

## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

Now that we have completed reviewing the beautiful stained glass windows (posted now on our website), let's look at the statuary and other images that adorn our church. All imagery in a church is intended to remind us of Bible stories and inspire us with images of other Catholics whose journeys of faith show us how to live.

We will start with the sanctuary, which is the area that houses the Altar. The marble, stone and gold mosaic wall provides a striking and prominent background for the crucifix. Its images of wheat and grapes that become bread and wine lead us to their transubstantiation into the Body and Blood of Christ, celebrated each Mass in the Eucharist. Radiating from the axis of the cross are subtle rays within the mosaic indicating Christ is the light of the world. The crucifix is a constant reminder that through His blood we are washed clean and our sins are forgiven.



The shape of the Tabernacle and the white marble pedestal on which it sits under the crucifix mirrors the sloping shape of the mosaic inset behind the crucifix, reminding us of the direct connection of Jesus' death on the cross to His true Presence in the Eucharist. Tabernacle means "dwelling place" and it is where Christ dwells in the Eucharist. It represents the new Ark of the Covenant and by tradition is gold and guarded by angels, depicted on the doors.



The Altar is in the center of the sanctuary and has a relic of St. John Vianney imbedded in the altar stone. The Altar, Ambo and Tabernacle pedestal are made of white Carrera marble. The mosaic wall

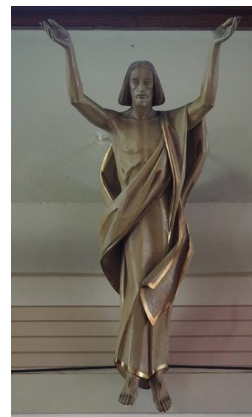
behind the crucifix, the Tabernacle, its pedestal and the Altar are all connected architecturally by their shape to visually reinforce their theological connections. We bow to the Altar in reverence to Jesus' sacrifice and the miracle of the Eucharist that occurs on the Altar during Mass. Christ is seen to be present among the faithful gathered in His name; in His word, as the Scriptures are read and explained; in the person of the priest and in a unique way under the sacred species of the Eucharist. Hence, during Mass, the Altar, where the Eucharist is celebrated, becomes our primary focus.



The Ambo is left of the altar where the Word is proclaimed. The brass holder for the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels is an eagle, representing the evangelist St. John. As we saw in the stained glass windows, John's gospel opens with *in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*, the divine logos, and the eagle is the symbol of *that which comes from above*. You will notice in Mass that the Book of Gospels is carried aloft in the procession. Once the Word is read, we carry it out of the church within us to proclaim to others. On the face of the Ambo is an image of the risen Christ reminding us of the path to eternal life through living the Word.



The original corpus on the cross was of a risen Christ. It was changed to the crucified corpus several years ago. The corpus was crafted by Demetz Art Studio in Italy. Directly across from the sanctuary, at the back of the church, above the exit is the original corpus of the risen Christ. As we exit to the east, we are reminded of His triumph over death and that following in His footsteps will lead us to eternal life in the Resurrection.



## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

From the sanctuary, we will move to the right to the north transept and examine those images.

First we encounter our patron saint, St. John Vianney, above the votive candles. He was born in 1786 in France and is known for his dedication to confessions, which he heard for up to 12 hours a day. It is said he could tell by looking at someone if they had a mortal sin on their soul. He also reminds us that *There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.*



He died in 1859, his feast day is August 4<sup>th</sup>, and he is the patron saint of priests. Fr. Blum rescued this statue from an obscure area, repainted it himself and had it prominently placed.

Above the next section of votives is a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Devotion to this goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary and spoke to her of His Sacred Heart. In 1856, Pope Pius IX made the feast of the Sacred Heart into a universal celebration that occurs 19 days after Pentecost. Jesus makes 12 promises to those who follow this devotion. Today, our First Friday practices come directly from the 12<sup>th</sup> promise.



1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state in life.
2. I will establish peace in their families.

