
- St. Padre Pio Relics Visit Champion – August 1-3
- Solemnity of the Assumption at Champion Shrine – August 15
- Solemnity of Our Lady of Champion – October 9
- St. Carlo Acutis Youth Day – October 18
- Eucharistic Healing Services – Last Saturday of Each Month

LIVING OUT THE JUBILEE YEAR IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Like Mary, we are all called to be Pilgrims of Hope today and every day until we reach our heavenly home. As Paul writes in his letter to the Hebrews, “*May we who have taken refuge in him be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered*” (Heb 6:18-20). These words encourage us to always find refuge in the hope that has been given to us as adopted sons and daughters of God. When we can hold fast to his hope, we will surely live as witnesses to God – to our families, to our communities, and to the world – just as Our Lady is! May the power of hope fill our days as we confidently await, alongside Our Lady, the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ! To learn more about celebrating this Jubilee Year at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, please visit championshrine.org/jubilee. To plan your pilgrimage to Champion this year, you can find many great resources at championshrine.org/visit.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
Confession in the sunshine.

Mary’s images grace many sites around her Shrine



ON MISSION FILE PHOTOS

Four images of Mary are among the artwork at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. From left are the official statue of Our Lady of Champion, a stained-glass window of Adele and the apparition, the Our Lady of Grace statue and the retired processional statue of Mary that dates to 1908.

Some of the statues are more than a century old

BY PATRICIA KASTEN
| FOR ON MISSION

CHAMPION — When you visit The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, you’ll notice many statues and images of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Several have historical significance to the Shrine.

One of the most recent is the stained-glass window of the apparition to Adele in the Mother of Mercy Hall. This full-size window was placed in the hall (dedicated in 2019) in 2020. There is also a matching window of St. Joseph on the same wall.

The words on the window of the apparition are: “Go and fear nothing. I will help you.” They are part of the message Adele

received from the Blessed Mother. Adele is depicted wearing the modified habit of the lay community she later founded.

Also on the grounds are:

■ The statue in the Apparition Chapel of Mary holding the Child Jesus is first seen when entering the chapel. This image of Mary is traditionally known as “the Queen of Heaven.”

This particular statue dates to 1942, when the present chapel was built. Set above the chapel sanctuary, it was donated by local people under the direction of Fr. Rudolph Hodik, then pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Casco. It was restored in 2020 by Conrad Schmitt Studios in New Berlin, Wis.

The statue was made in 1936 at DaPrato Statuary (now Daprato Rigali Studios) in Chicago. The Queen of Heaven image was chosen because, when Adele Brise saw

the apparition of Mary in 1859, the Blessed Mother identified herself as “the Queen of Heaven (Regina Coeli).” There are a few statues like it around the country — though not many. The molds and designs for this particular statue were destroyed in a 1968 fire at the Chicago studio.

When the Shrine’s statue underwent restoration in 2020, the staff at Conrad Schmitt took it to a nearby meteorology company with a calibration laboratory and 3D scanners. Don Warden, chief operations officer at the Shrine, said that, after a four-hour process, they completed a scan of the statue. It has been used to make molds for replica statues that are now sold at the Shrine’s gift shop.

■ The official statue of Our Lady of Champion was dedicated on April 12, 2013, by Bishop David Ricken who commissioned Gianfranco

Tassara of Milwaukee to design a statue following the description of Adele Brise’s vision. The blonde-haired image is attired in white with a gold sash. The statue is currently located in the Mother of Mercy Hall.

■ The statue in the Apparition Oratory is often photographed at the Shrine. Depicting Mary’s image as Our Lady of Grace, the statue came from France in August of 1907. It was donated by Fr. Philip Crud, pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Champion, who had been appointed to serve the local Belgian community in 1865.

Fr. Crud had directed Adele Brise to gather women to assist in her teaching mission. This statue is directly under the Queen of Heaven statue in the Apparition Chapel. It stands near, if not over, the reported site where Mary appeared to Adele Brise in October of 1859.

■ The now-retired processional statue of Mary is displayed in the Mother of Mercy Hall. This three-foot-high statue wears a crown and holds a scepter. Her white gown is stitched with silver thread and metal beads, forming a heart in the gown’s center. While the current statue is over a century old, it is not the original processional statue used by Adele Brise. That statue was irreparably damaged by fire started by a candle during a procession.

The retired second processional statue came to the Shrine in 1908, long after Adele Brise’s death on July 5, 1896. The statue wears a wig of human hair which diocesan archival records show was made in 1953. The hair was donated by Sr. Regina Le Mere, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross who died in 2018 at the age of 90.

The statue was retired in 2019, the 160th anniversary of the apparition.

■ Starting with the 2020 Assumption procession, a statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has been used. That statue currently stands in the sanctuary of the chapel in the Mother of Mercy Hall.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

In 2024, The National Shrine commissioned a beautiful artwork of Our Lady appearing to Adele Brise that appeared at the National Eucharistic Congress in July of 2024. This painting can be found and viewed in the History Center on the grounds of the Shrine. See page 15 for more details.

— ” —

May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit.

— ” —

ROMANS
15:13

DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR

2025 JUBILEE SITES

Cathedral of Christ the King
1410 Baxter Ave., Superior
Open year-round

St. Joseph Catholic Church
266 Airport Rd., Bayfield
Madeline Island
Open Memorial Day to Labor Day

715-392-2937 catholicdos.org
1201 Hughitt Ave., Superior, WI

Way of the Cross Shrine in New Ulm, MN

Chapel of the Sorrowful Mother of Jesus

Est. 1904 - added in 2020 to the National Register of Historic Places

DIOCESE of NEW ULM

The historic Way of the Cross shrine, located at 1500 5th North Street in New Ulm, Minnesota, includes 14 stations, a grotto, and a small chapel. For more information, go to: dnu.org/wayofthecross.

Hours:
Open daily all year
Chapel - open daily (April to October)

Are you a witness to Adele’s holiness and heroic virtue?

BY SHRINE STAFF | FOR ON MISSION

“Is the Cause for Canonization open yet for Adele Brise?” This is a question asked often at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion by visiting pilgrims.

The answer to the question is: “No, not yet.” However, this process is being discerned, and there are several steps that need to be completed before a Cause can be opened.

One of those steps is the drafting of the *Libellus*, which means “little book.” It is the document that is presented to the bishop as a petition to open the Cause.

This *Libellus* includes a short biography, writings or dictations, and a witness or testimonies to the life of the person of interest.

If opened, this Cause for Adele would be considered an Ancient Cause because of the amount of

time that has elapsed since her death in 1896. This makes the collection of witnesses and testimonies a bit more challenging, as there is no one alive who had direct contact with Adele.

In this situation, witnesses for the Cause would likely fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Descendants of Adele’s siblings or descendants of those who knew Adele, whose stories of Adele and her mission would have been passed down through each generation.
- Those who have received particular graces through the intercession of Adele, or those who have heard of family members, friends or others who have received particular graces through the intercession of Adele.
- Those who have extensively researched the life of Adele and the history of the Shrine itself.

A CALL FOR WITNESSES

If you or someone you know falls into one of these categories, we ask that you pray about sharing your witness or testimony of Adele. This is a critical component needed to open the cause!

For those who discern to come forward, we ask that you simply send a letter via email or postal mail with your name, contact information and a brief summary of your witness or testimony to Adele’s holiness and life of heroic virtue.

As we assemble the list of witnesses (we will need about 12), we may reach out to you if we need to clarify your information. If the Cause for Adele were to be opened, you would also be interviewed by the postulator for the Cause, who is responsible for the overall process.

We ask for Adele’s intercession in bringing forth witnesses of her life – that her story may reach more souls and that her witness to Christ may bring consolation to those in need.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

Adele Brise pictured above.





THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

Praying at the grave of Adele Brise, located at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Email: Please send to info@championshrine.org

Mail: Please send to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, 4047 Chapel Drive, New Franken, WI 54229



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U.S. Bishops Affirm Advancement of a Cause of Beatification and Canonization for Laywoman Adele Brise

BY U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

LOUISVILLE, KY. — At their annual Plenary Assembly in June 2024, the U.S. bishops held a canonical consultation on a possible cause of beatification and canonization for Adele Brise.

Bishop Thomas John Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance, and Green Bay Bishop David L. Ricken facilitated the discussion among the bishops.

By a voice vote, the bishops expressed support for the advancement of the cause of beatification and canonization on the diocesan level.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

The following brief biography of Adele Brise was drawn from information provided by the Diocese of Green Bay:

Adele Brise was born on January 30, 1831, in Dion-le-Val, Belgium, to Lambert and Catherine Brise. Despite losing sight in one eye from

a childhood accident, she was known for her cheerful demeanor. Adele pledged to the Blessed Virgin Mary to become a religious sister after her first Holy Communion, a goal that continued even after her family immigrated to the United States in 1855. Settling in Wisconsin, Adele remained committed to her religious calling.

