

Mysteries of Light add to beauty of Lourdes shrine

Mosaics depicting the luminous mysteries of the rosary are the newest addition to the outdoor rosary lane at the National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes in Emmitsburg.

Bishop W. Francis Malooly, western vicar, blessed and dedicated the mosaics April 29.

"The grotto is always such a peaceful and spiritual place to be, and the addition of these mysteries adds another dimension to this already-beautiful place," he said.

The mosaics feature multi-colored images of Christ's baptism in the Jordan River; Christ's self-revelation at the marriage of Cana; Christ's announcement of the kingdom of God; the Transfiguration and the institution of the Eucharist.

"They help people to be in touch with the public life and ministry of Christ as encouraged by Pope John Paul II," said Father John Lombardi, grotto chaplain. The late pope added the luminous mysteries to the traditional rosary five years ago.

"Our visitors universally like them," said Father Lombardi. "They find them very attractive. They fit in well with the other mosaics."

The artwork was imported from Barsanti Studios in Pietrasanta, Italy - the same company that created the original Emmitsburg mosaics depicting the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of the rosary. More than \$150,000 was donated for the new mosaics and \$50,000 was donated for their installation, according to Father Lombardi.

The grotto is working on plans to build a \$2 million visitors' center that will provide 2,000 square feet of space for spiritual conferences, displays of historical items, new restrooms and a small gift shop.

More than 100,000 people visit the Lourdes shrine every year, Father Lombardi said.