

National Shrine of St. Joseph



A ministry of St. Norbert Abbey since 1898

A Guide to the Shrine Artifacts

Una guía de los artefactos del santuario

Przewodnik po artefaktach Sanktuarium

Please do not remove this binder from the Shrine.

Por favor, no retire esta carpeta del Santuario.

Proszę nie zabierać tego segregatora ze świątyni.

Welcome

In our Judeo-Christian Tradition, a shrine is considered a place where divine grace is manifested in a very special way – a place where the human and divine worlds intersect.

Pilgrimages remind us that the journey we take to a place of special devotion designated as a shrine mirrors the journey on which we are embarked as the pilgrim people of God, for the Church on earth is a pilgrim Church (Lumen Gentium VII, 48-51).

Thank you for visiting the National Shrine of St. Joseph. Whether this is your first visit or you are a frequent pilgrim, I pray that your visit will bring you comfort. Pilgrims have been visiting and writing to the Shrine since 1888. As you visit, perhaps your curiosity has been piqued and a deeper understanding of some of the art and environment of the Shrine will enhance your prayer here. I hope that this guide makes your visit even more meaningful.

This guide could not have been possible without the Spanish translation assistance by Fr. David McElroy, O. Praem., and historical input from Fr. Steve Rossey, O. Praem., Fr. Mike Brennan, O. Praem. and Karen Mand, St. Norbert Abbey archivist.

St. Joseph, pray for us!

Br. Steve Herro, O. Praem.
Director



The Crowned Statue of St. Joseph

We pray before statues because the statue is a visible sign that leads our hearts to the person it represents. The Church therefore teaches that statues are sacramentals that awaken and nourish faith, help us enter into prayer, and express the proper veneration owed to holy persons without ever attributing to the wood or stone the worship that belongs to God alone.

The current statue of St. Joseph is the second statue of the National Shrine. It replaced the first statue in 1892 (the original statue is now lodged in the crypt of St. Norbert Abbey). The current statue, crowned by Bishop Sebastian Messmer of Green Bay on May 8, 1892, is the only crowned statue of St. Joseph in the United States and one of 17 crowned statues of St. Joseph in the world. The crowning was authorized by Pope Leo XIII on September 25, 1891. The statue was produced by the Bavarian Royal Court Art Institute in Munich, Germany. The crowns were fashioned by Feely & Son Jewelers in Providence, Rhode Island from metals and gems donated from people throughout the country. The Shrine was returned to Old St. Joseph Church from St. Norbert Abbey in 2015, and the statue was refurbished in 2021.



Relic from the Cloak of St. Joseph

A relic is a physical object that had a direct association with a saint or with Jesus Christ. The word relic derives from the Latin word “relinquere,” which means “to abandon or leave behind.”

The relic from the Cloak of St. Joseph is a second class relic, an item that the saint owned or touched (a first class relic is the body or a fragment of the body of Jesus or a saint).

The relic of the cloak of St. Joseph was authenticated by Cardinal Marchetti Selvaggiani on April 28, 1933. The authentication paper is held in the St. Norbert Abbey Archives.



Chest of Prayer Intentions

Pilgrims may lay their prayer intentions in a carpenter's tool chest, which represents the vocation of St. Joseph. Prayer intentions sent to the National Shrine of St. Joseph are also printed, prayed with, and placed in the chest.

All intentions are remembered during Wednesdays' Masses and Novena prayers as well as each Sunday Mass.

The chest was acquired from a Wisconsin antique shop in time for the 1992 updating of the National Shrine at St. Norbert Abbey.



The Holy Family Painting

The Holy Family painting, produced by Ruth Stricklin (Phoenix, Arizona), was commissioned by the Diocese of Phoenix to commemorate its 50th Anniversary in 2019. This original piece, which resides at the Diocesan Pastoral Center in Phoenix, is 6 feet wide by 9 feet tall and features the Holy Family: the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and the child Jesus.

The compositional structure features two equilateral triangles in a mirror image, giving the piece a clear center of gravity, and providing symbolic representation of the “two trinities” represented: the image of the Holy Family in the horizontal plane, and the Divine Family of the Trinity on the vertical plane: Father, Son, and Spirit. Symbolic representations drawn from the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of the Diocese of Phoenix, can also be discerned.

The painting housed at the National Shrine of St. Joseph was secured by Fr. Mike Brennan, O. Praem. for the National Shrine of St. Joseph in 2020.



The Divine Mercy Painting

The image of the Divine Mercy is a depiction of Jesus Christ that is based on the Divine Mercy devotion initiated by Faustina Kowalska before she was canonized St. Faustina.

According to Kowalska's diary, Jesus told her "I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I myself will defend it as My own glory." The prayer "Jesus I trust in you" is often prayed while gazing at the painting.

The original painting was produced by Polish artist Eugeniusz Kazimirowski in 1934, at the behest of Faustina. The Shrine's print was donated by Alice Kraft in 2021.

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Welcoming Pilgrims Since the 1880s

The National Shrine of St. Joseph – a ministry of the Norbertine Community of St. Norbert Abbey – began in 1888 when the Association of St. Joseph was established by Fr. Joseph Durin, MSC, who was the pastor of St. Joseph Church. The Association was established by a decree of Bishop Frederick Xavier Katzer, Bishop of Green Bay.

Fr. Durin witnessed the crowning of a statue of St. Joseph in the Norbertine Abbey of Frigolet (France) in 1874 and, wishing to do the same in De Pere, Wisconsin, he erected a statue under the arch of the sanctuary in St. Joseph Church.