In 1859, Adele experienced several apparitions of a woman dressed in white whom she later identified as Mary, the Queen of Heaven. She instructed Adele to become a teacher of religion. Adele began a door-to-door ministry, eventually founding a community of laywomen known as the Sisters of Good Help. They chose to live following the Franciscan way of life, without taking formal vows and focused on religious education.

The community faced many challenges, including the Peshtigo Fire of 1871, which threatened their chapel and school. Historically considered one of the deadliest forest fires, these buildings were spared which was considered



Adele Brise pictured sitting in center, surrounded by students she taught alongside her companions.

THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

by many to be a miraculous and divine response to prayers.

Adele continued her mission tirelessly, teaching and catechizing children, and creating a lasting impact on her community until her death on July 5, 1896. Her legacy of devout

service is summarized by the inscription on her headstone: “Sacred Cross, Under Thy Shadow I Rest and Hope.”

APPROVED MARIAN APPARITION SITE

The Marian apparitions experienced by Adele in 1859

were given formal and official approval by Bishop Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay in December 2010. The site of the apparitions was designated as a national shrine by the U.S. bishops in 2015 and is today known as the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.



*The Most Reverend
David J. Malloy,*



and the clergy, religious and laity of the Diocese of Rockford pray that through your pilgrimage to the **National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion** during this Jubilee Year, you receive hope and Our Lady’s guidance, just as she guided Adele Brise many years ago.



Diocesan Administration Center

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Rockford, IL 61125

www.rockforddiocese.org
(815) 399-4300

Shrine escaped devastation of Peshtigo Fire

October 1871 saw an inferno that burned 2,400 square miles of land, killing at least 1,500 people

BY PATRICIA KASTEN | FOR ON MISSION

PESHTIGO — Each autumn, images of fiery leaves pair with memories of the Peshtigo Fire. It happened on the night of Oct. 8, 1871, 152 years ago. The same storm system that fueled the Great Chicago Fire also spawned the Peshtigo Fire.

This series of blazes, firestorms and fire tornadoes in northeast Wisconsin spread over and destroyed 2,400 square miles — roughly the size of the state of Delaware — and killed 1,500 to 2,500 people.

This year, The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, as it does each year, will again mark the anniversary of this tragedy with prayer and remembrance. The Shrine and its founder, Adele Brise, played a role in the story of that fiery night.

Adele had founded what was then known as “The Chapel” (*“La Chapelle”*) at Robinsonville (now The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion). She and Fr. Peter Pernin, a Canadian missionary priest serving as pastor at St. Mary in Peshtigo and Our Lady of Lourdes in Marinette, both lived through that night of fire.

Every year, the Shrine hosts an anniversary rosary and prayer event all night from Oct. 8 to the morning of Oct. 9. Today it is known as the “Victory Over the Fire All Night Rosary.”

The commemoration begins at 7 p.m. with a remembrance service and continues with a candlelight procession around the outdoor rosary walk, all-night Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and rosaries prayed every hour. Joining participants are descendants of families who lived through that October night.

The first celebration of the Solemnity Mass of Our Lady of Champion was celebrated by Bishop David Ricken on Oct. 9, 2023. (See story on page 10A.)

While Adele did not write about the fire experience, Fr. Pernin did. In a book titled “The Finger of God Was There!” he wrote about his own experiences. He later visited The Chapel and spoke with “Sr. Adele,” as she was known to people in the area, to compare with and record what she lived through.

While The Chapel, where many gathered to pray that night, was spared from the flames, Peshtigo was not. Fr. Pernin’s church of St. Mary, as well as the rest of the town, were destroyed. Marinette and its neighbor city, Menominee, Michigan, were also extensively damaged, as was Fr. Pernin’s Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Marinette, where many survivors were evacuated.

DRY SUMMER

Fires had been burning in the area around and north of Green Bay for months. Drought conditions that summer had dried creeks and marshes. The then-flourishing lumber industry had also left the region strewn with huge amounts of tree debris and branches — called “slash.” Peshtigo was a city quite literally built on sawdust.

Sr. Pius Doyle, one of the founders of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy



PATRICIA KASTEN | FOR ON MISSION

A mural inside the Peshtigo Fire Museum depicts the night of Oct. 8, 1871, when people fled to the Peshtigo River to try to escape the fire that killed at least 1,500 people.

Cross, recorded events of late summer and fall 1871. In her journal, she noted how immigrant farmers were also clearing surrounding timberland for fields. Smaller prairie fires sometimes resulted.

“Early in August, in the afternoon,” Sr. Pius wrote, “the sun would be obscured, owing to the fire which steadily worsened so that, towards the end of the month, it was becoming frightful.”

Nothing, though, can describe the horror of the firestorm on Oct. 8 — including fire whirlwinds that witnesses described as sounding like freight trains. Historical records say that the fire was so intense that it had the power of a thermonuclear bomb and temperatures so high that people were cremated as they fled.

On Oct. 11, 1871, the Marinette and Peshtigo Eagle newspaper reported what happened to some that night: “Crowds pushed for the bridge, but the bridge, like all else, was receiving its baptism of fire. Hundreds crowded into the river, cattle plunged in with them, and being huddled together in the general confusion of the moment, many who had taken to the water to avoid the flames were drowned. A great many were on the blazing bridge when it fell.”

At the Peshtigo church on Oct. 8, Fr. Pernin dug a trench in his garden and buried his books and “church ornaments” in it and covered them with sand.

FR. PERNIN WENT FOR THE TABERNACLE

He then returned for the tabernacle, which was in his house because the church building was to undergo interior painting that upcoming week. Since he couldn’t get his key in the lock, he grabbed the entire tabernacle and put it in his wagon.

Going back for the chalice, he noted “a strange and startling phenomenon met my view. It was that of a cloud of sparks that blazed up here and there with a sharp detonating sound like that of powder exploding and flew from room to room. I understood then that the air was saturated with some special gas, and I could not help thinking if this gas lighted up from mere contact with a breath of hot wind, what would it be when fire would come in actual contact with it.”

Fr. Pernin managed to save the tabernacle, dragging his wagon to the Peshtigo River. In the jostle and bedlam, the wagon was pushed into the water and the tabernacle floated away. The next day, it was found, resting upright and dry, on a log in the river — with the sacred species safe inside. Today, the tabernacle spends part of the year

at St. Mary Church in Peshtigo and the summer at the Peshtigo Fire Museum, at 400 Oconto Ave. It is open from Memorial Day to Oct. 8.

IN THE RIVER

Fr. Pernin described the river scene that night: “When turning my gaze from the river, I chanced to look either to the right or left, before me or upwards, I saw nothing but flames; houses, trees, and the air itself were on fire. Above my head, as far as the eye could reach into space, alas! too brilliantly lighted, I saw nothing but immense volumes of flames covering the firmament, rolling one over the other with stormy violence as we see masses of clouds driven wildly hither and thither by the fierce power of the tempest.”

Nearly 10 miles away, in Marinette, as recorded in a special edition on Oct. 9, 1871, the Eagle newspaper reported the night scene: “At this time the direction of the wind changed rapidly

PESHTIGO | P19



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
Peshtigo Church Tabernacle

Adele Brise: A woman devoted to the Eucharist

BY FR. EDWARD LOONEY | FOR ON MISSION

GREEN BAY — The years since 2020 have been a difficult time for Catholics. The COVID-19 outbreak forced the suspension of public liturgies all throughout the world. Daily and Sunday Mass-goers no longer could receive the Eucharist. Spiritual communions became a way of life Sunday after Sunday, creating a longing within believers for the day they could once again be united with their Eucharistic Lord.

In some ways, this mirrors the 19th-century experiences of Belgian immigrants settling in northeast Wisconsin who began to abandon their faith and its sacramental practices. One priest wrote to the church in Belgium, asking for them to send accompanying priests with their flock who were emigrating to the United States.

This sacramental scene may be one of the contributing factors as to why the Queen of Heaven chose to appear to Adele Brise in 1859 — to renew the faithfulness of the people.

On Oct. 9, 1859, Adele was on her way to morning Mass, accompanied by her sister and a friend, when, for the second time, she saw a beautiful woman between two trees along the path. (Walking along the wooded trail, several miles each way for the privileged holy encounter, demonstrates Adele’s devotion to the Mass and the Eucharist.)

After attending Mass, Adele went to the priest and asked him for advice about the mysterious woman. He told her to ask a simple question and that is what she did on the way home.

From Our Lady’s message to Adele, we learn that she received Holy Communion on that Sunday because Mary commended her reception: “You received Holy Communion this morning and that is well.” But the Blessed Mother unlocked for us a secret about our re-

ception of Holy Communion, allowing Adele, and now us, to deepen our Eucharistic devotion.

