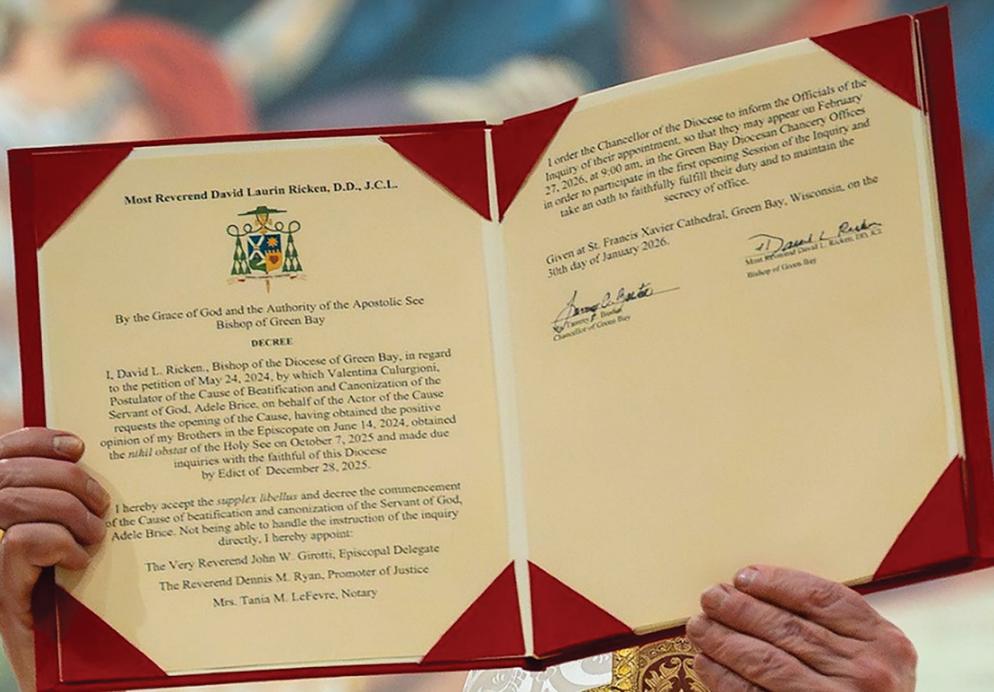


The magazine of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion

# CHAMPION

“TEACH THEM WHAT THEY SHOULD KNOW FOR SALVATION.”

[championshrine.org](http://championshrine.org) | 2026 Issue 1



Most Reverend David Laurin Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See  
Bishop of Green Bay

**DECREE**

I, David L. Ricken, Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, in regard to the petition of May 24, 2024, by which Valentina Calurgioni, Postulator of the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of the Servant of God, Adele Brice, on behalf of the Actor of the Cause requests the opening of the Cause, having obtained the positive opinion of my Brothers in the Episcopate on June 14, 2024, and made due the *nihil obstat* of the Holy See on October 7, 2025 and made due inquiries with the faithful of this Diocese by Edict of December 28, 2025.

I hereby accept the *supplex libellus* and decree the commencement of the Cause of beatification and canonization of the Servant of God, Adele Brice. Not being able to handle the instruction of the inquiry directly, I hereby appoint:

The Very Reverend John W. Girotti, Episcopal Delegate  
The Reverend Dennis M. Ryan, Promoter of Justice  
Mrs. Tania M. LeFevre, Notary

I order the Chancellor of the Diocese to inform the Officials of the Inquiry of their appointment, so that they may appear on February 27, 2026, at 9:00 am, in the Green Bay Diocesan Chancery Offices in order to participate in the first opening Session of the Inquiry and take an oath to faithfully fulfill their duty and to maintain the secrecy of office.

Given at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Green Bay, Wisconsin, on the 30th day of January 2026.

*David L. Ricken*  
Bishop of Green Bay

*David L. Ricken*  
Most Reverend David L. Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Green Bay

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# God's peace to you in this year of 2026!

There are many exciting things happening here at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

As we begin the 2026 pilgrimage season, what better way to start than with the joyful news that, on Jan. 30, Bishop David L. Ricken officially opened the Cause for Canonization for Adele Brice. With the promulgation of the decree beginning her path to sainthood, Adele has been given the title *Servant of God* (as seen on this edition's cover). Although this is often a long and prayerful process, it is exciting and unprecedented news for the Diocese of Green Bay and for the Church.

Over 130 years ago, Adele was laid to rest next to The Chapel. During my time here at The Shrine, I have personally seen countless pilgrims kneel before her grave. Families and pilgrims bringing prayers, flowers and gratitude for her witness and asking for her intercession. It is because of her prompt obedience, simple faithfulness and deep trust in God that we now hope she may one day be honored as a saint.

In 2025, we welcomed over 200,000 pilgrims to Our Lady's Shrine during the Jubilee Year of Hope. Although the jubilee has come and gone, the call to pilgrimage should not fall by the wayside. Rather, we should be renewed in our mission to seek deeper encounters with Christ through pilgrimage.

Already this season, we hosted the Shrine Lenten Mission, where I was able to preach on the Prodigal Son and reflect on Lent as a season of repentance and return to the Father.

The Shrine hosted a visit from the traveling statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe from the apparition site in Mexico. This pilgrimage experience deepened our knowledge and love of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Connecting the Marian apparition sites of Guadalupe and Champion provides a unique and profound opportunity to honor Our Lady. This is especially meaningful at Champion. The convergence of these two historic apparitions deepens our spiritual connection across the continent and invites pilgrims to renew their faith and devotion.

As the season continues, we look forward with excitement to the 13th annual Walk to Mary on May 2, 2026. We will celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States, with a special exhibit from July 1-9, 2026, highlighting American Servants of God, Venerables, Blesseds and Saints. One of our oldest Shrine traditions, the Mass for the Assumption of the Blessed Mother on August 15, will draw thousands to Our Lady's Shrine. You have many opportunities this season to encounter the peace and refuge Champion Shrine has to offer.

Know that each and every day your support helps us continue the mission inspired by *Servant of God Adele Brice*. Your generosity allows us to continue catechesis and to spread the faith to the pilgrims who visit The Shrine daily. Please know that you are always in my prayers. I ask you to keep The Shrine in yours, and to ask Our Lady of Champion and *Servant of God Adele Brice* to intercede for you.

I hope to see you at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion at some point this season. Come pray with us and with Our Blessed Mother!

