

GROTTO OF THE REDEMPTION

Walking Tour

ACCENTING THE GROTTO

Grotto Museum/Rock Studio – Built by Fr. Greving in the 60's & 70's, the exterior walls are done up in polished agates from all over the world. It took 16 years of cutting and polishing on these agates alone. The Museum features 3 different rock collections, articles and history on the building of the Grotto and of Fr. Dobberstein, Fr. Greving and Matt Szerencse. A 45-minute documentary video of the Grotto is available for viewing in the theatre.

The **Grotto Gift Shop** located east of the Grotto on Broadway, is open 7 days a week year round. The gift shop offers a large variety of special occasion gifts, jewelry, inspirational music and literature, as well as Iowa and Grotto collectibles. Please contact 515-887-5591 for additional information.

The **Grotto Cafe** is open seasonally, May through September. Special group menus and meal rates are available. For information, call the office at 515-887-2371 or the Cafe at 515-887-3591.

The **Grotto Campground** has 55 sites available for campers and tents. Electrical hookups, water, showers and a sewer dump station are available. Register in the Gift Shop/Office east of the Grotto.

GUARDIANS OF THE GROTTO



Honor Wall and Memorial Walk

*Sometimes people touch your life so dearly that
you wish you could honor them.*

The Grotto offers you the opportunity to participate in placing your name or the name of a loved one on the Honor Wall or Memorial Walk.

The staff and volunteers welcome thousands of visitors each year. Your generosity will assist with the necessary support needed to preserve this precious gift for future generations.

For further information or to request a participation form, call or stop by the Gift Shop/Office, or visit our website.

Grotto of the Redemption

Witness

A MIRACLE IN STONE

WEST BEND, IOWA

The Grotto of the Redemption is the inspiration and life work of Fr. Paul Dobberstein (1872-1954), a Catholic priest. For a decade, he gathered rocks and precious stones from around the world then began construction in 1912. For the next 42 years, Fr. Dobberstein created hundreds of intricate rock settings that form the Grotto's walls and ceilings, evoking a spiritual experience. Matt Szerencse, a parishioner, and Fr. Louis Greving, the next Catholic pastor in West Bend, worked side-by-side with Fr. Dobberstein and furthered the work of Fr. Dobberstein after his death.

The Grotto of the Redemption is the largest grotto in the world. It is comprised of nine separate grottos, each depicting a scene in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The theme of Redemption gives unity to this sacred space.

A. Garden of Eden or "Paradise Lost" - Adam & Eve are being driven out of the Garden of Paradise by an angel above. The devil, depicted as a green serpent wound around the trunk of a tree, tricked Adam and Eve with a lie resulting in man's fall from sanctifying grace. The plaque of the Immaculate Conception found in the left hand corner is a symbol of God's promise to send a Redeemer.

B. The Trinity Grotto – The first grotto started by Fr. Dobberstein in 1912 took five years to build. It is built in three half circles in honor of the Three Divine Persons, the Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. Most of the rocks in this grotto are calcite, which came from a cave in South Dakota, near the Black Hills. This grotto was built to fulfill the promise Fr. Dobberstein made to the Blessed Mary for curing him when he was stricken with pneumonia.

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PO Box 376
300 N Broadway
West Bend, IA 50597
www.westbendgrotto.com
Phone: 515-887-2371 800-868-3641
Fax: 515-887-2372
info@westbendgrotto.com

Experience the Grotto

C. St Michael, the Archangel – This statue represents the conquest of good over evil. Here, good is represented by St. Michael, the Archangel and evil is represented by the devil being crushed under the foot of Michael.

D. Christ's Sermon on the Mount – Jesus explains to us in the Eight Beatitudes exactly what we must do to enter into heaven. These Eight Beatitudes are written in gold mosaic, inlaid in green copper. The grayish colored stone on top is a stalagmite weighing more than 2000 lbs. from Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico gotten prior to the caverns becoming a National Park.

E. Ten Commandments – Here stands Moses giving to the world the Ten Commandments of God. A young man is asking Jesus, through the 8 ft. question mark on the ground, "Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" Jesus answers him with the words on the wall, "If thou wilt enter into life-keep the commandments." This grotto contains stalactites centered overhead and many rosettes, the rock clusters found on the walls.

F. Stations of the Cross – The Stations of the Cross are 14 scenes in the life of Christ from the time He was condemned to death by Pilate, until His body was laid in the tomb. The Venetian mosaics, imported from Italy, were incorporated into the pillar work to visually tell the story of the Way of the Cross. Stations 1-11 are made of brown jasper to symbolize suffering and death, and the 12th station is made of white stone to symbolize the importance of Jesus' death on the cross.

G. 13th Station / Calvary – The statue on the 40-ft high mountain-like structure is similar to Michelangelo's Pieta which is in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. It shows Mary holding the body of Christ after it was taken down from the cross. Beneath the cross is a 36 in. cross-section of petrified wood from Arizona.

H. 14th Station / Entombment of Jesus – Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are seen reverently and sadly holding the body of Jesus. The three figures have been sculpted out of a single block of white Italian marble.

I. Garden of Gethsemane – Gethsemane is the garden outside Jerusalem where Jesus went to pray the night before he died. Judas is sneaking around the corner carrying the bag of 30 pieces of silver he was paid to identify Jesus. The Angel of Comfort is portrayed in the opposite corner, as well as Peter and John sleeping outside.

J. Resurrection – As you approach the archway, you'll notice an alcove containing a statue of our Risen Savior with Mary Magdalene at His feet. In the Grotto of the Resurrection there is an empty tomb with an angel pointing to the lid of the tomb on which is written: "He is risen, He is not here." The white calcite and purple fluorite near the tomb show the coldness of death and the reality of evil, while the bright colored ceiling symbolizes his victory over sin and death.

K. Grotto of Nazareth – This grotto, completed in 1955 by Matt Szerencse and Fr. Greving, depicts the modest boyhood home of Jesus and His earthly parents. The white quartz was used to symbolize the virtues and pureness of the home.

L. Stable in Bethlehem – This grotto made of 65 tons of petrified wood from Montana and the Dakotas shows the traditional manger scene of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. Fr. Greving erected this grotto in 1956, and the statuary arrived in the early 1970's.

M. Statue of Fr. Dobberstein – The statue was erected in 1992, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Fr. Dobberstein beginning construction of the Grotto in 1912.

N. The Christmas Chapel – Built in 1927, and located inside Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church, this grotto represents the birthplace and the Nativity of Our Divine Savior. Specimens that Fr. Dobberstein considered too delicate to withstand the weather and changing seasons were incorporated into this grotto. Of particular note is the 300 lb. Brazilian Amethyst inset in the wall above the Christ child.

