

1 Shrine of St. Therese Chapel

Although originally intended to be a log church, the Chapel, constructed of Shrine-site beach stone, was built in the late 1930's. Fr. William LeVasseur, S.J., a man who held and followed through on the vision of establishing a Shrine occupying an entire island, celebrated the inaugural Chapel Mass on the Feast of Christ the King, October 26, 1941.

Bishop Joseph Raphael Crimont, S.J.D.D., the 1st bishop of all of Alaska, gave his consent and blessing to the establishment of the Shrine of St. Therese. As a lasting memorial, following his death in 1945, Bishop Crimont was buried in a crypt under the Chapel altar area. (In March 1995, Bishop Michael H. Kenny was also entombed in this crypt.)

In May of 1988, after nearly 50 years without a bell, such was installed in the tower and named "Raphael," (Bishop Crimont's middle name), which means "God Heals." It is rung at weddings, Eucharistic celebrations, days of renewal, prayer services (including ecumenical gatherings), and other festive occasions ringing out God's healing message of love.



Daily the Chapel is opened, and people are invited to enter this holy place and experience the living peaceful presence of God.

2 St. Therese of Lisieux

(See back panel.)

3 Stations of the Cross

The stone structures sheltering scenes of Christ's final hours of human life are part of a Catholic tradition of devotion called the Stations (or Way of the Cross.) Each of the Stations describe a scene from the passion, death, or resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the believer, in the first fourteen stations, enters into the painful scenes of Christ's suffering and identifies with Jesus through one's own personal pain and woundedness, the pilgrimage through life becomes a shared experience. Just as Christ entered into the fullness of suffering in the human condition to exhibit the depth of God's love and merciful forgiveness, he likewise experienced resurrections as depicted in the 15th station. The followers of Jesus are then given an invitation of hope to believe in the Good News that they too will pass through their suffering with Christ and experience their resurrection.

The Station rock structures were built about 1940, however, new sculptures were created by the artist R.D. Robinson and installed April, 1989. Cast in cultured alabaster, the scenes are meant to speak to one personally as they journey with Christ from station to station. The invitation, then, is to notice the details, to place yourself in the scene, to enter into the event, open to the unique message that is meant for you. (If desired, Way of the Cross or Stations of the Cross booklets are available inside the Chapel.)

4 Shrine Causeway

This causeway, limited to foot traffic, provides access to Shrine Island (previously named Crow Island). The original causeway, set in place before the Chapel was constructed, was built with logs, rocks, and fill.

The body of water north of the causeway is called Pearl Harbor, and it opens up to the Inside Passage waterway known as Lynn Canal. On clear days, the craggy, snow-covered Chilkat Mountains can be seen in the distance.

5 Shrine Columbarium and Gardens

The Shrine Columbarium was constructed on the Shrine property overlooking Pearl Harbor in 1998. Many Catholics, and non-

Catholics, regularly seek to select a niche for the immediate needs of the remains (cremated ashes) of their loved one

or for future plans for the interment of their own cremated bodies when they are called back to Abba.

Besides containing the black Zimbabwe granite columns of burial niches, the Columbarium contains considerable other features of importance.

The stones that line the wall of the Columbarium, the twelve large stones in sets of three, the stone altar, and the granite-faced cross, all have symbolic Christian significance dating back from the time of Christ to the present.



This holy, blessed, and dedicated place for the interment of the remains of loved ones is enhanced by the Biblical and Marian Gardens that flourish during the growing season each year. The development and the success of the gardens can be attributed to the research and efforts of Master gardener Ed Buyarski and his representatives of similar or related plants mentioned throughout the bible of found in Church Tradition, particularly in relationship to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

6 LeVasseur Cabin

The "LeVasseur Cabin" is named in memory of the man who first envisioned this Shrine, Father William G. LeVasseur, S.J. However, for a brief time, this structure was the original post office. It has also been used as a retreat master's residence and a retreatant cabin. After it fell into disrepair, the cabin received extensive repairs from 1985-1990. Presently it functions as a meeting place for youth and adults, and as a hermitage for retreatants desiring a simple atmosphere.



7 St. Therese Post Office

In 1938, this cabin was a functional post office, after 36 people petitioned the U.S. Government for its formation. Fr. LeVasseur, a local priest, became the first and primary postmaster. He used this post office to generate donation requests for the Shrine, and in turn, many donations from around the world were mailed here. Over 12,000 envelopes bear the first day's cancellation. Stamp collectors throughout the U.S.A. covet the postmark and cancellation stamp bearing the name "St. Therese, Alaska." (Note: St. Therese was spelled incorrectly.)

Retreat directors, families, private retreatants, and over-flow lodge users utilize this small building today.

8 Shrine Lodge

Previous to the 1932 ground-breaking for this lodge, there was no building in Alaska suitable for the religious and laity to gather for retreats. With the initial securing of 5 acres from the government, and eventually with an act of the U.S. Congress allowing the Catholic Bishop to purchase a total of 46.5 acres (at \$2.50 per acre), that need began to be filled.