3. I will comfort them in their trials.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and, above all, in death.
5. I will shed abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
6. Sinners will find in My Heart an infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Lukewarm souls will become fervent.
8. Fervent souls will rapidly grow in holiness and perfection.
9. I will bless every place where an image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored.
10. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
11. The names of those who promote this devotion will be written in My Heart, never to be blotted out.
12. I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months, the grace of final penitence; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

In the north transept is an area devoted to Divine Mercy, featuring the Divine Mercy image and flanked by St. Faustina on the left and Pope John Paul II on the right. Both were important in promoting this devotion.



St. Faustina was born Helen Kowalska in Krakow, Poland. She came from a very poor family, had only three years of simple education and joined the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, performing the humblest tasks. She received divine revelations from Our Lord and promoted the Divine Mercy devotion. She died in 1931 on October 5, which is her feast day. She is the patron saint of mercy.

On February 22, 1931, Our Lord appeared to Sr. Faustina, bringing this message. *"In the evening, when I was in my cell, I became aware of the Lord Jesus clothed in a white garment. One hand was raised in blessing, the other was touching the garment at the breast. From the opening of the garment at the breast there came forth two large rays, one red and the other pale. In silence I gazed intently at the Lord; my soul was overwhelmed with fear, but also with great joy. After a while Jesus said to me, 'paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the inscription: Jesus, I trust in You.'"*

Later, Our Lord explained:

*"The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous; the red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the depths of My most tender Mercy at that time when*

*My agonizing Heart was opened by a lance on the Cross....Fortunate is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him."*

The Second Sunday of Easter is Divine Mercy Sunday. The liturgical texts of this day concern the Sacrament of Penance and the Tribunal of the Divine Mercy and so are suited to this feast, which had already been granted to the nation of Poland and been celebrated within Vatican City. It was granted to the Universal Church by Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the canonization of Sr. Faustina on April 30, 2000.

Pope John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyla in 1920, in Wadowice, Poland. In 1978, he became the first non-Italian pope in more than four hundred years. His accomplishments were vast and he was very influential worldwide. He died in 2005 and millions of people waited in line to honor this beloved religious leader. He often spoke in his homilies of the mercy of God. This became the theme of his second encyclical, *Dives in Misericordia*, which promoted the message of St. Faustina. He was beatified on the Feast of Divine Mercy on May 1, 2011 by Pope Benedict. His sainthood ceremony, held on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27, 2014, brought together four popes. Pope Francis led the event to elevate Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII to sainthood, and Emeritus Pope Benedict attended.



## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

This week we will look to the left of the sanctuary, where we find Mary and Joseph.

After Pope Pius IX proclaimed dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, a young lady appeared to Bernadette Soubirous on February 11, 1858 in Lourdes, France. Thus began a series of 18 visions. During the apparition on March 25, the lady identified herself with the words: *I am the Immaculate Conception.*



Bernadette was a sickly child of poor parents, and her only education was the Catholic teachings, which she studied faithfully. Her visits to the grotto caused quite a stir and crowds of people would gather and watch Bernadette as she obediently did the things the lady asked of her. One day, she was asked to scrape at the mud near the grotto, which resulted in a spring of water that still provides thousands of gallons of water every day.

In 1862, the church confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions and the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes became worldwide in 1907. Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of faith. Church authorities have recognized more than 60 miraculous cures, although there may have been more. Lourdes remains one of the most frequented Christian shrines in the world. More than 3 million visitors, pilgrims and tourists come each year to the Grotto.

Many doubted her visions and she was questioned thoroughly and repeatedly. During interrogations Bernadette gave an account of what she saw. *It was a pretty young girl with a rosary over her arm. Her white rob was encircled by a blue girdle. She wore a white veil. There was a yellow rose on each foot. A rosary in her hand.*

Bernadette became a nun and devoted her life to Mary, to praying for the conversion of sinners and to the service of God. She died on April 16, 1879, at the age of 35. Canonized in 1933, her feast day is April 16

and she is the patron saint of illnesses, having suffered many during her life.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception is a Holy Day of Obligation celebrated on December 8, nine months before the feast of the Nativity of Mary on September 8.