*F. Anthony M. Stephens, CPM*

Father Anthony Stephens, CPM

## OUR LADY'S INTERCESSION

**Camp Lolek in Wrightwood, California, was miraculously spared from a devastating wildfire that threatened the entire region. As strong winds pushed flames toward the camp, fire-fighters prepared to abandon the property. Yet, the fire stopped precisely at the camp's boundary, leaving it untouched while surrounding areas burned.**

**Owners and staff credit the extraordinary protection to prayers invoking the intercession of Our Lady of Champion. Fire officials reported that the wind abruptly ceased at the property line, an event they could not explain.**



# WHAT IS A SAINT?

BY FATHER ANTHONY STEPHENS, CPM

**W**HEN PEOPLE HEAR THE TERM “SAINT,” I FEAR THAT THE MAJORITY OF CATHOLICS HEAR THE WORD AND IMMEDIATELY DISMISS IT AS SOMETHING BEYOND THEIR REACH. THE STORIES OF THE EXTREME FASTING OF ST. JOHN VIANNEY, THE HEROIC CHASTITY OF ST. JOSEPH, THE PRAYERFULNESS OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA, OR THE HIDDENNESS OF ST. THERESE OF LISIEUX PUT SAINTHOOD OUT OF REACH. YES, A SAINT IS “A HOLY ONE”, A PERSON WHO LOVES GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS, AND HAS A DEEP LOVE OF NEIGHBOR. YES, A SAINT LIVES DIFFERENTLY, BUT SAINTHOOD IS SOMETHING THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO ANYONE WHO IS WILLING TO LIVE OUT THEIR FAITH IN THE WORLD.

A great definition of “saint” is “a sinner who never stops trying.” The saint recognizes the deep love God has for them, and that it is by God’s power they become holy! Something that too many people forget is that saints were (and are) ordinary people who have the same problems as the average Joe Q. Pewsitter at any Catholic parish around the world. Saints suffered with the same effects of Original Sin and the battle to overcome their fallen human nature as the rest of humanity. Saints experienced human weakness and failure. A saint had to enter into the spiritual combat to overcome their fallen human nature with the help of God’s grace. This happened by virtue of the sacramental life: they had to confess their personal sins; they needed to pray every day; they needed to receive the Eucharist and cooperate with the graces of their state in life.

The saint doesn’t have to “do” anything other than cooperate with God’s plan. As one saint said, “The secret to sanctity: to do what God wills, as God wills it, because God wills it.” This is a very freeing thought! I don’t “save” myself. There is one savior, and that is the Lord Jesus. That takes all the pressure off of the individual.

There was a heresy in the 400s called Pelagianism (named after Pelagius, a monk) that proposed that human beings save themselves. His error was overemphasizing the value of human will power for salvation. It denied the belief that Original Sin tainted human nature and believed that the human will could choose good or evil *without* the help of God’s grace. Jesus’ death on the cross was a good example and an

edifying act, but Pelagianism holds that His death wasn’t necessary for our salvation. This heresy was condemned at the Council of Carthage in 418 AD, because we do not save ourselves.

But don’t we have to show the Lord that we are “trying” for Heaven? The answer to that question is “yes”. St. Augustine once said, “*God created us without us: but He did not will to save us without us.*” A person has to cooperate with the grace of God. We hear in the letter to the Ephesians, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God — not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” (Eph 2:8-10). St. Paul states we don’t save ourselves by our works. It is God who makes us holy. Yet while we are on earth,

God has a mission and plan for every one of us (whether we all acknowledge it or not). Our daily actions define the course our life takes, so on another level, our cooperation is necessary for salvation.

Living the Catholic life, day in and day out, is real “work.” It means avoiding the three sources of temptation in our lives: the world, the flesh and the devil.

The “world” as a source of sin obviously does not mean God’s creation, but the fallen world and its false promises of success without work and happiness without sacrifice. The “flesh” refers to our fallen human nature that has not been sanctified by baptism and has been allowed to follow unlawful impulses unrestrained. The “devil” is a fallen angel whose sole goal is to destroy God’s creation, especially by tempting men and women to sin. As we hear in 1 Peter 5:8-9: *“Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.”* A saint is a sinner who never stops trying to cooperate with God’s grace.

A good example of a saint who acknowledged himself as a sinner, but never stopped trying to repent and grow closer to God was the great saint and doctor of the Church, St. Augustine of Hippo. Born to a Christian mother and a pagan father, St. Augustine’s parents ensured that he was given a great education. He was a brilliant young man, who sought meaning and satisfaction in study and the pleasures of the world. He lived with a woman for many years and fathered a child out of wedlock. However, his search for holy wisdom led him on an odyssey towards God. St. Augustine recognized that the virtuous thing to do would be to bring his lower appetites under the reign of God’s grace and law. At the same time, he struggled to do the right thing. In his struggle to remain chaste, St. Augustine famously prayed to God: “Lord, give me chastity and continence, but not yet!” This is a very self-serving prayer. St. Augustine was not yet ready to make the full break with sin, but he gradually turned away from his unchaste life. God heard St. Augustine’s imperfect prayers, and he eventually rejected the life he had embraced and he returned to the practice of his Catholic faith. He returned with such fervor that his is now upheld as one of the great reversion stories in the history of the Church.

Stories like this give us hope for the future of our lives. God our Father wants us to want Him, because He created us for deep union with Him. We may be like St. Augustine, and we can only pray imperfect prayers: “Lord change me, but don’t let it hurt too much!” Of course, the turning away from sin will be painful at first. What we don’t realize is the relief we will experience in knowing the love of God in a new way. Before our conversion, we had a narrow notion of God’s love and our capacity to receive it. As we learn to trust more, we are gradually more open to God’s grace. We realize that detaching from sin allows us to exercise freedom in a way we had never experienced. God wants us to experience this freedom, so that we do not merely choose to live our faith out of obligation. He wants us to choose to love Him, and that daily choosing Him is how we become a saint. ★

“  
A ‘saint’ is  
‘a sinner  
who never  
stops  
trying.’”



# Igniting Faith in the Next Generation

## To teach the children.

This was the mission Our Blessed Mother gave to Servant of God Adele Brice on these very grounds over 166 years ago. That mission has never been more urgent than it is today.

We are living in a remarkable moment: a quiet revival is stirring in the hearts of young people. Across the Church, a new generation is rediscovering the beauty, truth and joy of Jesus Christ.

At **The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion**, we are blessed to help fan that flame to form young hearts in faith, hope and love each and every day.

“Teach them what they need to know for salvation.”