Henry Meyers and Peter Ludwig were contracted to cut the logs and to build this "Retreat House," and by 1935 most of the work was completed. It wasn't until the early 1970's, however, before central heating was installed, and the lodge wasn't open for year round use until 1986.

This log building contains 10 bedrooms, sleeping 20 people, 3 bathrooms, a large conference/living room with a rock fireplace, a dining area, kitchen, and a small chapel. It is scheduled throughout the year for a variety of retreats, days of renewal, children's summer camp, and government and business seminars. It is truly a place of retreat and renewal.

9 Merciful Love Labyrinth

This prayer walk labyrinth was constructed in the spring of 2001. Just as they had done in the 1930's to provide rocks for the Shrine

Chapel, Stations of the Cross, and other building foundations as a labor of love, volunteers of all ages carried cobbles from the beach nearby for constructing the Merciful Love Labyrinth.

Evidence of labyrinths have been found dating back to four thousand years, but as of late there is a re-awakening to the value of them. The Shrine Merciful Love labyrinth, laid out in patterns of concentric rings similar to the labyrinth found at Chartres, France, provides individuals of all faiths or no faith an opportunity to enter into a sacred spiritual experience. Some people equate the labyrinth with a maze, but they are really quite different. Labyrinths, symbols of the single path to the sacred center, have no confusing dead ends or false pathways; mazes, on the other hand have many paths, purposely designed to confuse and dupe the person navigating them. As Janis Burns Buyarski shares, "Labyrinths are part of the mystical tradition which looks for a direct connection to the Divine. It is a part of the "kinetic knowing," of praying through moving the body... In a time when many people are seeking ways to integrate psychology with spirituality, the labyrinth creates a safe, open space where the inner and outer meet and become one...Labyrinths are symbols of the path to the sacred center, and a metaphor for the human journey of life."

St. Therese of Lisieux, our Shrine patron saint, came to know the truth of the "merciful love" that God has for his creation. She knew that this merciful love from God was an invitation to allow the love of God to flow through her into the lives of others. May your journey on this labyrinth path allow you to come to know this truth.

10 Caretaker's House

In the summer of 1938, a one-room log cabin with chapel was built on this site. In time, it was to see new additions, and be the home for more than six different families, over a dozen children, and an assortment of pets, toys, and tools.

Although originally used a retreat master's cabin, and even considered as a convent site (with its own private chapel), it is now used to house the Shrine caretakers. It contains 5 bedrooms, a kitchen, living room, family room, and an enclosed porch. The caretakers reside on-site year round, and are often gifted with spectacular views and unusual experiences. In addition to maintaining the buildings and grounds and caring for those coming for retreats and weddings, they meet worldwide visitors, and provide a multitude of services for the visiting pilgrims.

11 Public Restrooms

12 Good Shepherd Rosary/Grotto Trail

Located just across Shrine Creek is a recycled asphalt walking path called the Good Shepherd Rosary/Grotto Trail and it is wheelchair navigable. This path begins with a bronze plaque of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who reached out and cared especially for those who were less fortunate in the "eyes of the World." As a remembrance to the late Bishop Michael Kenny of the Juneau Diocese, this trail is dedicated to him, for he represented the Good Shepherd in many ways, particularly in his respect for life from conception to death. As one walks this trail, you will come upon three semicircled areas, each on containing five bronze plaques of the Rosary. The artwork for the plaques was created by Janis Burns Buyarski. The first area represents the Joyful Mysteries, the second represents the Sorrowful Mysteries,

(Continued)

(Good Shepherd Rosary Trail, continued)

and the third, the Glorious Mysteries.

The present form of the Rosary was established in the Middle Ages after the Hail Mary became popular. The name "rosary" indicates a garland of roses. Linked together in a systematic way, the Rosary beads symbolize a crown of roses. The rosary is Scripturally based and is Christ centered and a rich devotional source of prayer for many Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Plans are to place a statue of Mary, one who carried the Christ child, at the end of the Good Shepherd Rosary/Grotto Trail.

13 Jubilee Cabin

This log building, located south of Shrine Creek on Jubilee Hill, was constructed in the Great Jubilee Year, 2000. A Jubilee Year calls one to come to know more deeply the great love that God has for each of his children. Found in Leviticus, Chapter 25 of the Old Testament, reference is made to celebrating the Jubilee Year with a call of forgiving debts, freeing captives and prisoners, and restoring justice. In Chapter 4 of Luke's Gospel, Jesus picked up the Jubilee theme in his inaugural speech when he stood up and read the Scroll from Isaiah. The Jubilee Cabin, then, is a place to come to for building relationships with God and humankind, whether that is with one's family, friends, church or business associates.

This Cabin, constructed out of 13 inch diameter logs shipped in from Prince George, B.C., Canada, was the first new retreat building to be erected at the Shrine since the first building phase of the 1930's. This modern and comfortable two bathroom, four bedroom facility is ADA (handicap) compliant on the first floor and has a fine kitchen and a gather/living room with a majestic view of the Inside Passage and Shrine Island. Being the second largest of the Shrine retreat facilities, it can accommodate thirteen persons in beds, and through the use of additional twin size mattresses, twenty can be slept.

