

The Leavenworth Echo

From the headwaters of the Wenatchee River in Washington State



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Our Lady of the Snows gives new gift to Leavenworth

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Publisher

A short drive up Ski Hill and left on Wheeler Street will lead you to Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church. A church congregation was inspired to build a special place for spiritual inspiration and reflection. That place is known as the Meadows.

It is incredible to see what has already been accomplished in such a short time by the dedicated work of the good people of Our Lady of the Snows. The project was conceived only last October but already the bulk of the project has been completed through volunteer labor and in kind donations from local businesses. And on June 17, The Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson Bishop of the Diocese of Yakima dedicated the new gardens.

To describe it as a garden understates the spiritual significance of the place and the monumental work that went into constructing it. And while there is still much work to do, the Meadows already includes a beautiful "Via Dolorosa," Grotto with the Resurrection Cross and Tomb, and beautiful landscaping that includes many native plants and grasses.

Via Dolorosa is Latin for "Way of Grief." It is the name of the route through the old city of Jerusalem that Jesus walked between his condemnation by Pilate and his crucifixion and burial. At the Meadows, the outside perimeter includes a path with 14 Stations of the Cross that provide an opportunity for reflection on Jesus' path to the cross. Each of the stations is marked with a large hand carved cross in English and German. For those who are not familiar with the Catholic tradition of the Stations of the Cross, a handy brochure is available that explains each of the 14 stations and provides a guide for meditation. And on the second Friday of each month, the church will conduct a special service for those interested in learning more about the tradition. The service is currently scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Local craftsman Karl Reuss built the crosses.

Pastor Father Alex Trejo of our Lady of the Snows inspired the project. Father Trejo envisioned a gathering place for people of all faiths, a sanctuary for personal reflection, prayer and solitude. When fully completed, the Meadows will be a place where Our Lady of the Snows can share their rich Catholic heritage with people of all faiths. The site will include a Marian contemplative area, an Our Lady of Guadalupe devotional, and special areas for outdoor worship services and celebrations.

Project Chair Don White said, "Our mission is to provide a spiritual gathering place for the people of faith in Leavenworth and beyond to worship, enjoy fellowship and experience God's creation."

From the vision brought forth less than nine months ago, the faith and dedication of the congregation of Our Lady of the Snows has already brought forth a miracle of inspiration. Anyone who visits the site today cannot help but be moved by it. And one can easily imagine the thrill of an Easter sunrise service in such a place. As the landscaping matures and the rest of the project is completed this will be yet another landmark location for visitors to our community.

Take the time in the next few weeks to make that drive up Ski Hill to Our Lady of the Snows. Make the walk around the Via Dolorosa. Whether you are Catholic or some other denomination you are welcome - the Christ story is universal. Father Trejo and the good people of Our Lady of the Snows have just given us all a gift, a gift that will enrich the spiritual life of all who visit the Meadows.



Photo by Bill Forhan
Don White assists The Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson, Bishop of the Diocese of Yakima, as he blesses one of the Stations of the Cross at the Meadows dedication on June 17.



Photo by Bill Forhan
The 14th station of the cross on the Via Delorosa is "Jesus is laid in the Tomb." Which leads to the celebration of Easter - the Resurrection. The Meadows site gives visitors an opportunity to reflect on the power of that message.