## St. Carlo Acutis Day: 'The Hope Awakens'

On **Oct. 18 2025**, The Shrine welcomed over **600 high-school students** for our annual **St. Carlo Acutis Youth Day**.

St. Carlo Acutis was canonized on Sept. 7, 2025, as the first millennial saint. He was chosen as the patron of this day because he reminds us that sainthood is not a thing of the past; it is something God is calling us to accept the challenge of now, with every small act we do.

Carlo passed away at the young age of 15 in 2006. He loved the Lord deeply and had a special devotion to the Virgin Mary. He loved to visit Marian apparition sites, visiting both Fatima and Lourdes. Many know him for the Eucharistic Miracles exhibition we host here at Champion Shrine each year (April 10-19, 2026). Carlo also created an online display documenting Marian apparitions from around the world. We like to imagine that if he were still alive today, he would have loved to come and visit Mary here at her shrine in Champion.

The beauty of St. Carlo lies in his true, childlike love for Jesus. Even as he dedicated his life and talents to promoting the Eucharist and using new technology to do so, he remained humble and joyful despite his suffering. He truly is a modern saint.

As Carlo once said, *"We don't need superpowers to be saints — we just need to love."* He is an example not only to the youth but to everyone, showing us how to use our gifts and our love to glorify the Lord.

With last year's "Star Wars" theme, **"The Hope Awakens,"** students were inspired by powerful talks from **Mari Pablo** and a panel of priests, sisters, and lay leaders who shared how hope flows from their vocations and from a life rooted in God.

One of the most touching things is watching many of these young people encounter Christ for the first time in a deeply personal way, praying in Eucharistic Adoration, learning the story of Mary's apparitions here in Champion and experiencing the beauty of The Shrine, all in a bilingual format.



### Bring Your Children

Parents and grandparents, gather your children, take them on a pilgrimage and let them encounter their Heavenly Mother at Her Shrine.

If you are a teacher or faith-formation leader and feel called to bring your students to a place where heaven touched earth, we would love to welcome you.

Together, let us continue the mission that Servant of God Adele Brice began: teaching the children.

Contact our pilgrimage coordinator, Kathy Ciha, at 920.866.2571, ext. 113 or [pilgrimage@championshrine.org](mailto:pilgrimage@championshrine.org)

## Gather The Children in this Wild Country

The Shrine has always been meant to be a place of gathering for children. From the time Servant of God Adele Brice opened the schoolhouse and began forming the children in the faith, this mission has been at the heart of The Shrine. That is what makes bringing faith-formation groups, or taking your children or grandchildren, here on pilgrimage, all the more special. Our Lady is our mother, and she desires to see us gather her children.

This year, The Shrine had the honor of hosting the Diocese of Green Bay All-School Mass, welcoming hundreds of students in grades 4-12, representing every Catholic school in the diocese.

In 2025 alone, 55 school and faith-formation groups visited The Shrine — a 25 percent increase over the previous year. Students deepened their understanding of the Sacraments by receiving Confession and Holy Communion, just as Our Lady instructed Adele. ★

*"I remember once watching a mother who brought her four young children to The Shrine. I melted when, in the oratory, the mother pointed to the statue of Mary and whispered, "That is your mother." The children immediately rushed to the statue to pray at the feet of their Heavenly Mother."*



*How do we do it?  
How do we welcome  
pilgrims from all over  
the world? How do we  
connect with people?  
How do we serve  
everyone 365 days  
of the year?*

## **Our volunteers are the answer.**

### **MEET MELISSA LIBAL.**

She started coming to Our Lady of Champion years ago as a pilgrim. “We were going through a rough spell, and spending time with our Lord during Adoration helped me to offer everything to Him. It felt as if a weight was lifted off of my shoulders.”

So how does someone go from a Pilgrim to a Volunteer?

Our Blessed Mother is the answer. She leads people. She calls people in so many different ways. Melissa said, “One day, I was going through all the tabs on the website. When I saw the volunteer tab, that is all it took. I wanted to be part of this special place.”

The first person she met was Petrine in the office. “I didn’t know that they have a schedule

for Adoration to make sure our Lord is never left alone. I signed up for a weekly hour. After that, I started helping with all the large events. It was exhilarating to be on holy grounds all day and meet people from all over the world.”

“Volunteering at The Shrine became a big part of my life. It truly changes you. You start to get to know the other volunteers, staff members and the priests. It’s like your second family. I would encourage anyone who has even one hour of extra time to come volunteer. It fills a void in your life. It completes you.” – Melissa Libal, Champion Shrine volunteer. ★

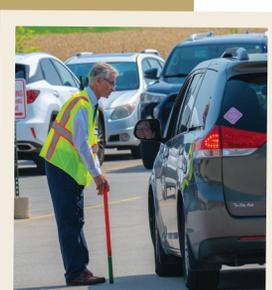


- ▶ Are you a prayer warrior?
- ▶ Are you a good listener?
- ▶ Do you enjoy sharing your faith?
- ▶ Do you like gardening or cleaning?
- ▶ Do you like driving a golf cart?
- ▶ Would you like to grow in your prayer life?
- ▶ Do you need community?



All of these types of volunteers are needed at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion to serve the 200,000 visitors each year.

If you want to share your gifts with The Shrine, visit [championshrine.org/volunteer](http://championshrine.org/volunteer) or contact [volunteer@championshrine.org](mailto:volunteer@championshrine.org)



# A Summer Tradition Rooted in History and Devotion

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is among the oldest and most celebrated events at The Shrine, dating back to its earliest days. Newspaper clippings from the early 1900s describe tens of thousands of pilgrims gathering for rosary processions, a powerful witness to the deep Marian devotion that shaped The Shrine's identity from the start.

Why the Assumption? We don't know for sure, but we can speculate that of the three principal Marian feast days – the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1), the Assumption (Aug. 15) and the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8) – August 15 was the closest on the calendar to the apparition anniversary of October 9. On a practical level, August also provides a more suitable temperature for the faithful to participate in an event held outdoors due to the large numbers that would gathered. Allowing families to come pray together.

That wisdom continues to bear fruit. To this day, thousands come each Aug. 15 for Mass, the rosary procession and family picnic, honoring Our Lady and taking part in a tradition that has endured for generations. Many pilgrims share that they have been coming for decades, some nearly 90 times, now bringing their children and grandchildren. What began as a simple, practical choice has become a living legacy: generations of families gathering in faith, prayer and gratitude.