14 The Little Flower Retreat

This deluxe structure, found near the Shrine's southern boundary, was built in 2001 and is nestled within the forest environment while facing the Inside Passage Breadline waters. Because this place is set apart from the rest of the Shrine facilities and seventy feet above the water, it gives one a true sense of solitude and privacy, yet it is able to be driven to (at times with 4-wheel drive) for ease of access. The structure, itself, was funded primarily from donations made by Vivian Kirkevold in memory of her late daughter, Heidi. Her intent was to provide funds to build a special place for people, particularly couples, to come to for renewal.

Being a modern facility, this Retreat has a fine kitchen, dining room, gathering room, bathroom with shower and bathtub, and two bedrooms, each with a queen size bed. The panoramic view from the very comfortable gathering room is truly an untiring scene of contrasting water activity amidst the reefs and island. One will not hasten to end their stay at this uplifting place of beauty and comfort.



Welcome to the Shrine of St. Therese

We invite you to experience the peace and serenity of this special place of refuge and retreat.

This site, dedicated to St. Therese of Lisieux, has been in existence for over 60 years. Built on a foundation of love, it continues to invite people of all ages, from all over the world, regardless of their religious affiliation. Today we invite you and we take joy in sharing this Holy Ground with you.

Allow at least 20-30 minutes to experience this tour. However, if time allows, we encourage you to take time to pause and reflect, to savor and explore — to discover the gift of the Shrine of St. Therese

Please keep in mind that these retreat facilities are frequently in use. We ask that you respect the environment of near silence and maintain a respectable distance from the buildings that could be occupied. The Chapel on the island is generally open for pilgrim visitors, however, because it is often used for weddings and liturgies, please follow any instructions you may find at the entrance. Once again, welcome!

St. Therese of Lisieux

This young woman who lived a hidden life, was a Carmelite cloistered nun from Lisieux, France. After overcoming many obstacles, she entered the convent at an astonishingly young age of 15, and died 9 years later. In 1925 she was canonized a saint.

In the Catholic tradition, we honor and imitate saints like St. Therese, just as we would anyone we love who is outstanding and points the way to what is most life-giving. Saints, like St. Therese, are never worshiped, rather we ask them to pray with us and for us through Christ to the Father as we might ask someone here on earth for support prayers. It is our belief that those who have been lovingly supportive towards others while living on earth can, in God's intercessory love through Christ even after their physical death.

Known for her "little way," St. Therese wrote in her autobiography, *The Story of A Soul*, that what really matters in life is not our great deeds, but our great love. She believed that the God of mercy had a special love for "ordinary" persons because he created so many of them, and she considered herself one of them.

Through personal example and unshakable confidence in God's love, St. Therese put into practice her belief that opportunities for loving occur most often in the ordinary events of one's life, and through these happenings we are called to choose to love others with God's help, and to grow into wholeness and holiness. The message of St. Therese, now known throughout the world teaches us that on one has to earn God's love. God loves us first and the purpose of life is to respond to this love.



Shrine of St. Therese

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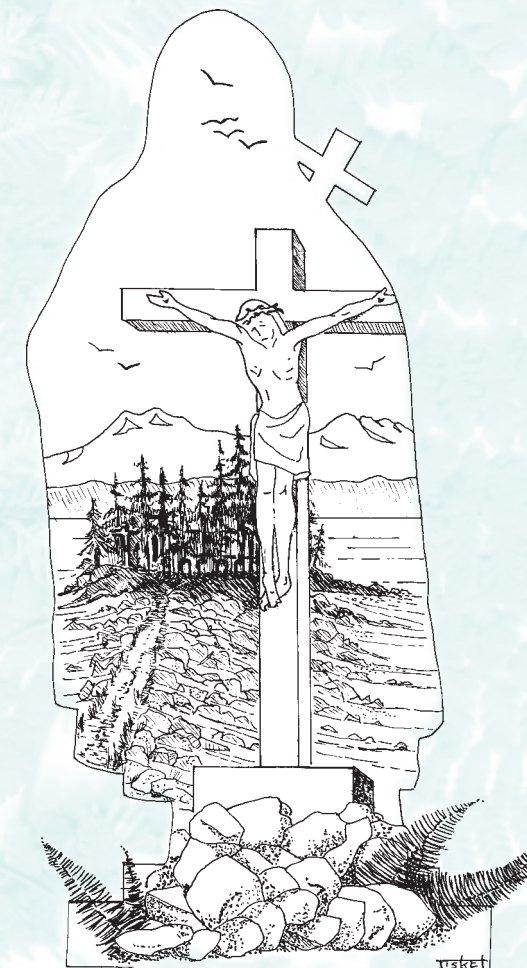
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Shrine of St. Therese

Self-Guided Tour



Enter these grounds with a sense of openness and enjoy the gift of God's peace...