Joseph was a carpenter of humble means, but he came from royal lineage, descending from David. Like Mary, he followed God's will faithfully, accepting Mary's pregnancy as from the Holy Spirit and protecting Jesus when the angel told him there was danger. He is referred to as a "just" man in the Bible, meaning that he was one who ] was completely open to all that God wanted to do for him. He was simply, joyfully, whole heartedly obedient to God—in marrying Mary, in naming Jesus, in shepherding the precious pair to Egypt, in bringing them to Nazareth, and in the undetermined number of years of quiet faith and courage.



Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry. Therefore he is the patron saint of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth. He is also patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers, travelers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, and working people.

We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Husband of Mary, and May 1 for Joseph the Worker. March 19 is the most commonly celebrated feast day.

In 1955 Pope Pius XII established the Feast of "St. Joseph the Worker" to be celebrated on May 1, May Day (International Workers' Day).

## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

Our side chapel is referred to as “Mary’s Chapel.” This is used for baptisms, small funerals and Masses. The chapel has an altar and a baptismal font. The altar is a smaller version of the main altar in the sanctuary, made of white Carrara Marble in the same shape and with the same branches and vine motif on the edge. The chapel was recently painted blue—the color always associated with Our Lady. The wall behind the altar is gold mosaic with a beautiful image of Our Lady and the Family also created in mosaic.



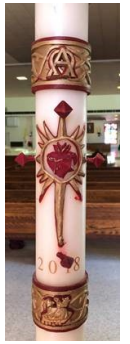
Images of Our Lady abound and this one reflects her role as Mother of us all, as well as of the Holy Family. Our Lord said, “Behold your mother.” Mary is our Mother, given by God so that she might nurture, feed, teach, guide, and protect her children. We recognize her as our true Spiritual Mother. The church honors her as the Mother of God, looks to her as a model of perfect discipleship, and asks for her prayers to God on our behalf.

The font is also white Carrara marble and the stand is of the same shape as both altars. The scallop shell is a traditional image for baptism. The shell is also the symbol for pilgrimage and Baptism is the start of our pilgrimage toward heaven.



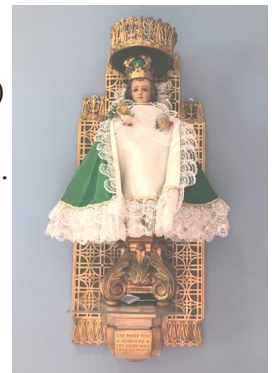
The baptismal font and Paschal candle stand together most of the year. The Paschal candle is used at baptisms, funerals and is on the sanctuary from Easter to Pentecost. Starting Holy Thursday, the church is devoid of candles until a new candle is blessed and lit each year at Easter Vigil. This represents the light of Christ coming into the world, dispelling darkness. We also welcome new Catholics who have journeyed into the light of Christ at this special and beautiful Mass.

The candle itself is rich in symbolism. It is made of pure beeswax representing Christ’s sinless nature. The wick represents His humanity and the flame His divinity. Five grains of incense are inserted in a cross recalling the aromatic spices used to prepare His body for the tomb and the five wounds to His body: both hands, both feet and His side. These grains are often imbedded in wax nails in the shape of a cross. The Greek symbols for Alpha and Omega are on the candle as Christ is the beginning and the end of all.



On the right side of the chapel is a statue of the Infant of Prague. This devotion is a veneration of our Lord’s sacred infancy. It started in the 17<sup>th</sup>

century when a statue of the Holy Child was brought into Bohemia (now Czech Republic) and eventually given to the Discalced Carmelites in Prague. Since then, the statue has remained in Prague, surviving several wars and upheaval, and has drawn many devotees worldwide. Many graces, blessings, favors and miraculous healings have been received by some who petitioned before the infant Jesus who said, “The more you honor Me, the more I will bless you.”



## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

As we move away from the transepts and back to the main body of the church, we will find the Stations of the Cross beginning on the south wall and ending with the 14<sup>th</sup> station on the north wall.



These images are a modern version of three dimensional carvings created in a simple and abstract style of one color with only gold accents for halos and the numbers. They also match the risen Christ corpus that hangs above the main exit.