In 1889, Bishop Katzer applied to affiliate the St. Joseph Association with the Archconfraternity of St. Joseph in Rome; that was approved on April 15, 1889. Fr. Durin began the publication of the *Annals of St. Joseph*, which became the official organ of the Archconfraternity.

According to an article in the *Annals of St. Joseph*, "The object of the Archconfraternity is to promote devotion to St. Joseph, the Patron of Christian families, and to unite under his patronage all its members, living and dead; so that there be a perpetual bond of charity between the Church on earth and the Church in purgatory; that the living may prepare for themselves for a happy death, and pray for their departed friends and relatives; and that the dead may intercede for the living, who by Holy Masses, Communions, and prayers have brought about their release from the purifying flames of divine justice." (November 1923 issue)

On August 13, 1889, the church was destroyed by lightning and ensuing fire. Bishop Katzer authorized Fr. Durin to solicit funds for a new church through a national appeal to the membership of the Association of St. Joseph. Although the church was destroyed, the St. Joseph statue survived and was reinstalled in the new church in April of 1890.

In 1891, approval was granted by Pope Leo XIII to crown the statue, and by papal brief in 1892 he formally established the Archconfraternity of St. Joseph at the National Shrine of St. Joseph.

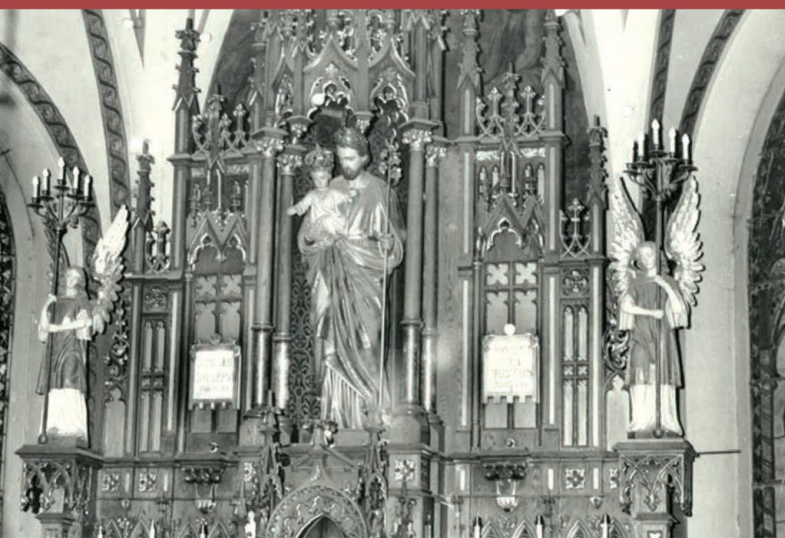
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A new, larger statue (the one now seen at the current Shrine), made at the Bavarian Royal Court Art Institute in Munich, Germany, was dedicated and crowned by Bishop Sebastian Messmer of the Diocese of Green Bay. The crowns were fashioned by Feely & Son Jewelers of Providence, Rhode Island, from metals and gems donated from various people around the country. On the same day a relic of St. Joseph was exposed for public veneration.

On July 13, 1898, the Parish of St. Joseph and the shrine were transferred to the Norbertine Fathers, and on September 25, 1898, Fr. Lambert Broens, O. Praem. was appointed pastor and director of the shrine. In July 1900, Fr. Bernard Pennings, O. Praem. was named pastor of the parish and director of the shrine, which remained at the church until 1969 – at which time renovations to the church prompted the statue to be moved on the east side of the Fox River to St. Norbert Abbey.

In 1992, the shrine was rededicated by Abbot Benjamin Mackin, O. Praem in the Abbey's St. Joseph Crypt in celebration of the centennial of the Archconfraternity of St. Joseph. The statue remained at the Abbey until 2015, when it was returned to the renovated oratory at Old St. Joseph Church on the St. Norbert College campus. In recent years, a renovation and conservation effort restored the statue to its original paint colors and patterns.

The National Shrine of St. Joseph statue – shown in its placement at the Shrine several decades ago – was crafted at the Bavarian Royal Court Art Institute in Munich, Germany.



Since 1888, a weekly Novena has been celebrated. The Solemn Novena of nine days occurs in March each year, culminating with a Solemn Novena Mass on March 19, the Feast of St. Joseph.

In 1955, Pope Pius XII established the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker to be celebrated on May 1. This feast emphasizes the dignity of the working man and the example that was set by St. Joseph. In 1961, Pope John XXIII proclaimed St. Joseph as the Protector of Vatican Council II, and in 1962 he ordered that the name of St. Joseph be entered in the Roman Canon in the Mass.

The St. Norbert Abbey archive houses the complete set of volumes of the Annals of St. Joseph.



Karen Mand
St. Norbert Abbey Archivist & Librarian

PRAY AT THE SHRINE

123 Grant St., De Pere, WI
(Adjacent to Old St. Joseph Church on the campus of St. Norbert College)

Visiting Hours:

Daily 6:00am - 11:00pm

Mass Times:

Sunday at 10:00am
(7:00pm during academic year)
Monday - Friday at noon

Perpetual Novena Mass:

Wednesday at noon (followed by Novena Prayers)

Annual Solemn Novena:

March 11-19; 7:00pm Mass

Lodging:

Newly renovated guest rooms at the Norbertine Center for Spirituality at St. Norbert Abbey are available to pilgrims. The Abbey is a 5-minute drive from the National Shrine of St. Joseph. To reserve a room, please contact the NCS at ncs@norbertines.org or 920-337-4300.

For additional information about the National Shrine of St. Joseph, including details about prayer requests, lighting candles and signing up for the e-newsletter, please visit norbertines.org/joseph or email shrine@norbertines.org