

FORTRESS OF ANTONIA: attached to the TEMPLE, it was the headquarters of the Proconsul, Pontius Pilate, at the time of Jesus' death. Here Our Lord was scourged and condemned to die on the cross.

GETHSEMANI: at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where Jesus suffered His agony and was taken prisoner.

CRUCIFIXION: the two crosses flank Our Lord representing the two thieves, one known as the "Good Thief," who asked Jesus for forgiveness.

DORMITION ABBEY: high on the hill: a Benedictine monastery on Mt. Zion. The place where the Virgin Mary died, and was assumed into heaven.

THE RESURRECTION: Brother Joe placed the empty tomb beneath Calvary. The Resurrection is the most important mystery of the Christians.

TEN COMMANDMENTS: the two tablets contain the Ten Commandments which were spoken by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai and then written on two stone tablets.

BRAZEN SERPENT: Prefigures Christ on the Cross. Moses was told by God to hold up a serpent on a pole so that those who looked upon it would be saved from the effects of the bite of poisonous serpents.

JACOB'S WELL: At the entrance of the Sicheb Valley; Here our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman of "living water."

TOMB OF LAZARUS: Here Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead; near the home of Martha and Mary.

BETHPAGE, ASCENSION MOSQUE AND CHAPEL, ANNUNCIATION CHURCH, CHURCH OF NAIM: buildings connected with events in Our Lord's life in the Holy Land.

GROTTO OF ST. JOSEPH: patron of Brother Joseph.

THE FIRST "LITTLE JERUSALEM." These miniatures represent Brother Joe's first attempts at constructing small buildings.

MOUNT TABOR: the Statue of Jesus atop the famous mount where He appeared transfigured to His followers. The Basilica commemorates the event.

NOAH'S ARK AND TOWER OF BABEL: Old Testament events recorded in stone and cement.

WAYSIDE SHRINE, DANIEL'S TOMB and CATHEDRAL IN MANCHURIA: The Cathedral was destroyed by the Communists.

HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON: One of the seven wonders of the Ancient World, built by King Nabuchodonosor about 3,000 B.C. Note the many elephants Brother Joe has placed here.

PYRAMID: Tomb of the Pharaohs.

WAYSIDE SHRINES: The Crucifixion and Head of Jesus.

BENEDICTINE SHRINE: Brother Joe's tribute to the Benedictine monks. Note the Benedictine Cross on the top with the word "Pax,"--"Peace," and the Benedictine motto of "Ora et Labora," --"Pray and Work."

OUR LADY OF FATIMA SHRINE. Notes the appearance of the Virgin Mary in 1917 to three small children in the town of Fatima, Portugal. Mary asked them to pray for the conversion of Communist Russia.

DIE WALD KAPELLE: "The Forest Chapel." A beautiful way-side shrine in honor of the Virgin Mary.

ST. POPE PIUS X: Known as the Pope of Peace, because he worked hard to prevent the outbreak of World War I. Also known for granting the privilege of receiving Holy Communion to small children.

LOURDES SHRINE: One of the most popular shrines in the world. Located in Southern France, it was here that the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubrius in a small cave in 1858. Later this huge church was built and many miracles have been performed among the thousands of annual pilgrims. This replica was the last built by Brother Joe-- in 1958 at the age of 80. (He died in 1961.)

AGONY IN THE GARDEN SHRINE: Dedicated to former students of St. Bernard College who were killed in World War II. The twenty-nine crosses in the cemetery represent the deceased.

THE AMERICAN FLAG: Brother Joe's way of honoring the St. Bernard fallen veterans, made from colored marbles, glass and cement. It has only 48 states, being made before Hawaii and Alaska entered the Union.

BENEDICTINE MONASTERY IN KOREA. At Seoul, Korea the Benedictine missionaries operated a large school. This is a replica of that school. Many Benedictine monks were killed by the Communists during the Korean War. The three crosses honor the three St. Bernard alumni killed in the War.

WORLD PEACE CHURCH. In Hiroshima, Japan, dedicated to world peace in hopes that no more atom bombs will ever be used again.

OUR LADY OF GUADELUPE SHRINE: The last of the Grotto shrines stands at the former entrance to the Grotto park. The Virgin Mary in 1531 appeared to a Mexican farmer, Juan Diego. A large church was built at the place and has become a famous pilgrimage shrine. Our Lady of Guadalupe is one of the favorites of American Hispanics, particularly in Mexico and Latin America.