For countless pilgrims, visiting The Shrine is not just a trip; it is a holy day of devotion, a cherished summer ritual and a way to pass on faith and tradition to the next generation. ★



## Learn More

Contact our pilgrimage coordinator, Kathy Ciha, at 920.866.2571, ext. 113 or [pilgrimage@championshrine.org](mailto:pilgrimage@championshrine.org)



# Miracles at The Shrine

BY FATHER NATHANAEL MUDD, CPM

I have often been asked, “Do you see miracles at The Shrine?” And I almost feel sad when I reply that I don’t often see miracles. That doesn’t mean they aren’t happening; in fact, I do hear a lot of miracles. Most of my interactions with pilgrims at The Shrine of Our Lady of Champion happen in the small confines of the confessional, and I usually never see their faces. Despite this, a good confession remains one of the more deeply personal and touching experiences someone can have at The Shrine.

Every confession is a miracle, a supernatural event, God actively changing reality through the power of His Divine Mercy. Although many of us look forward to seeing great miracles of physical healing, and hope to experience them ourselves, it is good to be reminded as well that this world is passing away. All of the created universe pales in comparison with the radiant value of one immortal soul in the eyes of God. And so, heaven rejoices more over one soul which is redeemed, which steps out of sin, than if material creation lasts another day.

To appreciate this, it is good to be reminded of what sin really is. Because it offends the infinite goodness of God, every sin is an infinite offense, of greater or lesser gravity. To quote Pope St. Paul VI, “Every sin in fact causes a perturbation in the universal order established by God in His ineffable wisdom and infinite charity, and the destruction of immense values with respect to the sinner himself and to the human community.” (*Indulgentium doctrina*, ¶2) God’s forgiveness of any sin is a testament to His Mercy and His Power.

In fact, some of the Saints of the Church have said that the forgiveness of sins is a greater miracle than even the resurrection of the dead to normal life. Because forgiveness wipes out an infinite offense to the all-good God. It is His greatest mercy that our offenses may be forgiven by Him.

And this makes the number of confessions heard at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion one of the most remarkable graces experienced by the priests assigned here, and, I hope, for the priests who visit here and aid us at busy times. Over the course of the last year, over 12,000 confessions were heard on The Shrine grounds. Each individual who received the sacrament felt the supernatural peace God gives with His forgiveness in the confessional; but the priests heard, over and over again, the miracle of God’s forgiving grace taking place with each absolution we gave.

We would all be eager to often receive healing which kept our bodies ever young and healthy. It would be wonderful if we showed a similar eagerness in receiving often this miracle of spiritual healing which keeps our souls close to God and spiritually healthy in His grace. ★



Last year,  
over 12,000  
confessions  
were heard  
on The Shrine  
grounds



## Participate

Come to Confession at  
The Shrine, available daily  
at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Scan the QR code to watch Father  
Nathanael Mudd, CPM lead an  
eight-part video series on Confession



# The Good Helpers Program

Since the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brice in 1859, the mission of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion has been carried forward by faithful souls who answer her call with prayer, devotion and generosity. Today, that mission continues through the Good Helpers Program, a special community of supporters who choose to walk with The Shrine in a powerful and intentional way.

The Good Helpers Program invites the faithful to take an active role in The Shrine's mission by committing to two simple but meaningful acts:

- ▶ Pray one Hail Mary each day for the intentions and needs of The Shrine
- ▶ Support The Shrine with a recurring monthly donation

This beautiful pairing of prayerful support and financial stewardship strengthens the foundation of The Shrine's mission. Your daily Hail Mary becomes part of the spiritual heartbeat of this refuge, and your recurring gift helps to sustain The Shrine's daily operations.

## **WHEN YOU BECOME A GOOD HELPER, YOU HELP ENSURE THAT:**

- ▶ Pilgrims from around the world can renew their faith through the Sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick
- ▶ These sacred grounds remain a prayerful and well-maintained refuge
- ▶ The message given to Adele Brice remains alive for generations to come

The Good Helpers Program is easy to join and completely flexible. You choose a monthly gift that feels right for you, and your commitment can be updated at any time. Most importantly, your daily prayer and monthly generosity make you a vital part of The Shrine's mission.

We invite you to prayerfully consider joining this growing community of faithful supporters. Together, we can continue to share Our Lady's message, welcome pilgrims to this refuge and carry forward the work entrusted here more than 165 years ago. ★



## **Learn more**

To become a member of the Good Helpers Program or to learn more about this vital program, visit [www.championshrine.org/good-helpers-program](http://www.championshrine.org/good-helpers-program) or call the Development Office at 920.866.2571, ext. 125.



# “GOD DOESN’T CALL THE QUALIFIED, HE QUALIFIES THE CALLED.”



## Adele Brice named Servant of God

***“God doesn’t call  
the qualified, He  
qualifies the called.”***

**It’s a phrase we hear often,  
especially when talking  
about the universal call to  
holiness. We are all called to  
be saints, and Adele Brice’s  
life is a beautiful example  
of what that can look like  
in the ordinary world.**

In 1859, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Adele and entrusted her with a mission: to teach children what they needed to know for salvation. Adele was not a professor, a theologian or a scholar. She was illiterate and uneducated, maybe the most unlikely teacher; she was not qualified, yet the called seldomly are. She humbly said to Our Lady, “But how shall I teach them who know so little myself?” Our Blessed Mother reassured her, saying, “Go and fear nothing, I will help you.” Adele was a simple, young woman with a willing heart, and that was enough. She accepted the call and

spent her life carrying it out with humility and perseverance.

Importantly, the Church’s investigation into her cause for sainthood is not based solely on the Marian apparitions but on how Adele lived her life afterward, her life of heroic virtue.

Recently, we interviewed a 96-year-old woman whose grandfather was present at The Chapel on the night of the Miracle of the Peshtigo Fire. Holding back tears, she shared how, to her family, Adele has always been spoken of as “St. Adele,” long before any official Church process began. For them, her holiness was never in doubt.

## SEEING WITH THE EYES OF HEAVEN

The joyful news that Adele's cause has been opened has excited many of the faithful. Yet there is also a concern worth mentioning: first impressions can stick. Some people encounter her story only through a few surviving images and comment on her appearance, saying she looked scary or even unattractive.

But this misses the point entirely.

The beauty of Adele Brice is not found in a photograph. In the eyes of Heaven, her beauty is seen in her zeal for God, her love for souls and her faithful service. Today, as a Servant of God, her life invites us to look beyond the surface and recognize the inner radiance of holiness.

## A TOWN NAMED BY A PROMISE

There are many fascinating details about Adele's life beyond the apparitions and the Miracle of the Peshtigo Fire.