This devotion has evolved over time. Tradition holds that our Blessed Mother visited daily the scenes of our Lord's passion. After Constantine legalized Christianity in the year 312, this pathway was marked with its important stations. St. Jerome attested to the crowds of pilgrims from various countries who visited those holy places in and around Jerusalem and followed the Way of the Cross. Numbers and depictions have varied over the years, but since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there are 14 traditional stations: Pilate condemns Christ to death; Jesus carries the cross; Jesus falls the first time; Jesus meets His Blessed Mother; Simon of Cyrene helps to carry the cross; Veronica wipes the face of Jesus; Jesus falls the second time; Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem; Jesus falls the third time; Jesus is stripped of His garments; Jesus is nailed to the cross; Jesus dies on the cross; Jesus is taken down from the cross; Jesus is laid in the tomb.

The continued importance of the stations in the devotional life of Catholics is attested by both Pope St. Paul VI, who approved a Gospel-based version of the stations in 1975, and Pope St. John Paul II, who wrote his own version in 1984. Booklets for the devotion can be found on Fridays throughout Lent in the church and the devotion is held on Good Friday in the church and on St. Pete Beach before sunset.

When we enter the church, we use holy water and make the sign of the cross, reminding us of our baptism and creating an overlap between physical

washing and spiritual washing. Holy water—water blessed by a priest—is known as a “sacramental,” a sacred sign that bears a resemblance to the sacraments. We use it in many ways within the celebration of the sacraments.



In funerals, we sprinkle the body with water at the beginning of a funeral ceremony, and we bless the rings of marriage with holy water during the wedding ceremony. In all of those it's meant to be a reminder of the baptismal sacrament.

Holy Water has three significances; it renews our Baptism promises; it calls us to repent of sin and be washed clean; it protects us from evil. Some traditions have blessed water with blessed salt added as a symbol of divine wisdom to those destined to be formed as “the salt of the earth.” Salt also has significance as protection from evil influences.

Holy water was first used in Rome around the 4<sup>th</sup> century. There is evidence of people taking blessed water home and conserving it in vessels from the year 590. The practice of sprinkling the congregation at Mass is from the 9<sup>th</sup> century and the presence of fixed holy water fonts in churches did not appear until the 11<sup>th</sup> century.



## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

In the back of the church on the south side, we find St. Peter at the south door exit and St. Therese of Lisieux along the back wall.

Simon was given the name Cephas meaning “rock” by Jesus, resulting in the name Simon Peter.

Peter had humble beginnings as a fisherman. He and his older brother Andrew were part of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. Peter became the first pope, chosen by Jesus to be leader of the Apostles and be his earthly representative.

*Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church,* he states in Mt:16. *I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* Those words, which now circle the dome of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, serve as the biblical mandate for the papacy. All popes are considered direct apostolic descendants of Peter and hold the authority of “Peter’s Chair.”



He is depicted with keys designating authority to govern the house of God, which is the church, and with a book since he is the source of Mark’s gospel and preached God’s Word. He requested to be crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus and is buried in St. Peter’s Basilica, which is named for him. He is the patron saint of fishermen, net makers and ship builders and his feast day is June 29.

Therese was born in 1873 in Lisieux, France to well-off parents who had 5 living girls and the entire family was very devout. Her mother died when she was 4 1/2 and her sister Pauline became a second mother. When she left to join a convent 5 years later, Therese was bereft. Two more sisters joined convents and by 14, Therese was hoping to do the same. She was pampered



and poorly behaved until reading *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, which changed her behavior and cemented her desire to love Jesus and serve Him. Though too young, she appealed to the Bishop for early entry to the convent. He refused and ultimately she appealed in person to the Pope. Eventually, the Bishop allowed her to enter at 15.

After her father died, the last sister also joined the same convent. Therese remained a novice and took the most menial jobs while continually offering small sacrifices to God. Her quiet submissive method became known as Therese’s “little way” of trusting in Jesus to make her holy and relying on small daily sacrifices instead of great deeds. She became very ill with tuberculosis and died at 24. Her sister compiled her thoughts and edited her journals and had them published and distributed to other convents. They appealed to the thousand of Catholics and others who were trying to find holiness in ordinary lives. Within two years, her notoriety was great and by 1925 she had been canonized.