The message went on: “But you must do more, make a general confession and offer your Communion for the conversion of sinners.”

Since Adele responded to the mission Our Lady entrusted to her of gathering the children and teaching, we can safely believe that she took seriously the invitation to prayer and offering her Communion for the conversion of sinners.

When returning to the pew after receiving Holy Communion, what do you do? Maybe you join in singing the hymn or pause for a few moments in silent prayer, having a heart-to-heart conversation with our Savior about our fears and hopes.

It is a powerful moment of prayer, and Our Lady asks us to pray for the conversion of sinners, which begins with ourselves, our family and friends, and the rest of the world.

The next time you receive the Eucharist, fulfill Our Lady’s request and pray for the conversion of sinners. You can pray with your own words or use the prayer I wrote (seen at right) to teach people how to pray in this way.

Adele attended Mass and received Holy Communion. After the apparition, she offered her Holy Communion for the conversion of sinners and prepared children to receive their first Holy Communion in response to Our Lady’s request to “teach the children how to approach the sacraments.”

The next time you approach to receive the Eucharist, remember the words Mary spoke to Adele and use them to deepen your Eucharistic devotion and prayer.

Fr. Looney’s writings, prayers and devotions to the Champion apparition can be found in his book “Our Lady of Good Help: Prayer Book for Pilgrims,” available from tanbooks.com and the Shrine gift shop.

“But you must do more, make a general confession and offer your Communion for the conversion of sinners.”

‘Prayer after Communion for the conversion of sinners’

BY FR. EDWARD LOONEY | FOR ON MISSION

Eternal Father, I kneel before you this day with a grateful heart because you have allowed me to receive the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus in Holy Communion.

Thank you for sending the Queen of Heaven to earth with a message calling us to conversion and emphasizing the sacraments. For when she appeared to Adele Brise in 1859, she asked her to offer her Holy Communion for the conversion of sinners. Just as Adele did long ago, I wish to do likewise this day.

I offer to you, Eternal Father, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of your Son, for the conversion of sinners, including my own conversion, in reparation for sin, and the salvation of souls. Through Our Lady’s maternal solicitude, may the hearts of hardened sinners return to the sacraments of penance and Eucharist, especially to Sunday Mass and to daily prayer.

As I go forward from this holy Mass, help me to fear nothing, knowing that you are with me and are always guiding me and that Our Lady constantly intercedes for me. Make me aware of your presence this day and always. Amen.



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Texas to Champion – Carol’s Story of Encountering Our Lady

BY SHRINE STAFF | FOR ON MISSION

CHAMPION — “Cool air and fall leaves, that’s something special for a Texan!”

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,” said 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 said 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,” she said.

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 about it, and I believe that after I lost my earthly mother, Mary became my mother,” she said.

Carol began visiting the Shrine as a pilgrim and, like many pilgrims before her, she said 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,” she said.

Desiring to grow closer to Our Lady, Carol recalled that it was a friendly Shrine staff member, Kathy Chia, who invited her to become a volunteer. In 2020, with her family grown and both she and Steve in retirement, Carol began her volunteer career at the Shrine. She started in the cafeteria and now serves in the gift shop five months out of the 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!” she said.

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 have 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,” Carol said.

To spread the word in her home parish that, yes, Mary has appeared in the United States, 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



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
Carol Konetzke in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion gift shop.

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 archdiocese,” she said.

Carol said she 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,” she said.

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

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An opportunity to visit with the saints

From the 12 Apostles to the Divine Mercy saint, saints’ relics offer another focus for prayer

BY PATRICIA KASTEN | FOR ON MISSION

CHAMPION — If you’d like to see relics of saints and even the life of Christ, a visit to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion might be in order. In the Apparition Oratory, you will find a large display case of relics of saints. These include relics of the 12 Apostles, who walked with Jesus when he ministered on earth.

The Shrine’s permanent collection of relics also includes relics of SS. Cecilia, Pius X, Anastasia, Faustina Kowalska, Teresa of Kolkata and Teresa of Avila, as well as a relic of St. Lucy that is in the process of being authenticated and thus not displayed.

Father of Mercy John Broussard, former rector at the Shrine, said that, over the years, the Shrine has received donations of relics. These include relics of St. Teresa of Kolkata and St. Faustina Kowalska.

The number, though, increased in one jump with the addition of the 12 Apostles.

“Suddenly,” said Fr. Broussard, “I had a priest come forward with a bunch of relics that he wanted to donate to the Shrine. He provided all the paperwork with them when he donated them.”

That priest donated the relics of the 12 Apostles several years ago, along with relics of the four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO
St. Maria Goretti relic.

“So, after some research and making sure they were authentic, we decided that it would be great to display all of them,” Fr. Broussard said. “When we renovated the downstairs oratory, we decided to include a relic case, a giant sort of reliquary case, where we could put them all.”

The Oratory Chapel’s display also contains relics from the roots of the now-gone trees where Adele Brise had her visions of the Blessed Mother in 1859. Those trees were a maple and a hemlock, according to the Shrine’s history.

Other than the trees, all of the Shrine’s relics are “first-class relics.” This means that they came from the actual body of the saint. First-class relics can be pieces of bones, hair or even blood.

“The relics represent, for us, two things,” Fr. Broussard said about the display’s importance. “First, they are (from) men and women who lived before us who were worthy of veneration and worthy of our respect insofar that they are very close to God. So we are reminded to ask for their intercession, to ask for their prayers. We believe that they are standing before God’s throne and are very influential in that regard.

“Secondly, (relics) remind us that we are body and soul and that, after death, we still reverence the body — especially with regard to the saints who were perfected by God’s grace,” he continued. “God’s grace affects not only their souls, but even purifies their very flesh. That is remembered when we reverence the relics of the saintly men and women who went before us: God’s grace is still imbued within their very bodies. So, we give that its due honor and veneration.”

Anyone who believes they might have relics is welcome to contact the Shrine. “We would be happy to look at them,” he said.

While not actually relics, a new addition to the Shrine’s collection is a permanent set of “The Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit,” designed by Blessed Carlo Acutis. Blessed Carlo documented Eucharistic miracles around the world and cataloged them onto a website which he created before his death from leukemia in 2006. He was 15 years old when he died.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

A reliquary case is behind the Lady of Grace statue, located in the Apparition Oratory, in the lower level of the Apparition Chapel.

The Champion Shrine Reliquary

In addition to being a place for an intimate encounter with our Blessed Mother, the Apparition Oratory is also home to a multitude of saint relics available for veneration behind the main crowned statue of Our Lady of Grace. On the saint feast days, each relic is brought up to the sanctuary of the Apparition Chapel for the day, with open veneration available for the hour before 11 a.m. Mass. The Shrine currently houses the relics of:

- St. Patrick (3/17)
- St. Mark the Evangelist (4/25)
- St. Philip the Apostle (5/3)
- St. James the Lesser Apostle (5/3)
- St. Matthias the Apostle (5/14)
- St. Barnabas the Apostle (6/11)
- St. Anthony of Padua (6/13)
- St. Peter the Apostle (6/29)

- St. Paul the Apostle (6/29)
- St. Thomas the Apostle (7/3)
- St. Maria Goretti (7/6)
- St. James the Greater Apostle (7/25)
- St. Pope Pius X (8/21)
- St. Bartholomew the Apostle (8/24)
- St. Teresa of Calcutta (9/5)
- St. Matthew the Evangelist (9/21)
- St. Francis of Assisi (10/4)
- St. Maria Faustina Kowalska (10/5)
- St. Teresa of Avila (10/15)
- St. Gerard Majella (10/16)
- St. Luke the Evangelist (10/18)
- St. Pope John Paul II (10/22)
- St. Simon the Apostle (10/28)
- St. Jude the Apostle (10/28)
- St. Cecilia (11/22)
- St. Andrew the Apostle (11/30)
- St. Barbara (12/4)
- St. Anastasia (12/25)
- St. John the Evangelist (12/27)
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The Walk to Mary: A Powerful Witness of Faith in Our Community

BY BISHOP DAVID RICKEN | FOR ON MISSION

GREEN BAY — Most of us are familiar with the Walk to Mary, the beloved pilgrimage event held annually in the Diocese of Green Bay on the first Saturday of May which draws approximately 6,000 faithful pilgrims from across the United States each year. Recently, it was honored with the prestigious Discover Green Bay 2024 Event of the Year Award. This recognition highlights the profound impact and witness the Walk to Mary has on the Green Bay community and beyond.

The Walk to Mary is more than a physical journey — it is a spiritual encounter where pilgrims are invited to reflect on their faith, grow closer to Christ and share that faith with others. The 22-mile walk winds through the City of Green Bay from the National Shrine of St. Joseph in De Pere and leads to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, the sacred grounds where Our Lady appeared three times in 1859.

