



The Knights of Columbus Newsletter

Martyrs' Shrine Musings



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The Shrine Story

The Martyrs' Shrine is one of three National Shrines in Canada. It has been such informally since the North American Jesuit Martyrs were named the secondary patrons of Canada. In 1644 Pope Urban VIII designated in perpetuity the Sainte-Marie Chapel of St. Joseph as a place of pilgrimage. That designation was transferred to the present Shrine Church when it was opened in 1926. The Shrine was dedicated as a National Shrine by the faithful pilgrims of Canada and the United States including many Bishops and Cardinals who traveled to Rome for the Canonization ceremony in June of 1930. Before the eyes of these faithful, with the inscription of our Martyrs on the catalogue of the Saints, eight cornerstones of the North American Church have been publicly laid into the very foundation of the Universal Church and united to the living Rock, the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

Shrines are places of pilgrimage. The act of pilgrimage becomes a paradigm of the whole life of faith: **departure** reveals the decision of pilgrims to go forward up to the destination and achieve the spiritual objectives of their baptismal vocation; **walking** leads them to solidarity with their brothers and sisters and to necessary preparation for the meeting with the Lord; the **visit to the Shrine** invites them to listen to the Word of God and to sacramental celebration; **the return home**, in the end, reminds them of their mission in the world, as witnesses of salvation and builders of peace.

I would hope that the Knights of Columbus come to see the Shrine of the Canadian Martyrs as something they can and ought to promote and support. The Shrine to the Martyrs honours those men who by their work, their lives and their deaths founded the Faith here in North America. In their lives they followed in the footsteps of their Lord and Master imitating His passion and death. The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Faith. That blood was shed here in what was then New France and what is now North America.

The Knights of Columbus and The Martyrs' Shrine

Since 1926 the Knights of Columbus have been involved with the Martyrs' Shrine. At all of the Shrine's milestone points the Knights have been present and active participants.

More recently the Knights were enlisted by

Shrine the past Shrine Director Fr. Robert Wong, S.J. and the present Shrine Director Fr. Alex Kirsten, S.J. to assist the Shrine in the carrying out of its mission to the Church in Canada. To date this has been achieved by the generosity of the Knights of the various Zones of Southern Ontario. What follows is a brief listing of projects that the Knights have supported over the last eight years.

| Year | Item | Amount | Zone(s) |
|------|--|------------------|-------------------|
| 02 | Picnic tables | \$3,000 | 1 Zone |
| 03 | Benches | \$6,850 | 1 Zone |
| 04 | Flood Lights | \$8,000 | 1 Zone |
| 05 | Retaining Walls | \$55,000 | 3 Zones and State |
| 06 | Church Lighting & Caf e Renovation | \$28,000 | 3 Zones and State |
| 07 | Stairs / 5 Entrances Refurbished | \$54,500 | 4 Zones and State |
| 08 | Filion Entrance, Retaining Wall & 8 Church Doors | \$34,000 | 5 Zones and State |
| 09 | Repair/Seal Slate Siding on Church | \$35,000 | 7 Zones and State |
| | Total to Date | \$224,350 | |

The Zones participating to date are: the North, East and Western Zones of the Toronto Archdiocese; the North, and Southern Zones of the Hamilton Diocese; the Northern Zone of the Peterborough Diocese; the Eastern Zone of the London Diocese and the K of C State Board.

The project for this year 2009, is the refurbishing, cleaning and staining of the slate siding on the upper level of the Shrine Church. Many of the slates have been damaged over the years giving unwanted access to birds and insects.

Thank you one and all for your great generosity and wonderful support.

May the Martyrs continue to bless you and yours.

A. F. Kirsten, SJ