

Seeking the Living Water

“Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer. For pilgrims seeking living water, shrines are special places for living the forms of Christian prayer ‘in Church’” (CCC 2691).

People often ask, “What is a shrine?” After all, the words “shrine” and “pilgrimage” are not part of our everyday speech. A shrine is a church or other sacred place visited by the faithful as pilgrims for special devotion. A pilgrimage is a journey by the faithful to a shrine, a place made sacred. “Living water” refers to the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Risen Christ that comes to dwell in us, to cleanse us and renew us.

At Kateri’s Shrine, the spirit and memory of Saint Kateri are present in a special way. The shrine is sacred as Kateri’s home, as a place to personally experience Kateri and her blessings, and as a source of the holy water of Kateri’s baptism 341 years ago.

Kateri’s Shrine offers a much-needed respite from the loneliness of a secularized world. The physical features and natural beauty of the shrine, together with our prayers and liturgy, help pilgrims understand the spiritual significance of their experience.

While winter is considered the shrine’s “closed season,” our staff, volunteers, and friends are busy supporting numerous improvements and renovations. Volunteers are preparing monthly mailings. Prayer letters go out, and the returning prayer intentions are included in the prayers of Friar Mark and our other friars. Our property manager, Tom Gray, is renovating four of our public restrooms, including fresh paint, new doors and trim, and new baby changing tables. We are applying for grants to install new water-saving fixtures. We recently applied for a grant to install a new roof on Saint Peter’s Chapel. We are upgrading our computers, printer, and accounting and donor relations systems. Also in the works are new signs, improved lighting, trail and habitat improvements, and new and restored museum exhibits. Friends of the shrine provide the ongoing support we need to sustain our operations. Together, we are working to enhance the experience of pilgrimage for all who seek the living water found here. The shrine welcomes our First Nations friends, people interested in Native American culture, tourists, and neighbors just out for a walk. We hope that everyone can experience the living water of Kateri’s Shrine, whether on-site or online.

We would like to welcome our new Assistant Director, Rita Gullion. Rita comes to the shrine with a special devotion to Saint Kateri and 20 years of experience in non-profit administration, fund development, and communications. Rita and her family have been regular visitors to the shrine since 2004. Rita's daughter, Kateri is a lector at our Sunday Masses.

Yours in Christ and Saint Kateri Tekakwitha,

Bill Jacobs, Shrine Director
Rita Gullion, Assistant Director

*The shrine is a ministry of the Conventual Franciscan Friars of
Our Lady of the Angels Province, Ellicott City, MD.*