This year's recognition holds particular significance considering the 2025 Jubilee, a time when Catholics around the world are called to be Pilgrims of Hope — to fan the flame of hope found only in Jesus Christ and to be witnesses of this hope for others.

The Walk to Mary is more than a physical journey — it is a spiritual encounter where pilgrims are invited to reflect on their faith, grow closer to Christ and share that faith with others.

from the mountain” and share our gift of faith with the world.

The Walk to Mary embodies this calling, providing an opportunity for a personal encounter with Jesus through the Blessed Virgin Mary (going up the mountain) and, in turn, offering a chance for evangelism and renewal within both our Catholic community and the greater Green Bay area (coming down the mountain).

To embark on the Walk to Mary is to answer the call to step beyond oneself, encounter God in a profound way and become a witness of hope to the world.

Registrations are now open for the 2025 Walk to Mary and I warmly invite you to consider participating this Jubilee Year. The pilgrimage's destination, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, has been designated a Jubilee Pilgrimage Site for 2025. This is a wonderful opportunity to encounter the spiritual graces Our Lord desires to give during this special year.

Discover Green Bay's 2024 Event of the Year Award affirms what I and so many pilgrims have seen since the inception of the Walk to Mary: a powerful public witness to faith and a source of grace and unity for all who participate. It is a tribute to the many staff, volunteers and pilgrims whose dedication and faith bring this event to life each year.

For more information about the Saturday, May 3, Walk To Mary and to register, see walktomary.com.



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National Eucharistic Pilgrimage brings ‘Jesus into the streets’

The Marian Route came through the diocese June 12-18, 2024, en route to the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis

BY JEFF KUROWSKI | FOR ON MISSION

HOWARD — Matthew Heidenreich took a moment to pause after entering the narthex of St. John the Baptist Church early in the evening on Thursday, June 13. Heidenreich, one of eight perpetual pilgrims on the Marian Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, had just completed walking from Pittsfield to Howard as part of the prayer procession with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

A passerby on his way to the church for Mass offered him gratitude for his inspiration.

“It’s inspiring for us,” Heidenreich told On Mission. “Sometimes we hear these messages about how hopeless everything is and how it seems like so many people are walking away from the church. But for me, this has been an experience about how many faithful Catholics there still are, how many people are willing to take a stand for what they believe and are burning for that love of Christ. Seeing 7,000 people in Minneapolis follow the Lord, that’s powerful. There are 300 people here for Mass.”

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage began on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Four groups of young adults departed from the north, south, east and west to cover more than 6,000 miles. They converged on July 15, 2024, in Indianapolis, two days prior to the start of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress at Lucas Oil Stadium.

The Marian Route (north group) started its journey at Lake Itasca in Minnesota.

On Wednesday, June 12, the Eucharist was transferred from the Diocese of La Crosse to the Diocese of Green

Bay at St. William Church in Wittenberg. A group of more than 50 young people representing parishes throughout the diocese were in Wittenberg to welcome the Eucharistic Lord.

“The joy among the young people was palpable as they opened their hearts to the Lord in silent prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, in the sacrament of reconciliation and in fellowship with their peers,” said Kately Javier, religious education director for the Parish & Family Life Mission Team of the Diocese of Green Bay.

“The youth followed Jesus to the lakeshore for the final boat procession in Cecil,” added Javier. “From the lakeshore, young people listened intently as faithful disciples to Christ, the master who taught them from the boat and invited them to follow him. With hearts racing, having encountered the Lord truly present in the Eucharist, the young people now go forth as missionary disciples to share the good news of God’s love with all the world.”

The boat trip across Shawano Lake was not originally planned to be part of the June 12-18 pilgrimage in the diocese, said Tina Haanen, mission team coordinator for the Parish & Family Life Mission team of the Diocese of Green Bay. Haanen worked on logistics for the route.

“I met Deacon Todd (Raether, pastoral coordinator at St. Martin of Tours Parish in Cecil),” said Haanen. “We were trying to figure out how to go to Camp (Tekakwitha). Deacon Todd said, ‘I think we should do a boat.’ It came together.”

Heidenreich, who is from Columbus, Ohio, and attends the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, said he had worked two summers in the northwest part of Wisconsin. He described the trek across Shawano Lake as “the most Wisconsin thing I’ve ever seen — Catholics on a boat together.”

The events and experiences in each diocese on the route were different and there was beauty in those differences, said Heidenreich.

“There is the diversity of our church, yet there is unity,” he said. “Christ is coming the same way, but to vastly different communities. He’s always coming and bringing his presence.”

Heidenreich said that he was drawn



JEFF KUROWSKI | FOR ON MISSION

A prayer procession with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament arrives in Howard on June 13. The procession, which started in Pittsfield, was part of Marian Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Mass followed the procession at St. John the Baptist Church. The pilgrimage came through the Diocese of Green Bay June 12-18.

to the journey of the pilgrimage because he’s a backpacker and he first encountered the Lord during eucharistic procession.

“I was raised Catholic and went to a Catholic school. But it was when I went to a Catholic summer camp is when I encountered the faith being lived out in a vibrant way,” he said. “I started to engage in daily prayer. It really came alive at that point. I attribute a lot of those experiences to why I’m here now.”

Fr. Michael Thiel, pastor of St. Denis Parish, Shiocton, and St. Patrick Parish, Stephenville, served as chaplain for the pilgrimage in the diocese.

“It’s God stirring up the hearts of his people,” he said. “The people who have already begun pilgrimage have had their hearts moved. Now they are on the move and Jesus is moving with them. We are bringing Jesus into the streets, outside the walls of the church, into the public. It’s an incredible witness to the depth of our faith.”

The pilgrimage featured a day of service on June 15.

Diocesan employees, family members and volunteers, along with the pilgrims, assisted with food preparation at Paul’s Pantry and painting and yard work at the Whatsoever You Do House of Hospitality, both in Green Bay.

“Service has been cool,” said Heidenreich. “When we are at parish life, we see a snapshot, but to be able to enter into the needs of a community, really

serve, it’s a deeper way to engage and that’s been such a blessing for us.”

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion hosted the Marian Route on Sunday, June 16, for Mass with Bishop David Ricken and a large eucharistic procession around the grounds. Heidenreich said that none of the perpetual pilgrims had been to the Shrine before, so they were excited to experience the site of the only approved Marian apparition in the United States.

Parishes in the diocese along the Marian Route hosted holy hours. The pilgrims also visited five different monasteries/convents.

The Holy Eucharist was transferred from the Diocese of Green Bay to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at Mass on Tuesday, June 18, with Bishop Ricken and Archbishop Jerome Listecki of Milwaukee.

It was an honor to have one of the pilgrimage routes go through the Diocese of Green Bay, said Fr. John Girotti, vicar general and moderator of the Curia.

“It’s a very exciting time for us as Christians and Catholics because we are all on pilgrimage through life and we are all going somewhere,” he said. “Our goal is, of course, heaven. The Eucharist is how Jesus is present, how he nourishes us.”

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From Guadalupe Shrine to Champion Shrine

Four seminarians share their pilgrimage experience

BY SHRINE STAFF | FOR ON MISSION

“Lord, I need you to pick up my foot, and I will put it down.”

As Nick, Rob, Benedict and Carl arrived at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, there was no time to waste. “Our goal was to make it for 11a.m. Mass,” said Nick, smiling. And that is exactly what they did.

After Mass on the grounds of the Shrine, the four men and their loved ones stepped outside of the chapel, dropped their backpacks and rested in the sun. A feeling of gratitude surrounded their little group – gratitude to the Lord for the Grace given to accomplish their long pilgrimage.

THE JOURNEY

Diocese of Green Bay seminarians Nick Vande Hey, Rob Reynebeau and Benedict Wood, as well as Diocese of Superior seminarian Carl Oman, joined together to complete a 225-plus mile walking pilgrimage from the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin, to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

Their pilgrimage was 11 days long and consisted of walking, praying in silence, sacrificing together and sing-



Seminarians Nick Vande Hey, left, Rob Reynebeau, Carl Oman and Benedict Wood are pictured on the grounds of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

ing. “We sang a lot,” said Vande Hey, with a chuckle.

When asked what their favorite songs were, they agreed, “Any Marian hymns.”

“But, also, some country!” added Reynebeau.

For lodging along the journey, they called ahead to parishes in the communities they passed through and priests connected them to parishioners who would be open to hosting the seminarians.

“We knew where we were going, or at least we knew there was a person expecting us, but sometimes these were complete strangers,” said Vande Hey.

After determining their stops and their Six Rules of Life on the pilgrimage, they were off.

THE SIX RULES OF LIFE

The four men kept the following Six Rules of Life to connect them to God and embrace the spirit of pilgrimage:

- 1. Embrace the Cross.

Overall, no complaining. Unite their sufferings – the blisters, the cold feet, the frustrations that arose – to the suffering of Christ.