Few people know that the town where The Shrine stands was not always called Champion. The name itself is tied to Adele's personal promise to Our Lady.

At the time of her First Communion, Adele privately promised the Blessed Mother that she would serve the Lord in "Champion, Belgium." She took this promise so seriously that she almost refused to immigrate to America with her parents. Only after her parish priest reminded her of the commandment to honor her father and mother did she agree to go.

Years later, after the apparitions, the growing settlement petitioned for its own post office. The usual custom was to name the town after the family who owned the general store that would house the post office, but that family declined. While visiting the general store, Adele was asked what the town should be named. She answered: "Champion."

In that simple response, her old promise was fulfilled. She would indeed serve Our Lady in Champion.

## OBEDIENCE IN TRIAL

Like many saints, Adele's path was not without misunderstanding and trial.

At one point, a bishop threatened her with excommunication, barred her from receiving Holy Communion and instructed her to close her school and return the keys. Adele responded with remarkable obedience. She arranged care for the children and traveled to Green Bay to return the keys in person.

When the bishop finally met her face-to-face, he was deeply moved by her sincerity and zeal. Instead of shutting her down, he returned the keys and encouraged her to continue her good work.

Her humility spoke louder than any defense she could have offered.

## A LEGACY WITHOUT WRITINGS

Unlike many saints whose letters and writings endure, Adele was illiterate. She left behind a few words in writing; many were dictated and written by her companions. Instead, her legacy lives on in the

testimonies of those who knew her and in the memories of the generations who remember her.

One of her students, Odile Allard, wrote in a 1952 letter:

"I can say Sister Adele left her mark on my life. I often wonder how a poor girl without instruction could accomplish such things without a powerful hand to guide her. She was so humble, so charitable to everyone, especially the children. The suffering she endured seemed to be proof that the Blessed Virgin had truly worked through her. Do we not read in the lives of the saints that they all endured great trials and sufferings?"

## THE QUIET PATH TO SAINTHOOD

Adele Brice's story reminds us that holiness does not require fame, education or influence. It requires a "yes." A "yes" repeated daily in small acts of faith, service, obedience and charity.

God did not call Adele because she was qualified. He qualified her because she was willing.

And perhaps that is the most encouraging lesson of all: the call to sainthood is not reserved for the extraordinary, it is offered to the faithful. ★

*"She was so humble, so charitable to everyone, especially the children. The suffering she endured seemed to be proof that the Blessed Virgin had truly worked through her."*

-ODILE ALLARD

Visit [Adelebrice.org](http://Adelebrice.org) to learn more.





# ADELE JOSEPH BRICE

## *Cause for Canonization*

Recently, the Catholic Church officially opened Adele Brice's Cause for Canonization, the formal process that can lead to someone being declared a saint. For many people, that announcement sounded big but confusing. Does it mean she's officially a saint now? Not yet. Does it guarantee she will be canonized? No. It means that the Church has begun a serious and careful investigation into her life.

Canonization is the Church's way of recognizing that a person lived a life of heroic holiness, is with God in heaven and can be honored publicly as a model for others. It's not a popularity contest or a quick decision. The Church looks closely at how a person lived, how they loved, and how they practiced their faith when no one was watching.

Opening a "Cause" simply means the investigation has begun.

On Jan. 30, Adele's 195th birthday, the bishop of Green Bay formally opened her Cause and gave her the title "Servant of God." It's the first official step on the road toward sainthood. From there, historians, theologians and investigators will study her life in detail. They'll examine records, letters, testimonies and family stories passed down through generations. They'll ask: Did she live with extraordinary faith? Did she love others deeply? Did she remain faithful through difficulty?

If the answer remains yes, the case eventually moves to Rome. She could then be declared a Venerable by the pope, if found she had lived a life of heroic virtue. At that point, miracles attributed to her intercession would also be examined carefully, skeptically and scientifically. If one miracle was found, she would be declared a Blessed. At later stage, with a second miracle, she would be declared a Saint.

All of this can take years. Sometimes, decades. Occasionally, even centuries. There is no fast track to sainthood.

The Church teaches that everyone is called to be a saint. Not everyone will be canonized, but everyone is invited to holiness. Saints are simply people who lived that call fully.

Adele Brice's journey toward sainthood is now officially underway. But for many believers, her example has already been lighting the path for generations. How can you help her Cause? By praying for Adele's intercession and for her Cause. Allow God to show you how Adele can play a role in your life.

## What has happened so far ...

Before Adele's Cause was opened, the Church moved slowly and deliberately, following a careful process designed to ensure every Cause receives the highest level of attention and scrutiny.



## What happens now, in the Diocesan Phase ...

At this stage, the Bishop, along with the officials of the inquiry, will begin the Church's investigation, examining Adele's life from many angles to learn more about her.



### How to Help

Prayer remains the heart of Adele's Cause. Ask for her intercession, look for her presence in your daily life and help keep her story alive by sharing it with others and spreading the message of Our Lady of Champion. You can follow her Cause at [AdeleBrice.org](http://AdeleBrice.org).



ANSWER  
THE CALL



# WALK TO MARY

**I****N AN AGE WHEN MARATHONS, ENDURANCE RACES AND PHYSICAL CHALLENGES HAVE CAPTURED THE ATTENTION OF MANY, A DIFFERENT KIND OF JOURNEY QUIETLY TRANSFORMS HEARTS AT CHAMPION SHRINE. OVER 10,000 PILGRIMS LACE UP THEIR WALKING SHOES NOT FOR MEDALS OR PERSONAL RECORDS, BUT TO ANSWER A CALL FIRST ISSUED MORE THAN 160 YEARS AGO BY THE BLESSED MOTHER HERSELF.**

One thing that makes the Walk to Mary truly unique is its geography. It is the only pilgrimage in the world where one can walk in a single day from a National Shrine of St. Joseph to an approved Marian apparition site. Beginning at The National Shrine of St. Joseph in De Pere, pilgrims journey 22 miles on foot to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, symbolically connecting St. Joseph, protector of the Holy Family, with Mary, Queen of Heaven.

This is not a race. It is not about speed or endurance. It is a pilgrimage of the heart.

