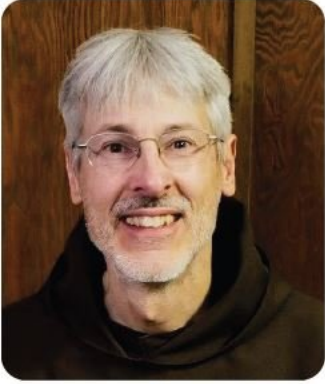




Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians Spring 2026



Peace be with you!

Spring is such a glorious time at Holy Hill. You can almost feel the surrounding woodlands awakening as the days gradually warm. Along with the promise of spring, more pilgrims arrive each day to receive the sacraments and enjoy the beauty and peace of this sacred place. They find that Christ Jesus and His Blessed Mother await them, encouraging them to embrace their Lenten journeys toward Christ's Passion with determination and a bold confidence in God's mercy

Fr. Mark DeVelis, OCDS Preparations are nearly complete for the greatest feast day of our faith. As has been our tradition for many years, the morning of Good Friday will include a procession of the faithful praying the outdoor Stations of the Cross. Led by Archbishop Jeffrey Grob, visitors numbering in the hundreds will follow him along the half-mile long pathway, praying at each of the life-size scenes. Generations of families show up for this beautiful tradition. On Easter Sunday, our Masses will be filled to overflowing with pilgrims celebrating the Risen Lord in the Basilica adorned with Easter lilies and spring flowers.

This year, we've already begun our First Saturday Days of Reflection, essentially a day retreat that includes a talk by a Friar from our community as well as Mass and Adoration. The topic in May, "Crowning Mary in Our Hearts," is a perfect way to begin our devotion to our Blessed Mother in the month that is consecrated to her. A full schedule of talks can be found on our web site.

Toward the end of last year, we found ourselves even busier than usual. In fall, we were making final preparations for the mid-November visit of the first-class relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Holy Hill was chosen as one of only 40 sites nationwide to display the relics, which were on tour from France to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Little Flower's canonization to sainthood. Over the course of basically a long weekend, we welcomed more than 10,000 pilgrims from Wisconsin and surrounding states. Our postulants escorted the reliquary into the Basilica to the accompaniment of the Chesterton Academy choir and a shower of rose petals. If you would like to see a short video that captures the essence of the visit, go to our website and click on the St. Thérèse image on the home page.



During the quieter months of January, we planned the projects we hope to accomplish throughout the year. I am pleased to say we will begin the restoration of the life-size Stations of the Cross as soon as weather permits, thanks to generous donors. Cleaning and refurbishment is necessary about every 25-30 years to maintain these historic scenes, each carved from limestone, one per year between 1914 and 1928. Stations that remain available for sponsorship are on our website wish list.

(continued on next page)

Peace be with you! (continued)

We continue to plan for the future renovation of the St. Thérèse Chapel. As you may know, we already have an architect's rendering of the sanctuary and the front part of the nave completed and on display, and are working on the rendering of the back section of the nave. It will be such a blessing when this renovation is completely funded and the project can begin! All in God's time.

Other items on our to-do list this year include a much-needed renovation of the priests' choir in the monastery. This is where the Friars celebrate Mass, pray the liturgy of the hours and spend time each day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. We also will grind and polish the terrazzo floors in the Mercy Chapel and Shrine Chapel, and we will work on the middle bronze doors to the Basilica to make them functional again for years to come...and the list goes on and on.

In news from our Discalced Carmelite community, we always enjoy meeting the many pilgrims who visit Holy Hill. Every Sunday from 9am until 3pm, you will find a Friar at the welcome desk outside the gift store, answering questions and blessing items that range from rosaries to motorcycles. Many visitors are surprised to know that we have such a vibrant community serving here. Holy Hill is currently home to 12 priests, two deacons (another deacon is currently in Boston), and seven postulants. We look forward to the ordination of our deacons to the priesthood later this year, God willing. Please keep them (and all of us!) in your prayers.

In closing, I want to thank you for everything you do for Holy Hill. We rely so much on your kindness, prayers, and generosity to maintain this sacred place and to serve the nearly half million pilgrims who visit us each year. We continue to hold you close in our prayers as we wished you a blessed Easter Season. May the shalom on the Risen Christ rest in our hearts, in our families, and in our troubled world. Amen. Alleluia!

—Fr. Mark DeVelis, OCDS



"In the depths of my soul I never ceased to have the profoundest peace because I sought the will of God alone."

- St. Thérèse, the Little Flower



More than 10,000 pilgrims came to Holy Hill in mid-November to venerate the first-class relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The Basilica overflowed with people there to welcome her amidst a shower of rose petals and hundreds of roses adorning the sanctuary.



Easter Greetings

from Fr. Michael-Joseph Paris, OCD, (left) and the seven postulants discerning their call as Discalced Carmelite Friars. Please keep these men in your prayers.

Refurbishment of the Outdoor Stations of the Cross

Refurbishment begins this spring. The stations were sculpted from limestone starting in 1914 by Joseph Aszklar, a Polish immigrant. He completed the 14th Station in 1928. The statues are set in grottos built from fieldstones gathered in nearby fields. Cleaning, sealing and repairs are done approximately every 25 years to preserve the statuary for future generations. See our website Wish List to sponsor a remaining Station.



A Mass Union is a Cherished Gift for Sacramental Celebrations

A white (or blue) Mass Union folder is a heartfelt expression of love and faith, offering perpetual Masses and prayers for loved ones as they continue their journey in Christ. It is a perfect gift for a wedding, baptism, confirmation or first communion. Whatever the occasion, a Holy Hill Mass Union is a thoughtful remembrance that will be cherished. The hard cover, embossed folder can be viewed and ordered on our website (visit www.HolyHill.com).



We are blessed to have your support!

Thank you for being a partner in our mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. Your support truly makes everything we do possible. If you would like information on how you can remember Holy Hill in your will or through a donation of stocks, bonds or securities, please contact the Development Office at **262-628-1838, ext. 118**. God Bless You!