- 2. If you need something, ask. If you don’t need something, don’t ask. Accept whatever is offered to you.

This was ultimately how the four seminarians approached the concept of begging.

“We were begging for our basic needs throughout the course of this pilgrimage as a way to surrender to God’s providence,” said Wood.

- 3. End every day with zero dollars or have a plan to give it away.

In the spirit of “give us this day our daily bread” they would end their day with zero dollars. While they were sometimes given money during the pilgrimage, the four men said they

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The Rector of Champion Shrine, Fr. Joseph Aytona, gave the four men a blessing when they arrived to the Shrine.

did not want to get a donation and be set for the week, only to take care of themselves.

“We wanted to give people the opportunity to enter into the pilgrimage by helping provide for us, and for us to trust that God would provide,” said Wood.

4. Live liturgically.

This was how they prayed throughout the course of the pilgrimage. They would begin each day by praying through some of the intentions they were carrying and then spent 45 minutes in silence. They would do the same after lunch – 45 minutes of silence preceded by praying half the sheet of the intentions they were carrying. Each day, they prayed all five of the hours of the Breviary on the road together or sometimes completed evening prayer at the place they were stopping for the night. They would pray several rosaries together and, if walking during the 3 o’clock hour, they would pray the Stations of the Cross.

“As we progressed through the pilgrimage together, there would be longer periods of silence, more prayer, more growth in our interior life as we got closer and closer to our destination,” Wood explained.

5. Live with a spirit of trusting spontaneity.

They wanted to trust that, not only would God take care of them, but that God would provide awesome opportunities in front of them. Sometimes, they would go off-trail to check out a church and pray there for a while, or just take risks.

“One day we were staying with a family, and they had a 7-year-old who was asking for ice cream. So, we went out to Dairy Queen and got them Dilly Bars because we had money that we had to donate that day,” said Wood. “It was just embracing this joy and trusting that, while we are embracing the Cross, we are also going to be provided opportunities to give, to love and to enter into the joy of the Lord.”

6. Become a saint.

“This life is passing. We are called to strive and trust that God will supply the Grace we need to enter into eternal life,” said Wood, looking out onto the Shrine’s grounds. “That is the purpose of the pilgrimage – to remind us that in our day-to-day life, we are pilgrims marching towards the heavenly Jerusalem, marching towards eternal life. That is the goal. That is what our life is oriented towards.”

THE SPIRIT OF PILGRIMAGE

What does pilgrimage mean to each of you?

Nick Vande Hey

Pilgrimage is an opportunity to draw closer to the Lord with an eternal perspective and for him to draw close to you... to recognize in a small way the larger journey that we are participating in.

Benedict Wood

Pilgrimage for me is an opportunity to depend totally on the Lord. Particularly related to this pilgrimage – when you are pushing yourself to your physical limit, when you are begging for your needs, when you are living a life that radically is dependent on God – any ideas of independence start to disappear, and you come face-to-face with your poverty before the Lord.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

Seminarians Nick Vande Hey, left, Rob Reynebeau, Carl Oman and Benedict Wood with family and friends.

There were times with every step I would pray, “Lord, I need you to pick up my foot, and I will put it down.”

Carl Oman

Pilgrimage is a microcosm of life. In these 11 days, we were able to experience the whole journey – with its joys and struggles. It makes a big analogy to life itself, our journey as a pilgrim church. When we first started off, it was exciting and full of anticipation. Then, a few days in, we are on the longest, straightest stretch of highway and you start to recognize you can’t just do this anymore on your own. But this shows us a glimpse of our own life – and, especially as seminarians, our life as priests.

Rob Reynebeau

I really relate pilgrimage to the full journey of life. Throughout this pilgrimage, I’ve felt the full range of emotions that we experience in life. Time spent on pilgrimage allows us to be more attentive to the full movements of our heart and to create greater intimacy with Jesus. Especially as a seminarian, I was grateful to fully claim this time to discern what Jesus wanted to reveal to me on this pilgrimage, while simultaneously reflecting on my life – who I’m trying to serve, what my goal is, what my intentions are.

A CONNECTION TO THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC PILGRIMAGE

From May to July 2024, the National Eucharistic Revival held its National Eucharistic Pilgrimage across the United States. Four different routes were offered for pilgrims to participate in, all converging in Indianapolis on July 16 for the 10th National Eucharistic Congress. One of the routes, known as the Marian Route, passed through many Midwest Shrines devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, including The National Shrine of Our Lady of

Champion, the first and only approved Marian Apparition Site in the United States.

The Marian Route will follow in similar steps to what these four men did in walking from La Crosse to Champion. “We are just warming up the trail for them,” said Vande Hey, smiling. “Make straight his paths.”

WE ARE ALL CALLED TO PILGRIMAGE

When asked if they would recommend pilgrimage to others, “Of course!” said Vande Hey. “The Lord just reveals so much and pours forth an abundance of Grace when we give him our time.” While we may not all be able to walk 225-plus miles from La Crosse to Champion as these men did, the spirit of pilgrimage lies in the hearts of us all. Whether intentionally traveling to a sacred site, living out our vocation and nurturing it in others, or by doing God’s will daily – we are all pilgrims. The question remains for each of us to ponder: “How can we best embrace

our journey as we walk towards our heavenly destination?”

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray For Us! Our Lady of Champion, Pray For Us!

To plan a pilgrimage to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, check out championshrine.org/visit to find resources, planning guides and travel information.



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– Benedict Wood

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Cause for Canonization Advances as National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Arrives at Wisconsin Marian Shrine

Adele Brise’s cause for canonization moved forward just before pilgrims arrived at the only Marian apparition site in the U.S.

BY EMMA FOLLET | NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER

NEW FRANKEN, WIS. — The bells of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion rang out shortly before 2 p.m. on Sunday to welcome and announce the arrival of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

Approximately 2,000 pilgrims participated in the Shrine’s leg of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims, from babies in strollers to wheelchair-bound elderly, came together to walk with Our Lord and proclaim by their presence his true presence. Volunteers passed out holy cards with the newly painted image of Mary’s visits to Adele Brise.

In 1859, Brise saw three apparitions of the Blessed Mother in the woods of Champion. The original image was on display in July 2024 during the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis before coming to remain at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion to be enjoyed and meditated on by the many pilgrims who visit each year.

Adele Brise, and the only church-approved Marian apparition site in the United States, made Champion an ideal choice for many faithful who wished to participate in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

Ten young women, who were part of an ENDOW group, fundraised for almost two years in order to make this trip happen. The group spent several days visiting parishes and praying especially for one of their group leaders who was suffering from breast cancer. They also carried with them the intentions of their parishes, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Henry from the Phoenix area, to pray for them and to “give to our Holy Mother,” said Kandi Madden.

The women chose this Shrine “because it was the only approved Marian apparition,” added high-school student Elliana Madden, Kandi’s daughter. “And Wisconsin has cows,” she added, laughing.

“We found out about the Eucharistic Pilgrimage after already choosing the Shrine, and we got to walk seven miles with them. We found all that out after planning to come, so everything lined up perfectly for us,” she said.

The group was excited to hear about the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ decision to move Adele Brise’s cause for canonization forward while they journeyed.

“We are really lucky to be here and have this experience and recenter God in our life and grow closer to each other,” said another student, Meaghan Keogh.



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

Eucharistic Procession at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

Many other pilgrims also attended with specific intentions in their hearts — or for their hearts.

“I’m pregnant with a baby that has a severe heart defect, and we were kind of researching what is the closest we could be to God in the United States without traveling too far,” said Krista from St. Paul, Minnesota.

Due in September, she shared that her baby would have multiple open-heart surgeries, as well as a potential heart transplant down the road. “We knew about the Marian apparition here, and it just so happened that this procession was happening,” she said.

Her husband, Tony, continued, “We were drawn to this location and then we found out they were having this procession, so it was good timing from that standpoint.”

The couple, accompanied by their other children, enjoyed participating in the pilgrimage. “It was a beautiful and wonderful day,” Krista said. “All we can do is pray, so that’s what we came here to do.”

The McKinney family from Barneveld, Wisconsin, also expressed their gratitude in sharing this experience with their children.

“We hadn’t made it up here yet, and it just happened that the pilgrimage was going to be here, and we thought it would be a great way to come and visit the Shrine and also participate in the pilgrimage,” said Cameron, the father. “We just [thought] it would be a really good experience for the kids to see people come from all over to worship and give this time to Jesus. Everything came together to make this weekend work out really well.”

“Our kids have learned about Adele Brise and Our Lady of Champion,” said Beth, the mother, expressing gratitude for making the pilgrimage.