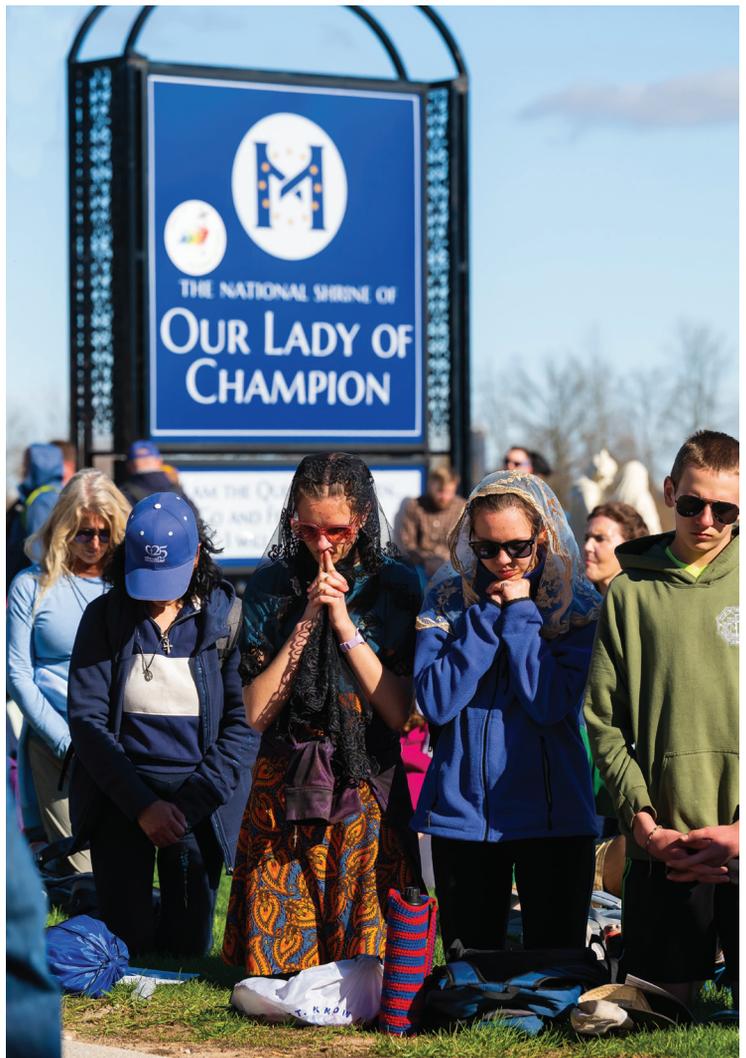
Pilgrims come as they are, some with joy, others with sorrow; some walking in silence, others praying the Rosary or singing hymns together. Families walk alongside religious sisters, elderly alongside young children. Some complete the full route, while many join for only the final miles. Every step becomes an offering, every blister a prayer, every mile a reminder that life itself is a pilgrimage toward heaven.

**IN A CULTURE THAT OFTEN PRIZES SELF-RELIANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT, THE WALK TO MARY OFFERS SOMETHING**



## Participate

Sign up for the Walk to Mary by visiting [walktomary.com](http://walktomary.com).



### COUNTERCULTURAL: SURRENDER.

It invites participants to slow down, to listen, and to allow God to work through physical effort united with prayer. The popularity of athletic endurance events shows that people are hungry for challenge and meaning. The Walk to Mary responds to that hunger with a spiritual experience that strengthens not only the body but also the soul.

At journey's end, pilgrims gather for Mass at The Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, where the source and summit of our

faith, the Eucharist, crowns the day. Confessions are heard, prayers are answered, and hearts are renewed.

Whether you walk every mile or simply join in spirit, the Walk to Mary is an invitation: to step away from the noise of the world, to walk with Mary to Her Son, and to place your trust in the loving guidance of Our Blessed Mother.

In answering Mary's call, we discover that this pilgrimage does not end at The Shrine; it continues in how we live, love and teach the faith in the world today. ★

# The Saints Who *Shaped America*

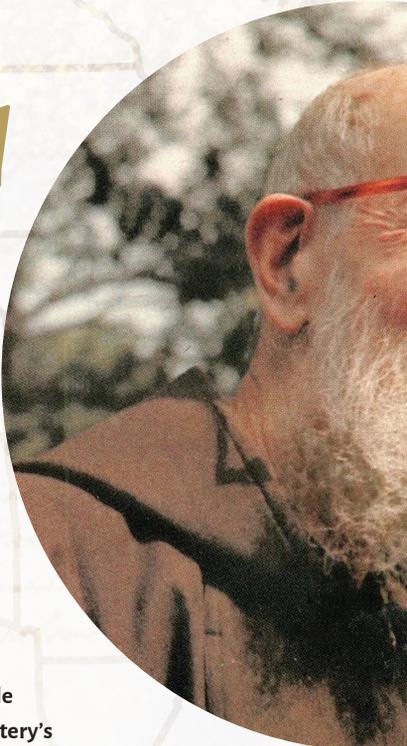
We are all required to take history in school, and we often hear the familiar phrase: “*Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.*” For me, history was never just a requirement, it was a fascination. I was especially drawn to American history and to the individuals who shaped our nation: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr. and many more. Each left a unique and lasting imprint on the American story.

As our nation approaches the 250th anniversary of independence, we are given a rare opportunity to reflect on who we are, where we came from and what truly defines us as Americans. For Catholics, this anniversary holds special meaning. A country founded on religious freedom, consecrated to the Immaculate Conception, and “one nation under God” not only is something we benefit from, but something that continues to inspire us.

When we think about colonial America and 1776, Catholics are often quietly present in the background. Yet their contributions were real and meaningful. One of my favorite examples is Charles Carroll, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. His brother, John Carroll, would become the first Catholic bishop in the United States. That same bishop invited St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born Catholic saint, to open her school in Maryland, planting seeds that would grow into the American Catholic educational system.

America’s 250-year history is rich with Catholics who helped shape the nation. Today, the Church recognizes 11 American saints, six Blesseds and more than 50 Venerables and Servants of God on the path to sainthood. Among them now is Servant of God Adele Brice, the seer of *Our Lady of Champion*, the humble Belgian immigrant farm girl chosen by Mary to receive a heavenly message. That her life and witness stands among America’s great holy figures is nothing short of extraordinary.

These men and women helped shape America not through power or prestige, but through sacrifice, service, and an unwavering love for Jesus Christ. They show us what it truly means to be American.



## Blessed Solanus Casey

A Wisconsin native and humble Capuchin friar, known for his kindness, healing touch and deep trust in God. His community assigned him the role of doorkeeper, one of the monastery’s lowest and simplest tasks. However, he saw this assignment as a great blessing, an opportunity to listen to and serve everyone who came to the door.



