



Answers to Your Questions About Mary's Grotto



Q: What is Mary's Grotto?

A: Mary's Grotto was originally built by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a place of prayer, reflection, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. For generations, it has served as a cherished spiritual landmark for the sisters, Immaculata University students, alumni, and visitors.

Over the years, many traditions grew around the Grotto. One beloved custom involved each incoming freshman class planting ivy at the site. As the ivy flourished and spread, it became a symbol of the students' own growth—academically, spiritually, emotionally, and personally—throughout their years at Immaculata.

Q: Where was Mary's Grotto located?

A: The original Mary's Grotto was located in a wooded area behind Immaculata University's campus along Grotto Lane.

After extensive evaluation, it was determined that the land surrounding the Grotto had become increasingly unstable due to significant water runoff and erosion. The repairs and ongoing preventative measures required to maintain safe access would have been extensive and costly. For the safety of visitors, access to the site was restricted, and the decision was made to explore relocation options.

Q: Why is Mary's Grotto being relocated?

A: Over the past several years, the Sisters, Servants of the IHM engaged in professional land studies, consultation with experts, prayerful discernment, and careful consideration of various options.

After evaluating the long-term sustainability of the original site, the decision was made to preserve the spirit and legacy of Mary's Grotto by creating a new Grotto in a safer and more accessible location. While the original site holds deep memories, the new Grotto will ensure that future generations can continue to experience this sacred place of prayer and reflection.

Q: What will happen to the original Grotto?

A: The original site will be allowed to return naturally to the landscape over time. While the physical location will no longer be accessible, its history, significance, and traditions will



Answers to Your Questions About Mary's Grotto



live on through the new Mary's Grotto. The new Grotto will honor the legacy of the original while providing a welcoming and sustainable space for future generations.

Q: Where will the new Mary's Grotto be located?

A: The new Mary's Grotto is being constructed on the campus of Immaculata University behind the Lillian Lettiere Center. In keeping with the IHM commitment to stewardship of creation, the design has been thoughtfully developed to work in harmony with the natural environment. The layout incorporates the mature trees already present on the site, minimizing environmental impact and preserving the beauty of the landscape.

Q: Will the new Grotto be accessible to everyone?

A: Yes. Accessibility was an important consideration in selecting the new location.

The Grotto will be situated near a large parking area and will feature level pathways and flat terrain, making it easily accessible for individuals using wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, or other mobility aids.

Q: How does Mary's Grotto reflect the mission and charism of the Sisters, Servants of the IHM?

A: Mary's Grotto provides a sacred space where individuals can encounter God through prayer, reflection, and the beauty of creation. In a world often marked by busyness, division, and uncertainty, the Grotto offers an opportunity to pause, find peace, and deepen one's spiritual life. By fostering contemplation, hope, and connection with God, the Grotto reflects the IHM mission of proclaiming the Gospel and building a more compassionate and faith-filled world.

Q: When will the new Mary's Grotto be completed?

A: Construction is expected to be completed by October 10, 2026, in time for Camilla Hall's Oktoberfest celebration. Visitors attending Oktoberfest will have an opportunity to tour the new Grotto and learn more about its history and significance.

Q: Can prayer groups visit the Grotto?

A: Absolutely. Mary's Grotto will be open to individuals and groups seeking a peaceful setting for prayer, reflection, the Rosary, faith gatherings, and other devotional activities. We welcome all who wish to spend time in this sacred space.



Answers to Your Questions About Mary's Grotto



Q: Will there be a dedication ceremony?

A: Yes. A special Donor Dedication Mass is planned for May 2027. All donors who contribute to the Mary's Grotto project will be invited to participate. May was selected because it is traditionally recognized as the month dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Q: Can I make a multi-year pledge?

A: Yes. The Office of Mission Advancement would be happy to assist you in establishing a multi-year pledge. Spreading your gift over several years can make your commitment more manageable while allowing you to receive charitable tax benefits each year of your pledge.

Q: Can I make my gift in honor or memory of a loved one?

A: Yes. Tribute and memorial gifts are a meaningful way to celebrate or remember someone special. Depending upon the level of giving, naming opportunities may be available for various elements of the Grotto, including pathways, trees, gardens, benches, the fountain, and other features within the site.

Q: How much will the Mary's Grotto project cost?

A: The total estimated project cost is \$1,255,000.

Q: How can I support Mary's Grotto?

A: Donations may be made by scanning the QR code provided in campaign materials or by mailing a check payable to: **Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

Mission Advancement Office, Attn: Maureen Cislo, 230 IHM Drive, Malvern, PA 19355

Q: Who can I contact for additional information?

A: For questions about the project, naming opportunities, or ways to support Mary's Grotto, please contact: *Maureen Cislo at: 610-647-2160 ext. 1926 or: Maureen.Cislo@ihmimm.org*