The McKinneys, originally from Indiana, looked forward to attending the National Eucharistic Congress last July as well as visiting family in their native state. “We wanted to try and see one stop of the pilgrimage on the way to the Congress so that when the kids see the Eucharist coming in [at the National Eucharistic Congress] they’ll remember that they saw it on that pilgrimage path, and this was just perfect.”

“We just started talking about how it would be something [the kids] would remember forever, seeing that amount of people come together for Jesus. I just feel like, as they go out into the world, maybe

they feel like a minority sometimes or they feel lonely, they’ll remember this time when there were so many people who loved the same thing they loved and worshiped Jesus like they do and hopefully that carries with them. That’s my hope for them,” said Beth.

The O’Brien family also expressed their excitement to attend the event.

“We’ve been following the cross-country Eucharistic procession, and since it’s coming as close to our place as possible today, we traveled to meet it. We are also very interested in Our Lady of Champion. It’s very significant that it’s America’s only approved apparition, so I just wanted to bring my kids and for them to experience this.”

The O’Briens’ 9-year-old daughter concurred, saying, “It’s nice to be part of the Eucharistic Revival, ‘cause it’s a very big event in history!”

The procession fell on Father’s Day, and for some pilgrims, that brought another depth to the day.

Local parents Alex and Megan Sekora brought their young son along with them and enjoyed getting to celebrate both fatherhood on earth and our eternal Father in heaven.

“It’s an honor to spend Father’s Day here,” said Alex. He said Father’s Day is also part of recognizing our own sonship and daughtership, while “putting God the Father first and remembering the reason why we are Catholic.”

Alex said he sees his own role of father tied together to his faith. “Ultimately, our goal as Catholics is to go to heaven, so even just from a young age, from 3 months old, including him in the Catholic faith and involving him in Eucharistic processions and just bringing him to Mass, we just want to teach him from a young age the importance of the Catholic faith — and ultimately all our children,” he said.

The Green Bay family was excited to see so many people join the Eucharist procession and celebrate the True Presence with so many people. Alex added, “We come out here for events at the Shrine quite a bit because we live so close, but being able to see so many people ... do the Eucharistic procession to publicly proclaim Jesus’ True Presence in the Holy Eucharist is an amazing feeling and an honor.”

Follett, Emma : (c) 2025 EWTN News, Inc. Reprinted with permission from the National Catholic Register - <http://www.ncregister.com>.

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Diocese of Green Bay

A National Eucharistic Congress Art Collaboration with Champion Shrine

BY SHRINE STAFF | FOR ON MISSION

CHAMPION —What began as a concept in the summer of 2023 with the National Eucharistic Congress has turned into a brilliant movement to celebrate sacred art and Our Lady for the National Eucharistic Revival! The team at the National Eucharistic Congress reached out to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, sharing their desire to have artwork from churches, shrines and sacred sites at the National Congress in July 2024. The Shrine was then paired with a well-known artist from St. Louis, Gwyneth Thompson-Briggs, to paint the beautiful scene of Our Lady of Champion’s appearance to Adele Brise in 1859.

UNITING THREE APPARITIONS

Gwyneth describes the painting through her lens: *This painting highlights the Eucharistic element of Our Lady of Champion by uniting the three apparitions to Adele Brise into a single image. As in each apparition, the Queen of Heaven is depicted robed in dazzling white, standing between two trees — a maple and a hemlock — in the midst of an ancient forest in early October 1859. She appears to dissolve into a cloud of mist, as she did after the second apparition. As Adele noticed in the third apparition, a yellow sash surrounds Our Lady’s waist, a crown of stars surrounds her head and her long, wavy, golden hair falls over her shoulders. Adele could hardly look at her face because of the bright light shining around her. In the painting, a sheer veil communicates this not-quite-blinding light. The right half of Adele’s face, clearly lit to the viewer, reveals what must have most distinguished her in the eyes of the world: the prominent scars from a childhood accident with lye. The left half of her face, with her eye fixed on the Queen of*

Heaven, is veiled in shadow from the viewer. Adele is dressed in workday clothes, as she was at the time of the first apparition, when she was on her way to the gristmill with a sack of wheat. The wheat also alludes to the second and third apparitions, when Adele was on her way to and from the reception of Holy Communion. As during the third apparition, she has fallen to her knees to receive her mission from the Queen of Heaven: *Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation . . . their catechism, how to sign themselves with the Sign of the Cross, and how to approach the sacraments. Our Lady’s raised right hand at once suggests the mission to go out and gather the children of the country, and the blessing she seemed to impart before disappearing. Adele’s acceptance of this mission is symbolized by her embrace of the wheat, which becomes the interpretive key of the painting. Cultivated in the midst of the wilderness by the children of the country, the wheat is called – like them – to be transformed through the Cross and the Sacraments; and with Adele’s cooperation — into a pure sacrifice to the Lord.* The final work of art was displayed at the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis July 17-21, 2024. It then traveled to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion to be displayed for pilgrims to see and pray with. The Shrine has small prayer cards of the artwork with the prayer for the National Eucharistic Revival.

SHARING THE ARTWORK

Champion Shrine’s gift shop has several items featuring this art, including prayer cards and various-sized prints. We are very grateful that Champion Shrine was



THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED PHOTO

In 2024, The National Shrine commissioned a beautiful artwork of Our Lady appearing to Adele Brise that appeared at the National Eucharistic Congress in July of 2024. This painting can be found and viewed in the History Center on the grounds of the Shrine. invited to participate with the Eucharistic Congress in this program and look forward to sharing the wonderful piece of artwork with our visitors to the Shrine!



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Shrine has strong ties for those with Belgian roots

Volunteer remembers that her great-grandfather learned about his faith from Adele Brise in the 1860s

BY BENJAMIN WIDEMAN | FOR ON MISSION

CHAMPION — Joan Dalebroux's family roots run deep at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

So deep, in fact, they date all the way back to the Shrine's origin in 1859.

In October of that year, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Adele Brise as the 28-year-old walked to church here along a wooded trail, telling her, in part, "Gather the children in this wild country and teach them what they should know for salvation."

Two months later, in December of 1859, Dalebroux's great-grandfather, Isadore Boucher, was born in Chicago to parents who had emigrated from Belgium, Adele's home country.

Not long after, the Bouchers moved to this area, and Isadore became one of the children taught by Adele as she followed the Blessed Virgin Mary's instructions.

"I feel so fortunate, so blessed, that my family has such a connection, such a strong love for the chapel and Adele Brise and our religious history here," said Dalebroux, 84, who was 12 when her great-grandfather died in 1950.

Dalebroux is among the area residents whose families, many of Belgian descent, have worshiped at the site of the Shrine for decades. Seven generations in Dalebroux's family have been here — stretching from her great-great-grandparents to her grandchildren (she also has three great-grandchildren who live outside of northeast Wisconsin).

In 2010, Bishop David Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay formally approved the Marian Apparitions that took place on the grounds of the Shrine as "worthy of belief." In 2016, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops declared the grounds of Our Lady of Champion as a national shrine.

Dalebroux (*nee* Gillis) speaks with youthful enthusiasm about the chapel there and her upbringing in the countryside 15 miles northeast of Green Bay.

She was born May 11, 1938, on her grandparents' farm in Dyckesville, just a few miles from Champion. At the age of 2, Dalebroux and her family moved to a Norbertine farm across from Bay Shore Park. For the first two decades of her life — and then again for the past 30-plus years — her home parish has



BENJAMIN WIDEMAN | FOR ON MISSION

Joan Dalebroux, of the township of Red River, volunteers at the Welcome Center at The National Shrine. She holds a photo of her great-grandparents, Emma and Isadore Boucher. Isadore was born in Chicago, the child of Belgian immigrants. The Bouchers moved to the Champion area in 1859 and Isadore became one of the children taught by Adele Brise. Dalebroux was 12 years old when her great-grandfather died in 1950.

been St. Louis, Dyckesville.

She and her husband, Gene, married in 1958 and attended St. Odile Catholic Church in nearby Thiry Daems for about 30 years until it closed in 1992. They then returned to St. Louis Parish.

Throughout her life, Dalebroux has worshiped at the current chapel — located where Adele's father built the first chapel in 1859. She said she usually prayed here at least once a week — perhaps once every two weeks while raising her children — equating to more than 3,000 visits in her lifetime.

"My earliest memory of 'The Chapel' (an early name for the current Shrine), is going there with my grandma (Frances Gillis)," Dalebroux said. "I was just a young girl when I went with her, but I still remember that it smelled so new. This current chapel was built in 1941, so it was brand new at that time. It had a pleasant, woody smell. I remember thinking, 'This new church smells so good.'"

"And my grandma, she loved the chapel," Dalebroux added. "We would go there often during the war (World War II) since we had family in the service. One of my uncles was in a submarine in the South Pacific. My grandma would be so concerned because she wouldn't hear from him for a month at a time. So she'd walk all the way to the chapel and pray her rosary every step."