## Venerable Emil Kapaun

A fearless U.S. Army chaplain from Kansas known for his courage, compassion and strong faith during the Korean War. While serving soldiers on the battlefield, he risked his life to rescue the wounded and comfort the dying. He eventually gave his life in 1951, sacrificing himself for fellow prisoners. Father Emil Kapaun was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 2013. His life stands as a historical example of faith, selfless service and courage to the very end.

# CATHOLIC SAINTS OF AMERICA

## *Celebrating 250 Years of Faith and Freedom*

The Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, with its powerful message of catechesis and evangelization, offers a unique opportunity to teach and inspire. There is no better way to mark the nation's 250th anniversary than by celebrating the holy men and women who helped shape America through faith.

Inspired by St. Carlo Acutis, and developed in collaboration with numerous Causes for Canonization and shrines across the country, The Shrine will host a special exhibit honoring these remarkable lives. From July 1-9, 2026, visitors are invited to join in a novena for the nation, explore the exhibit, venerate relics of saints and blesseds, watch videos about their lives, speak with those involved in their Causes and deepen devotion to saints in the making.

The celebration will feature a Mass on July 5, the anniversary of the death of Servant of God Adele Brice, the first such celebration since the opening of her Cause. Join us as we honor what may one day become her feast day, and as we pray for our country and for all those holy men and women who may one day be called saints.



### Learn More

For more information, visit [championshrine.org/americansaints](http://championshrine.org/americansaints).



## Servant of God Michelle Duppong

A joyful young Catholic Focus missionary from North Dakota, known for her vibrant faith and deep love for Christ. Even while battling cancer, Michelle remained joyful and trusting in God, inspiring others through her courage and peace. She died at age 31 in 2015, leaving a legacy of youthful faith, joyful service and love that shines even in suffering.



These American heroes and many more like them are just as meaningful as the figures we read about in history textbooks. Their lives remind us that American greatness is found in saints who lived with courage, faith, compassion and selfless love. By studying their stories, we learn how to live with purpose, serve others and stand strong in difficult times. ★



Support The Shrine's mission through our online Gift Shop

## A note...

You may have noticed a new look to our newsletter, or perhaps that it arrived at a different time than usual. We wanted to take a moment to explain why.

Our mission in the Communications Department is simple: to share the story and message of Our Lady of Champion and Adele Brice with as many people as possible. Sometimes, fulfilling that mission means embracing a little change.

While this newsletter may look different, it carries the same heart and purpose as always. This year has been especially meaningful because of the recent news surrounding Adele Brice, and we wanted to bring you that information in the most timely and thoughtful way possible. That means this issue is a bit larger than usual, essentially combining two newsletters into one.

If you found this issue meaningful, we encourage you to share it with friends and family. **Anyone can sign up to receive the magazine for free at [championshrine.org/stay-in-touch](http://championshrine.org/stay-in-touch).**

This newsletter is offered freely to homes with the hope of inspiring others through Our Lady's message to teach the faith and bring people closer to Christ.

We hope that in reading this issue, you learned something new and felt drawn closer to Our Lady. We hope to welcome you to The Shrine soon.

Thank you for your prayers and continued support. They mean more than you know. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact us at [media@championshrine.org](mailto:media@championshrine.org).

With gratitude,  
**The Communications Team**

## Special Events

### Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit

**APRIL 10-19**

Eucharistic Miracles of the World, an international exhibit created by St. Carlo Acutis. Showcasing miraculous events from around the globe, this display invites pilgrims and parish groups into a deeper encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.

### Walk to Mary

**MAY 2**

Walk with Mary on a 22-mile pilgrimage from The National Shrine of St. Joseph in De Pere to The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion. This unique journey offers a powerful way to grow in faith and community with the Blessed Mother.

Learn more or register at [walktomary.com](http://walktomary.com).

### May Crowning Mass

**MAY 3, 11:30 AM**

The day after Walk to Mary, join The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion as it celebrates its time-honored tradition of crowning Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

### Marian Conference

**MAY 22-23**

Champion Shrine's Marian Conference, exploring this year's theme: Our Lady, Refuge of Sinners. We invite you to deepen your understanding of Mary and grow closer to her Son, Jesus.

Learn more at [championshrine.org/marian-conference](http://championshrine.org/marian-conference).

### Saints of America

**JULY 1-9**

Celebrate our nation's 250th birthday with a first-of-its-kind special exhibit honoring all the *Saints, Blesseds, Venerables and Servants of God* from the United States. Discover their inspiring stories and learn how we, too, are called to become saints!

Learn more at [championshrine.org/americansaints](http://championshrine.org/americansaints).

### Servant of God Adele Brice, Anniversary of Death

**JULY 5, 11:30 AM**

Join us for Mass at 11:30 a.m. on July 5 to mark the 130th anniversary of Adele Brice's death and the first celebration since the opening of her Cause for Sainthood, as we pray for her Cause and honor her holy life.



## Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**AUG. 15, 11:30 AM**

One of Champion Shrine's longest traditions! Pilgrims from across the country gather to celebrate Mass at 11:30 a.m. on the Feast of the Assumption, followed by a historic rosary procession around the grounds. A picnic lunch will be available for a small fee.

## Anniversary of the Miracle of the Fire

**OCT. 8**

On the anniversary of the Great Fire of 1871, The Shrine and the Belgian Heritage Center share the story of the Belgian settlers. That evening, thousands of candles light the grounds as the Miracle of the Fire is read aloud at 7 p.m. The night continues with all-night Adoration and hourly candlelit rosary processions.

Learn more at [championshrine.org/oloc-solemnity](http://championshrine.org/oloc-solemnity).

## Solemnity of Our Lady of Champion

**OCT. 9**

We celebrate the anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions to Adele Brice in 1859. Observed as a Solemnity at The Shrine, this is a day of highest honor for Our Lady of Champion and the pilgrims who come to commemorate this special moment.

Learn more at [championshrine.org/oloc-solemnity](http://championshrine.org/oloc-solemnity).

## St. Carlo Acutis Youth Day

**OCT. 24**

Calling all high school students! Join us for a powerful day to grow in your faith like never before. Spend the day rediscovering the beauty, truth and goodness of the Catholic faith. Confession, Adoration and Mass will be available.

Learn more at [championshrine.org/youth-day](http://championshrine.org/youth-day).

## Advent Rorate Caeli Mass

**DEC. 5**

An ancient Advent 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 illuminates the chapel. Hot breakfast and a special Advent reflection will follow Mass.