The staff of the Ave Maria Grotto thank you for visiting our beautiful shrine. We hope you enjoyed your tour. Please come back.....and May God Bless you with a safe journey home.

This short Self Guided Tour was written by one of the Abbey monks, Father Aloysius Plaisance, OSB., Ph.D

A SELF GUIDED TOUR OF
THE AVE MARIA GROTTO

St. Bernard Abbey, Cullman, Alabama 35055

The Ave Maria Grotto is located on the grounds of St. Bernard Abbey, the only Benedictine monastery in Alabama, founded in 1891. The Grotto consists of a landscaped hillside of 125 small stone and cement structures, the handiwork of the creative genius, Brother Joseph Zoettel, O.S.B., for almost 70 years a monk of St. Bernard Abbey.

A pleasant two block pathway winds besides these miniature buildings passing in front of a large cavern style Grotto on the lower level of the hillside. Opened in 1934 on the site of a former stone quarry the Grotto miniature park was a continuation of the creative work of Brother Joe, who built his first replicas about 1912, and his last, the beautiful Lourdes Basilica Church replica in 1958, constructed when he was 80 years old.

Brother Joseph was born in 1878 in Landshut, Bavaria and in 1892 came to the newly founded St. Bernard Abbey. His monastic life was spent at the Abbey in daily hours of prayer and in laboring in the Abbey power house. When not busy shoveling coal into the furnaces, he began to construct miniature buildings from discarded pieces of building materials.

Brother Joe placed his cement and stone creations in the Abbey gardens but due to the large number of visitors coming to see them they were moved to the present site in 1934.

Brother Joseph gathered ideas for his creations from extensive readings of history and the bible. Of all the replicas he has seen only about six of them: those of his home town of Landshut and those of St. Bernard Abbey. All the others were constructed from photos or from memory.

Brother Joe who died in 1961 is buried in the Abbey Cemetery, one hundred yards north of the Gift Shop. Visitors are invited to visit his grave.

WELCOME TO THE GROTTO!

THE TOUR

The first shrine is appropriately BETHLEHEM. Here is depicted the birthplace of Jesus Christ. Above the enclosure is written. "Venite Adoremus,"- "Come Let us Adore."

THE TOWER OF THANKS was constructed by Brother Joseph to thank his many friends who sent him materials for his works. The green glass balls on top are from Ireland where they were used as floats on fishing nets.

ST. PETER'S SHRINE: constructed of pumice rock, it honors the first Pope. The word, "Peter" means rock--hence the construction material. Above see the figure of St. Michael the Archangel, represented in art with body and wings.

MONSERRAT ABBEY is a famous Benedictine Abbey in Spain known as a pilgrimage site.

WAYSIDE SHRINE: Typical of European and Latin American countries such shrines are located along the roads, where travellers stop and say a prayer.

CASTLE TRAUSNITZ AND ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH: these two miniatures are located in Brother Joseph's home town, Landshut, Bavaria. The castle's name means "trust not," because the baron who built it did not keep a promise of protection he'd made for the local people. St. Martin's Church, in which Brother Joseph was baptized in 1878, has the tallest brick tower in the world, 432 feet.

STATUE OF LIBERTY: Brother Joe built this as a tribute to his adopted country. Designed by Alexander Eiffel, the engineer who built the famous Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Statue of Liberty stands 151 feet high.

RED CROSS TOWER: built as a tribute to the Red Cross work in World War I.

TEMPLE OF THE FAIRIES: note its tiny organ. Brother Joe used over a dozen old cold cream jars in this structure. Can you find them?

HANSEL AND GRETEL VISIT THE TEMPLE OF THE FAIRIES. Note its beautiful little children and the dragon. The dragon is bound by a heavy chain!

ST. BERNARD COLLEGE BUILDINGS. Depicts the history of the Abbey school. An old log cabin was purchased in 1891 along with 160 acres at \$2.00 an acre to form the beginning of the Abbey. The Map of Alabama with the words, "Here We Rest," refers to the meaning of the Indian word, "Alabama," not to the energetic monks! The LIBRARY and ABBEY CHURCH are hand-cut stone buildings.

CATHEDRAL OF MOBILE, ALA. The Immaculate Conception Cathedral dedicated in 1849 was the first church in the U.S. to be so dedicated to the Virgin Mary under this title. The two domes are discarded toilet bowl floats!