For decades, people sought comfort at the site of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. And Dalebroux's family was no different in that regard.

"When we would go to Tuesday evening devotions, the chapel would be full from the front to the back," Dalebroux said. "Everyone was together, praying for the end of the war. So many people had sons or daughters or parents or brothers in the service. We all were worried and wanted to see the war end."

She also recalls visiting "The Chapel" for many years on Aug. 15 on the feast of the Assumption.

"We always went to that," she said. "Never missed it. I remember seeing my friends there that day, too."

Delving further into her family history, Dalebroux said her great-grandfather, Isadore Boucher, and his family went to the chapel during the Peshtigo Fire in 1871.

The fire (which took place on Oct. 8, 1871, the same night as the Great Chicago Fire) destroyed much of the surrounding area except the grounds of the chapel, its convent, school and five acres of land consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Pilgrimages increased after that, as did the devotions on Aug. 15.

"He was 12 years old when the fire was happening," Dalebroux said of her

great-grandfather. "They all went to the chapel to pray. Even some people who weren't Catholic went there. It was an oasis from the fire."

"Because my great-grandfather was taught by Sr. Adele (as people called Adele), I think maybe that's why my grandmother, after she was born, had so much faith and trust in going to the chapel for her whole life."

Dalebroux has carried on that tradition, regularly attending Mass at the chapel and volunteering about once per week in the Welcome Center. She also assists during Eucharistic Adoration.

"I like that I meet people from all over," she said. "It's unbelievable the distances people come for their pilgrimage. In summer, especially, I really enjoy seeing so many people. They tell me their stories and sometimes I tell them my story. I answer questions as best I can and point people in the right direction."

She recalls one interaction with a visitor about six years ago while volunteering in the Oratory Chapel.

"I was standing in the back, in case anyone had a question, and this lady came up and said, 'Do you smell that sweet smell like roses?'" Dalebroux said she did not.

So the woman told her that she had been praying in front of the Blessed Mother's statue and caught, on the breeze, a sweet smell of roses.

Dalebroux said the woman told her, "It's the same smell I experienced when my mother passed away."

Although Adele passed away in 1896, Dalebroux said she feels a special bond with her.

"I feel really close to her in a way," Dalebroux said. "I pray to her. When I go to the chapel, depending where I'm parked, I stop by her grave and say a prayer. Whenever I arrive at the chapel and get out of my car, I'm stepping on holy ground. It's a place of peace. I'm always happy to be there. And as long as I'm able to, I'll always go there."

Dalebroux and her husband haven't ventured far from the chapel over the years.

When asked what changes she might like to see at the Shrine in the years ahead, Dalebroux said:

"I'm happy with the way things are going. We just have to always realize the Blessed Mother is the one who's in charge there, not us."



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1. LOURDES, FRANCE
1858: A beautiful lady, who identifies herself as the “Immaculate Conception,” appears to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous.

2. AKITA, JAPAN
1973: Mary gives Sister Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa three messages.

3. BEAURAING, BELGIUM
1932- 1933: A group of children see visions of Mary between late November and January.

4. BANNEUX, BELGIUM
1933: A young girl named Mariette Beco, who came from a poor, lapsed-Catholic family, said Mary appeared to her on eight occasions, encouraging her to pray.

5. LAUS, FRANCE
1664-1718: A series of daily Marian apparitions lasting 54 years are experienced by young French shepherdess Benoite Rencurel.

6. QUITO, ECUADOR
1594: Under the title Our Lady of Good Success, Mary appears to Spanish-born Mother Mariana de Jesus Torres.

7. FATIMA, PORTUGAL
1917: Apparitions of Mary appear to Lúcia dos Santos and two of her cousins on the 13th day of six consecutive months.

8. TUY, SPAIN
1929: Lúcia dos Santos reports that Mary returned and repeated her request for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

9. CHAMPION, WISCONSIN
1859: Marian visions received by Adele Brise are the first in the United States to receive approval of a diocesan bishop.

10. KIBEHO, RWANDA
1980s: Mary appears at an all-girls Catholic high school in this remote village.

11. MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
1531: Mary appears to Indigenous peasant St. Juan Diego near the present-day capital.



Source: Marianist Father Salvatore Perrella, assistant dean of faculty at the Pontifical Theological Faculty Marianum ©2011 CNS

Belgian wayside shrines offer road signs of devotion

Chapels built by Belgian immigrants dot Brown, Door and Kewaunee counties

BY PATRICIA KASTEN
| FOR ON MISSION



ON MISSION FILE PHOTO

A wayside chapel, originally erected in Dyckesville, was moved to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in 2003. It stands near the northern edge of the property.

CHAMPION — In your travels around northeast Wisconsin’s Door County, you might notice small, frame buildings that look like farm sheds — except for the little crosses on top.

There are more than two dozen of these wayside or roadside chapels dotting Door, northern Brown and Kewaunee counties. They were built by Belgian immigrants and their descendants.

For example, there is Our Mother of Perpetual Help Chapel at 9861 W. Swamp Road and St. Roch Chapel at 1257 County Highway DK, both open to the public.

There is also a chapel, originally built in Dyckesville, that was moved to the grounds of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion in 2003.

These chapels — generally housing an altar, statues, a cross and a place to sit and/or kneel — were built by families as places for prayer or in gratitude for help, such as healing from an illness.

The wayside chapel that was moved to the grounds of the Shrine was restored by Tory Thiry and his family.

While located on private land, the chapels were always placed so that they were near a road and accessible to all. Some are now on private property.

For a map and addresses, visit walloonbelgiansdoorpeninsula.weebly.com/chapels-map.html.

The chapels, sporting individual styles, dot the landscape and farmlands of Door, Brown and Kewaunee counties.

For example, St. Odile Chapel has its little stained-glass window over the doorway in Thiry Daems and the Blessed Virgin Mary Chapel has its blue cross above the door in Tonet.

There is St. Ghislain Chapel in Misere, standing exactly where the St. Michael Church in Misere did until the mid-1970s.

Each chapel has its own rustic charm. Some have candles to light. Others have holy water fonts for blessing. Many have guest books with names from around Wisconsin, the Midwest and even overseas, like the woman from England who visited St. Odile Chapel in 2019.

When you stop at these chapels, local people will notice you and, should you have questions, are glad to help. Most are willing to share some local stories.

Wayside or roadside chapels of a variety of types are not unique to Wisconsin. Their roots actually date to Roman and Greek times, when statues of Hermes (the Greek god of travelers), set in small shrines, would guide travelers along commonly traveled routes.

Wayside shrines can be found across Europe, from Poland and Slovenia to Italy and France, Belgium and England. They range in size from single pillars, called “column shrines” and *Schöpflöf-fel* shrines (meaning “serving spoon” or “scoop” in German), to roofed boxes nailed to trees to more elaborate chapel-shrines.

In France, you can find *calvaires* (stone crucifixion scenes), some dating to the eighth century, and often placed along travel routes, though many have been lost over the centuries.



Wayside shrines were often located along routes taken by pilgrims to famous shrines, placed at crossroads or major geographic sites, such as mountaintops or springs and fountains.

Many of the roadside chapels in Door County are along routes leading to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, which has been a pilgrimage site since Adele Brise’s visions in 1859.

Wayside shrines don’t always have to be a building. Even the humble bathtub shrines seen in yards from the Midwest to the East Coast, sometimes adorned with seashells, can qualify as wayside shrines. Made from a half-buried, cast iron tub, these shrines most often hold a statue of Mary, but can also hold a cross or a statue of another saint.

Another development you will see in northeast Wisconsin are rosaries — often lighted — on the sides of houses. While not technically a wayside shrine, these memorials that honor Mary nonetheless mark places of prayer and remind us to turn toward God on all our journeys.