## Monthly Events

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### Eucharistic Healing Services

**LAST SATURDAY OF MONTH**

After the 11:30 a.m. Mass on every last Saturday of the month, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in Adoration. This is followed by the Anointing of the Sick for those who need the Sacrament.

## FEAST DAY RELIC VENERATION

*The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion is home to many beautiful relics of saints and blessed.*

*On their feast day, The Shrine brings out the saints' relic for personal veneration the hour before 11:30 a.m. Mass. See our upcoming relic veneration dates:*

- St. Patrick (3/17)
- St. Joseph Bilczewski (3/20)
- 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. Helena (8/18)
- St. Pope Pius X (8/21)
- St. Bartholomew the Apostle (8/24)
- St. Teresa of Calcutta (9/5)
- Relic of the True Cross (9/14)
- St. Matthew the Evangelist (9/21)

# A Place of Prayer and Peace Renewed

BY KELSEY DORNER, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**The grounds of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion have long been a place of prayer, healing and encounter, where countless pilgrims come seeking Christ through the loving intercession of Our Blessed Mother. These holy grounds have welcomed the faithful who arrive carrying hopes, burdens, gratitude and trust, many finding peace simply by walking the paths and pausing in prayer.**

Among the most beloved spaces on The Shrine grounds is the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto. Tucked away along the Rosary Path, the grotto has served as a place of stillness and reflection for countless pilgrims. Here, pilgrims whisper prayers and place their intentions before Mary, confident in her maternal care and constant intercession. For many, the grotto is a place

of consolation, where hearts are comforted and faith is renewed.

In the spring of 2026, The Shrine will begin a much-needed restoration of the Lourdes Grotto to preserve its beauty and ensure it remains a welcoming place of prayer for generations to come. Time and the Wisconsin elements have taken their toll, and thoughtful restoration is

necessary to protect both the structure and the sacred atmosphere of this cherished space. This important project will be made possible through Adele's Wish List, a special giving program that allows donors to directly support tangible needs here at The Shrine.

The restoration will address essential structural repairs, enhance the surrounding landscape and refresh the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, all while honoring the reverent character of the grotto. Every aspect of the project is being approached with great care and prayerful consideration, mindful of the countless pilgrims who have knelt there over the years. Their prayers, offered in moments of sorrow, thanksgiving and hope, have become part of the living spiritual legacy of this refuge.

Adele's Wish List reflects the spirit of Adele Brice herself, who responded faithfully to Mary's call and devoted her life to caring for the mission entrusted to her. Through this program, today's supporters are invited to continue that legacy. By contributing to Adele's Wish List, donors become active partners in The Shrine's mission, helping to maintain sacred spaces where faith is nurtured, prayer is encouraged, and hope is renewed.

You are warmly invited to help restore this cherished place of prayer. Gifts made through Adele's Wish List directly support the restoration of the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto and help ensure it remains a place of peace and devotion for future pilgrims. No gift is too small when it is offered in faith and love.

Your generosity today is an investment in the spiritual life of The Shrine and in all who will seek comfort, healing, and hope at the grotto in the years to come. As we look ahead to 2026, we invite you to keep this project and all who will come to pray at the Lourdes Grotto in your prayers. May Our Lady of Champion continue to intercede for all who seek Her Son with trusting hearts. ★

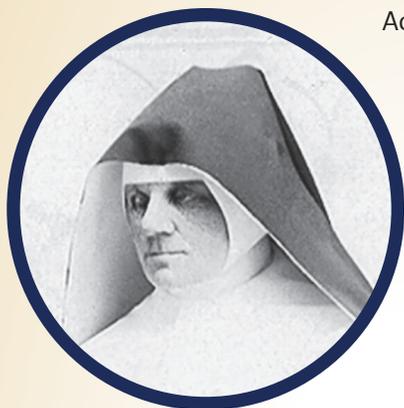


## Get Involved



**If you would like to support this project, please visit [championshrine.org/give](https://www.championshrine.org/give) or contact the Development Office at 920.866.2571, ext. 125.**

# ADELE'S WISH LIST



Adele Brice 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 answered prayers and pleas 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:

- ▶ **Adele Brice prayer cards (\$100)**
- ▶ **Liturgical items for Mass (\$100)**
- ▶ **Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary certificate printing (\$250)**
- ▶ **Internet upgrade for schoolhouse building (\$1,600)**
- ▶ **Battery-operated lift table (\$2,500)**
- ▶ **Mother of Mercy Hall painting project (\$4,490)**
- ▶ **Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto restoration project (\$60,000)**

*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?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion**  
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 Champion, WI 54229-9462

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# DAILY SCHEDULE

## GROUNDS AND FACILITIES

Apparition Chapel, Apparition Oratory and Grounds..... Daily | 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
 History Center ..... Daily | 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
 Mother of Mercy Hall ..... Daily | 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

## NATIONAL SHRINE GIFT SHOP AND 1885 SCHOOLHOUSE CAFE

Monday-Saturday ..... 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
 Sunday ..... 10:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

*Please note that the gift shop and cafe are closed on Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.*

## CELEBRATION OF MASS

Saturday and Sunday ..... 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.  
 Additional Mass (April - October) at 8 a.m.  
 Daily ..... 11:30 a.m.  
 Additional Mass (April - October) at 9:30 a.m.  
 Wednesday ..... Additional Mass at 5:45 p.m.

## SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Daily ..... 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

## SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Adele Brice Day ..... Every ninth of the month | Following 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 Last Saturday of the Month ..... Following Eucharistic Healing Service

## DEVOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Rosary ..... Daily | 10:45 a.m.  
 Divine Mercy Chaplet ..... Daily | 3 p.m.  
 Exposition of Blessed Sacrament ..... Daily | 12:45 p.m. - 3 p.m.  
 Rosary Walk ..... Sundays (May-October) | After 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 Holy Hour and Guided Lectio Divina Sundays ..... (November-April) | After 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus ..... First Friday | After 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 Fatima Devotions ..... First Saturdays | 10:40 a.m.  
 Eucharistic Healing Prayer Service ..... Last Saturdays of Month | After 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 Blessing of Expectant Mothers ..... Every 8th of the Month | Following 11:30 a.m. Mass  
 Stations of the Cross (Lenten season only) ..... Tuesday | 8:45 a.m.  
 Friday | 5:45 p.m.

*Blessings of religious articles will take place daily after the 11:30 a.m. Mass and daily at 1:30 pm.*



To get the newsletter  
 mailed to your home,  
 visit [ChampionShrine.org/  
 stay-in-touch](http://ChampionShrine.org/stay-in-touch).