Her feast day is October 1, and she is a patron saint of the missions, because of her special love of them and her support of missionaries. Her writings and humble everyday actions of service continue to inspire many.

## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

Moving on to the north side of the back of the church we have St. Clare along the back wall and St. Paul at the corner of the north side exit.

Chiara was born in Assisi on July 16, 1194, the beautiful eldest daughter of a wealthy and devout family. As a young girl, she dedicated herself to prayer. She heard Francis of Assisi preach during a Lenten service when she was 18 and became one of his earliest followers, remaining close and caring for him up to his death. On Palm Sunday in 1212, Chiara left home and went to a chapel to meet with Francis. While there, her hair was cut off, she was given a plain robe and veil, and she left to join the convent of the Benedictine nuns of San Paulo, becoming Clare.



Her father found her and tried to make her come home, but she refused and professed that she would have no other husband than Jesus Christ. To give her the greater solitude she desired, Francis sent Clare to Sant' Angelo in Panzo, another Benedictine nuns monastery. Clare's sister Catarina, took the name Agnes and joined her. Over time, other women joined them, wanting to also be brides of Jesus and live without money. They became known as the "Poor Ladies of San Damiano." They all lived a simple life of austerity, seclusion from the world and poverty. Clare and her sisters wore no shoes, ate no meat, lived in a poor house and kept silent most of the time. Their lives consisted of manual labor and prayer. Clare became abbess of the order. She died in 1253 and was rapidly canonized two years later. The order became known as the Order of St. Clare in 1263.

St. Clare was designated as the patron saint of television in 1958 by Pope Pius XII, because

when she was very ill and could not attend Mass, she was reportedly able to see and hear it on the wall in her room. She is also the patroness of eye disease, goldsmiths and laundry. St. Clare's feast day is celebrated on August 11.

St. Clare is often pictured shoeless and carrying a monstrance or pyx, to commemorate the time she ward off the soldiers at the gates of her convent with the Blessed Sacrament. In 1224, an army of soldiers from Frederick II came to attack Assisi. Although very sick, Clare went out to meet them with the Blessed Sacrament on her hands. She had the Blessed Sacrament placed at the wall where the enemies could see it. Then on her knees, she prayed for God to save the sisters. A voice seemed to answer: "I will keep them always in My care." At that moment, a sudden fright struck the attackers and they fled as fast as they could.

The ultimate evangelist, Paul was originally known as Saul, a Roman citizen and Pharisee who presided over the persecutions of the early Christians. And was present at the martyrdom of St. Stephen. While Saul was on the road to Damascus, he was blinded by a bright light and heard the voice of Jesus ask "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?" This caused him to convert, be duly baptized and take the name of Paul.



Paul traveled all over the world preaching ceaselessly. He visited Peter, the first pope and they are often associated together, as Paul's preaching supported Peter's apostolic efforts. Paul established several churches in his travels. He remained in communication with the faithful through letters answering questions and resolving disputes. Those that have survived have become part of the Bible. Paul's writings provide good advice for how Christians should live.

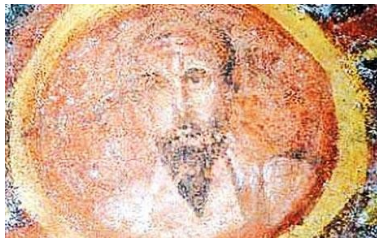


While preparing for a missionary trip to Spain, he was imprisoned in Caesarea by the Jews for two years. He traveled again, was shipwrecked in Malta, and was imprisoned for another two years for preaching in Rome. Despite these imprisonments, Paul continued to preach. In 67 AD, he was arrested in Rome a second time and was beheaded under Emperor Nero. Because he was a Roman citizen, he was not crucified.

St. Paul is among the most famous intelligent and influential of the apostles. St. Paul is the patron saint of missionaries, evangelists, writers, journalists, authors, public workers, rope and saddle makers and tent makers. His feast day is June 29—when he is honored with St. Peter, although he is also honored on other days throughout the year; January 25, for his conversion; February 16, for his shipwreck; November 18 for the dedication of his Basilica, St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. He is depicted with a book representing his epistles and a sword reminding us of his martyrdom.