Sources: fisheaters.com; wikipedia.org; ncregister.com; waysideshrines.org and walloonbelgiansdoorpeninsula.weebly.com




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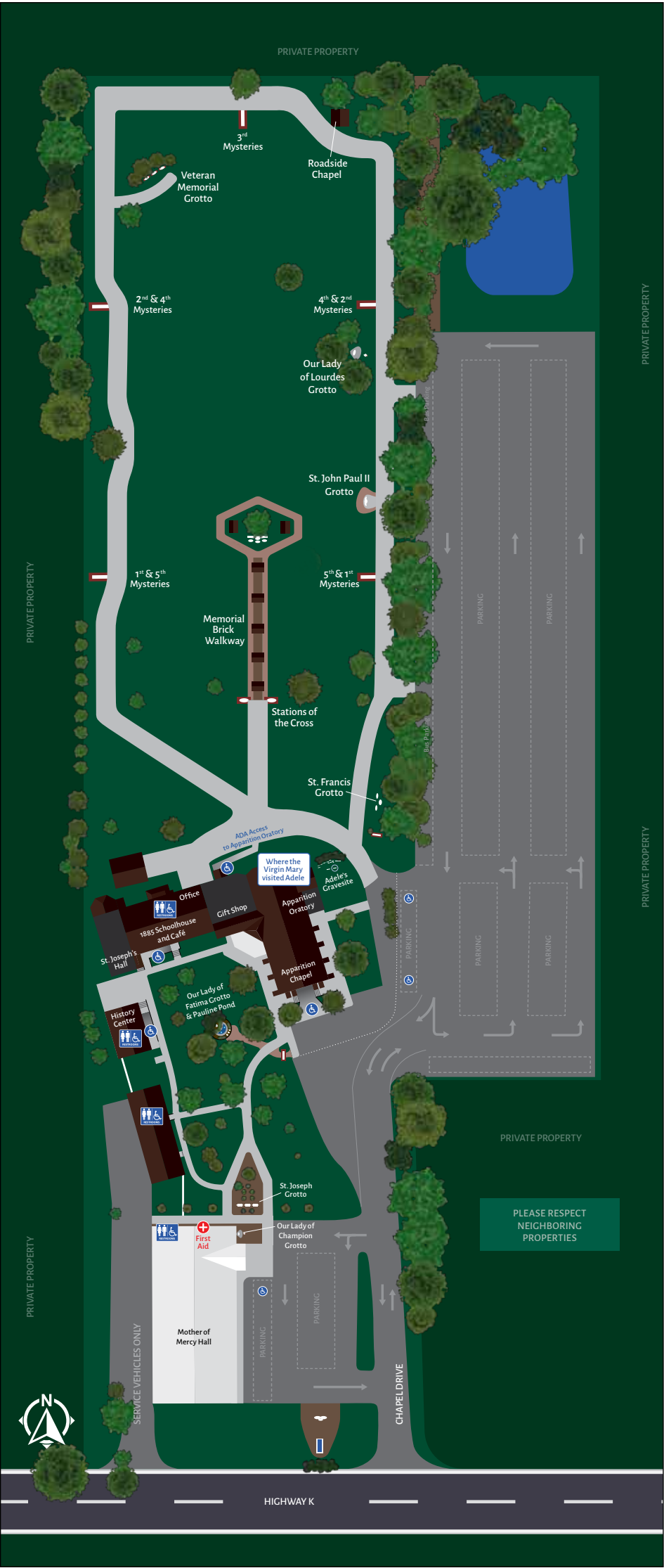
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THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION | SUBMITTED GRAPHIC

This map shows the grounds of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. To the south, shown on the bottom, is County Highway K. Highlights include the chapel building, Adele Brise's grave, the History Center, Mother of Mercy Hall and the 1885 Schoolhouse with museum and cafe.

Belgian Fact

In 1861, the second chapel was built by the community faithful. They inscribed the words *“Notre Dame De Bon Secours, Priez Pour Nous”* over the chapel’s entrance, translated as *“Our Lady of Good Help, Pray for Us.”* This is related to a popular Belgian Marian devotion to Our Lady of Good Help that goes back to the 12th century in Brussels, Belgium.

Source: The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion



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Peshtigo fire drove people to the safety of Adele's chapel grounds

FROM PAGE 6

blowing from several points of the compass alternately. First from the southwest, then from the west, then from the northwest, then back again to the south, during which time we were visited by a series of whirlwinds which showered cinders and sparks in every conceivable direction. ... From the rear of J.S. Dickey's store in the direction of the Bay all was one broad lurid sheet of flame as far as the eye could reach."

Fr. Pernin survived that night by staying in the river, though his eyes were damaged by the heat — leaving him blinded for a time. He also became sick from the chill of being soaked in the cold water. Like him, many people stayed in the river all night.

By morning, as he later saw for himself, the entire neighborhood around the Shrine had lost houses to the flames, but not the school, chapel or even the fence around the six acres of the chapel grounds had been touched.

THE CHAPEL SURVIVES FIRE

Further south and east of Peshti-

go, lower Door County and northern Brown and Kewaunee counties were also burning. (The town of Brussels was destroyed by the fire.) Adele Brise and her companions at The Chapel knew they could not escape the fire. So they took the statue of Mary from the chapel and bore it in procession around the grounds. They were joined

by local people fleeing from the flames. Fr. Pernin, in recording what Adele told him later, said they processed around the grounds on their knees, praying the rosary.

By morning, "the houses and fences in the neighborhood had been burned with the exception of the school, the chapel and fence surrounding the six acres of land consecrated to the Blessed Virgin."

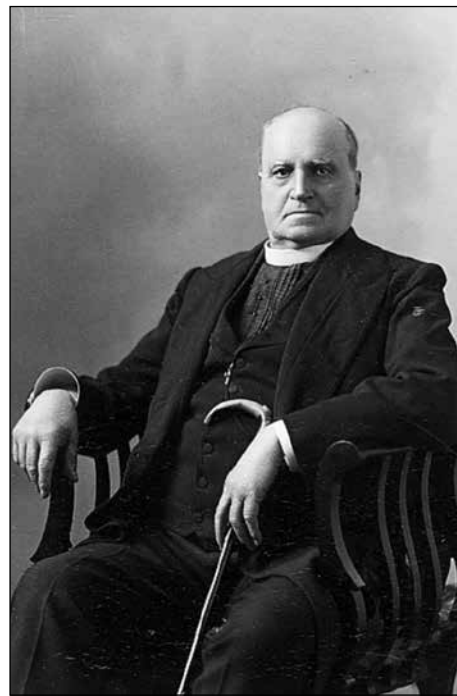
Fr. Peter Pernin

in another direction continued to hope and pray."

By morning, he continued, all "the houses and fences in the neighborhood had been burned with the exception of the school, the chapel and fence surrounding the six acres of land consecrated to the Blessed Virgin."

TURNING IN ANOTHER DIRECTION

"When the flame and wind blew so strongly in the direction of the chapel as to prevent their further progress, unless they exposed themselves to suffocation," Fr. Pernin wrote, "they awaited a lull in the storm or turning



COURTESY OF DIOCESAN ARCHIVES | FOR ON MISSION

Fr. Peter Pernin, a Canadian missionary priest who served as pastor at St. Mary Parish in Peshtigo and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Marinette in 1871, wrote one of the most descriptive accounts of the Peshtigo Fire in his memoir "The Finger of God Was There!"

Fr. Pernin noted that around the area not burned by the fire, a "winding path surrounding the enclosure being only eight or 10 feet wide... now shone out like an emerald island amid a sea of ashes."

The priest, who oversaw the rebuilding of his two Marinette and Peshtigo



ON MISSION FILE PHOTO

A reflection of a statue of Our Lady of Grace, located in the Apparition Oratory at the Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, is seen in a framed picture of Adele Brise. "Sr. Adele," as she was called by locals, led the people in prayer around the grounds during the night of the Peshtigo Fire.

churches, stopped short of calling either the salvaging of the Peshtigo tabernacle or the survival of the chapel grounds "a miracle." But he added that he "earnestly counseled" anyone who could do so to visit Adele to question her about the events and "return edified and happy at heart."



“ Teach them their catechism, how to sign themselves with the sign of the Cross, and how to approach the sacraments; that is what I wish you to do. Go and fear nothing. I will help you. ”

— Our Lady of Champion, October 1859



ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE

THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION

Champion, WI

Find Peace



Come see where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared in Champion, Wisconsin to Adele Brise in 1859.

Experience the peace of Our Mother's presence - where she still calls her children today.

Learn about the unique story of the only Church-approved Marian Apparition site in the United States.

Here, find *peace*



DAILY ACTIVITIES

HOURS

Grounds | Open Daily 7:00 am - 7:00 pm
Gift Shop & Cafe | Mon. - Sat. 9 am - 4 pm; Sun. 12:30 - 4 pm
History Center | 7:00 am - 5:00 pm (May - Oct.)
9:00 am - 4:00 pm (Sept. - April)

MASS

Daily & Sunday | 11:00 am
Tues. & Sat. | Additional 8:30 am Mass
Wednesday | Additional 5:45 pm Mass
Sundays May-October | Additional 8:30 am Mass

CONFESSION

Daily | 10:00 am, After 11:00 am Mass, & 2:00 pm
Saturday | After 8:30 am Mass

DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS

Rosary | Daily at 10:30 am
Divine Mercy Chaplet | Daily at 3:00 pm
Adoration | Daily from 12:00 - 3:00 pm

FEATURED EVENTS

EUCCHARISTIC HEALING SERVICES

Last Saturday of each Month after 11 am Mass

WALK TO MARY

First Saturday in May

MARIAN CONFERENCE

The weekend before Memorial Day weekend

CELEBRATION FOR THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Every August 15

ANNIVERSARY OF THE MIRACLE OF THE GREAT 1871 FIRE & SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF CHAMPION

October 8 and 9