MISSION SECTION: Here Brother Joseph recreated some of the missions founded by the famous California missionary, Franciscan Father Junipero Serra: SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CARMEL, MISSION DOLORES, and SAN BUENAVENTURA.

Other mission churches are SAN MIGUEL, Santa Fe, N. Mex., SAN FERNANDO, and SANTA BARBARA.

THE ROUND TOWER: a mysterious round tower of stones in Rhode Island considered to have been built by the Vikings.

THE ALAMO: a mission church in Texas. The scene of a famous battle in which Davy Crockett was killed.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL: The Guardian Angels of all of us are honored in this small grotto. The blue cross inside the cave is made from blue ink bottles.

ST. THERESE, THE LITTLE FLOWER. Born in Lisieux, France, in 1873, St. Therese entered the Carmelite convent at the age of 16. Her claim to sanctity was the heroic virtues she practiced in performing the everyday tasks to which she was assigned. She died in 1897 and was proclaimed a saint in 1925. This grotto was made from Alabama marble and the statue is from Italy.

ST. PETER'S BASILICA in Rome, one of Brother Joseph's most famous miniatures, was constructed in 1954. Brother Joe began it by using an old bird cage to form the huge dome. Standing over the tomb of the Apostle Peter, the first Pope, the Basilica is the largest church in the world, covering four acres and holding 70,000 people.

MONTE CASSINO ABBEY: Founded by St. Benedict in the fifth century it is located on a high mountain top south of Rome. It has been destroyed by wars four times, the last in 1944 by Allied bombers. Each time it was rebuilt.

ST. SCHOLASTICA OF SUBIACO: St Benedict's first monastery in the mountains near Rome.

ST. ANSELM'S, The International Benedictine College on the Aventine Hill in Rome.

PANTHEON: Built by Romans in 27 B.C. was a temple to all their gods, it later became a Christian Church. Many famous people are buried in it.

VESTAL VIRGIN: the vestal virgins' duty was to keep the lamps burning before the pagan gods. If a virgin allowed the fires to go out, she was put to death.

THE AQUEDUCT: built to carry water into the cities. This one is a copy of the Appius Claudius Aqueduct.

ROTUNDA OF ST. STEPHEN: in honor of one of the first deacons and the first martyr of the Christian Church.

THE COLOSSEUM: one of the most popular Roman ruins. Much of it remains today. Built as an open air theater for the entertainment of the Romans, it was the site where early Christians were put to death and gladiators fought combats to death.

BASILICAS, TEMPLES and CATACOMBS. Many famous buildings are scattered on the hillside: ST. PAUL'S OUTSIDE THE WALLS, ST. AGNES; ST. LAWRENCE, ST. DOMITILLA; THE VESTAL TEMPLE; TOMB OF ST. PETRONILLA, and ST. SIXTUS CHAPEL. The catacombs were underground rooms and tunnels where the early Christians held their services and the Christians buried their dead.

THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA: Brother Joe built this famous tower as it stands today: leaning.

THE STATUE OF ST. FRANCES CABRINI: standing off by itself it honors a saintly immigrant woman from Italy who worked for the poor in the U.S. She built 67 institutions; orphanages, hospitals, schools and convents. She is buried in New York.

THE AVE MARIA GROTTO. Standing with the Child Jesus in her arms, the Virgin Mary here is known as Our Lady of Prompt Succor, or Our Lady of Quick Aid. At the viewer's left in St. Benedict, founder of the Benedictine monks; on the right is his twin sister, St. Scholastica, foundress of the Benedictine nuns. This Grotto is 27 feet high; 27 feet wide; 27 ft. deep; The word grotto means cave and the Ave Maria Grotto obtains its name from this structure. Brother Joseph beautified the grotto with its many pieces of colored stone and glass. He built the Altar using bits of crushed glass, stone and cement. He also made the stalactites which hang from the ceiling.

SCENES FROM THE HOLY LAND: This section portrays the life of Our Lord from His birth through His death upon the cross and final Resurrection.

BETHELHEM CAVE: The very first scene in this section is the beginning of Christianity.

CITY OF JERUSALEM: The GATE OF HEROD leads into the city of Jerusalem, a word meaning city of peace. Here is a famous miniature of Brother Joe's:

THE JEWISH TEMPLE or THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM, the worshiping place of Palestinian Jews. Inside was kept the Ark of the Covenant, in which were the Ten Commandments. The original ark was destroyed in 587 B.C. and the entire TEMPLE was destroyed with the city in 70 A.D. by the Romans.