This fresco, which dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD, was discovered during restoration work at the Catacomb of Saint Thekla in 2009.

Experts carefully removed centuries of grime from the fresco with fine lasers. There are more than 40 known Catacombs or underground Christian burial places across



Rome and because of their religious significance the Vatican's Pontifical Commission of Sacred Archeology has jurisdiction over them.

The catacomb is close to the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, which is said to be built on the site where he was buried.

This is the first time that a single image of Saint Paul in such good condition has been found and it is the oldest one known. According to Christian tradition, his body was buried in a vineyard by a Roman woman and a shrine grew up there before

Emperor Constantine consecrated a basilica in 324 which is now St. Paul Outside the Walls. In the Narthex, or entry to the church, we have pictures of our bishop Most Reverend Gregory Parkes that remind us of our union with the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg. But as Catholics, our union extends beyond the diocese as we are also united with the Catholic church throughout the world under the spiritual guidance of Pope Francis, The Vicar of Christ on earth, whose image is also in the Narthex.

This concludes all the interior images and statues, which began with the Blessed Mother and St. John Vianney, our first statues in the church. Fr. Blum then added St. Clare, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Peter, St. Paul and finally, St. Faustina and St. John Paul II. All of these are meant to remind us of those who have gone before, unite us with other Catholics worldwide and inspire us on our own faith journey.

## STATUARY AND IMAGES

### St. John Vianney Catholic Church

Outside of our church we have additional statues and images to discover. The largest and most visible is our grotto honoring Our Lady of Fatima.



The grotto originally stood where the current church is now. What is now Monsignor Trainor Hall was the church used from Easter Sunday of 1950 until Easter Sunday 1963, when our current church held its first Mass. The grotto was moved to its current location with the construction of our current church and was surrounded by beautiful ficus trees which were originally used as sanctuary decorations for Easter, then planted at the grotto. Unfortunately, they were damaged during hurricane Irma and were removed in 2017, 100 years after the first Fatima apparition.



Much has been written about the series of visions, the children, and Our Lady of Fatima, and it proves to be fascinating and inspirational reading for your exploration. In brief, between May 13 and October 13, 1917, three Portuguese children received apparitions of Our Lady near Fatima, 110 miles north of Lisbon. Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of the World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia. The visions caused great excitement and drew crowds of thousands, but only the children saw Our Lady. They created worldwide interest that spanned decades and continues to this day. Today, Fatima is visited by 4 million people a year and the feast of Our Lady of Fatima was added to the church's worldwide calendar in 2002.

The message of Fatima is simple: Pray. Fittingly, the grotto is a peaceful place for prayer and is often visited.

When entering the south side transept entrance of the church, you may have noticed the beautiful terra cotta della Robbia image on the wall. Giovanni della Robbia(1469-1529) was an Italian Renaissance

ceramic artist. His art applied baked enamel to terra cotta, used bright colors and depicted religious scenes. Using a blue background as it is the color associated with Our Lady, this loving

portrayal of Madonna and Child is over 100 years old and is a replica of a della Robbia. It originally hung in the old Florida Theatre at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. in St. Petersburg, which was razed in 1967. A parishioner purchased it and upon his death the family anonymously donated it to us.





Between our church and Monsignor Trainor Hall is a bronze statue of St. John Vianney with a child. This is a replica of a statue in the field near Ars, France. The statue was commissioned by Fr. John Murphy after the parish's Golden Anniversary in 1998, following a pilgrimage to Ars and viewing the original.



In 1818, a boy herding sheep saw a priest striding towards him, like a peasant pushing a rickety cart heaped with objects, including a wooden bedstead. The priest called to the boy and asked him if it was much further to the village of Ars. The boy pointed out the little town before them, *How small it is!* the priest murmured. Then he knelt on the frozen ground and prayed at length, his eyes fixed on the houses. As he rose and set out again with his cart, the boy walked with him. When they arrived in front of the poor church, the priest said to him: *Thank you for showing me the way to Ars...I will show you the way to Heaven.*