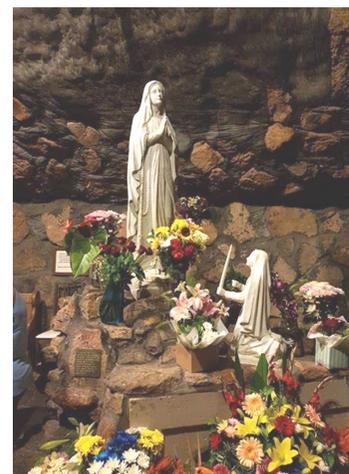


NEWS FROM THE GROTTTO

It has been wonderful to see our Pilgrims are coming back to visit Our Lady at the Grotto, let us pray that this pandemic will be over soon.

The Society of Our Lady of Lourdes would like to wish all our members and their families a happy and healthy 2021.

We are also in desperate need for a handyman to do small odd jobs and keep the Grotto and its surrounds clean and tidy. Contact us on 97559 2171.



The Society of Our Lady of Lourdes

Newsletter No 62 January 2021

GROTTO & CENTRE
(located Off St James Ave
at rear of the Catholic
Church, Earlwood, NSW.)
EARLWOOD NSW 2206
Tel: (02) 9559 2171

All correspondence to:
INFORMATION CENTRE
P.O.Box 382
EARLWOOD NSW 2206

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OUR EMAIL ADDRESS
TO**
ololgrotto@gmail.com

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

The famous Catholic author G.K. Chesterton once recounted a controversy when he was a boy about a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Child outside of his parish church. Some people, mainly informed by a Protestant mentality, objected to the image of the Virgin Mary and thought it gave her too much attention or detracted too much from the worship due to Christ.

Chesterton explains that there was much arguing about what to be done but all came to the conclusion that it was impossible to take Mary out of the statue and leave it intact. Instead they chipped Christ out of the statue! He notes that this unusual and strange way of "solving" the problem actually says something very profound and that is the truth that "You cannot chip away the statue of a mother from all round that of a newborn child. You cannot suspend the new-born child in mid-air; indeed you cannot really have a statue of a newborn child at all. Similarly, you cannot suspend the idea of a newborn child in the void or think of him without thinking of his mother. You cannot visit the child without visiting the mother, you cannot in common human life approach the child except through the mother."

This truth reveals for us the greatness and importance of the Virgin Mary and her unique role in our relationship with Jesus. As we look to contemplate God born as a baby at Christmas, our contemplation inevitably draws us to His mother who brings Him into the world and carries Him, feeds Him and cares for Him. The very first people to meet and adore Him, the shepherds and wise men, did so as He was held in the arms of His Mother.

DATES TO REMEMBER

If anyone wishes to receive their Newsletter via email, please forward us your email address to ololgrotto@gmail.com or otherwise we will continue to post out the letter.

Donations for masses are sent regularly to the Capuchins and Divine Word Missionaries for members and deceased members of the Society.

The Rosary is recited every Monday & Friday at 10.00am

PLEASE NOTE each month first Friday Mass is celebrated at 10.30 am.

The next Mass and Blessing of the Sick will take place on Sunday 14 February, 2021 Bishop Richard Umbers will be the Principal Celebrant.

Devotions will begin with recitation of the Rosary at 2.30 pm followed by Mass at 3.00 pm then the Blessing of the Sick. In case of rain, the Blessing will be held in the church.

PLEASE NOTE: DISABLED PARKING will be limited to the main drive entrance to the Grotto. Parking is also available in the surrounding streets and Council car park.

Our Lady of Lourdes Pray for US

From the very first moments of His life, Mary shared her son with others. In the very first days of His life, the shepherds and wise men asked to see Him, meet Him and adore Him and she was generous in allowing them to draw close and encounter Him. Let us approach her this Christmas and ask that she share Him with us also so that we can share in her love for Him and experience the salvation of the Prince of Peace.

Rev Fr Ronnie Maree

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Society has around 1000 members, comprising both Life Members and Ordinary Members. To cater for the needs of the members, the Information Centre was built in the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Earlwood. Each week many visitors come to the Grotto and the Information Centre as well as its shop.

The Centre is staffed by volunteer workers from 9am – 1pm on Monday & Friday, who:

- Set up and keep up to date records of members (on computer and cards)
- Keep the Society's financial records (on computer)
- Deal with the correspondence to and from members and others,
- Arrange the Mass and Blessing of the Sick (twice a year February and October)
- Distribute Lourdes water as requested.
- Recite the Rosary every Monday & Friday at 10am in the Grotto
- Organise First Friday Mass each month at 10.30am

If you have ever visited the Society's Information Centre, you may have noticed that the usual volunteers working there are elderly retirees that have been doing this work for many years. It should be noted that we are not having trouble coping with the work at present, but prudence suggests that we should be preparing for the time when the current volunteers decide to call it a day. When that time comes, we hope to have organised for an orderly hand-over so that the Society will continue to run smoothly. With this in mind, we would like to hear from Members, retirees or otherwise, who have a strong devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes and who may be interested and have some Office, Accounting or Computer skills. Please contact the Information Centre on (02) 9557 2171.

8 SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

1. Angels

The angels proclaimed the news of the Saviour's birth. They sang, "Glory to God in the highest" and proclaimed the good news on that first Christmas night.

2. Bells

Bells ring out to guide lost sheep back to the fold. The Christmas bell signifies that all are precious in *His eyes and He will help you.*

3. Evergreen Trees

The evergreen Christmas tree stays green all year and reminds us of the everlasting hope and life eternal. Because of Jesus Christ we can have eternal life. It also points up to heaven reminding us to look to God in all things.

4. Holly

The holly plant represents immortality, as well as the crown of thorns worn by our Saviour. The red holly berries represent the blood shed by Him for us.

5 Wreath

The Christmas wreath is a symbol of the never ending love of God—having no beginning and no ending. Wreaths are in circles made with evergreen which symbolizes eternal life.

6. Candles

The Christmas candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. He is the light we should follow and through Him we will find our way in the darkness of life, and also be a light to others.

7. Star

The Christmas star represents the first star of Bethlehem that shone on the night Jesus was born. It also symbolizes the Christ is the light of the world and is a shining hope to all mankind.

8. Candy Cane

The candy cane is in the shape of a shepherd's crook used to bring lost lambs back to the fold. The Saviour is often thought of as the Good Shepherd, guiding us back to His fold. The white on the candy cane represents the purity of Jesus, and the red stripes symbolize the blood He shed for us.

