

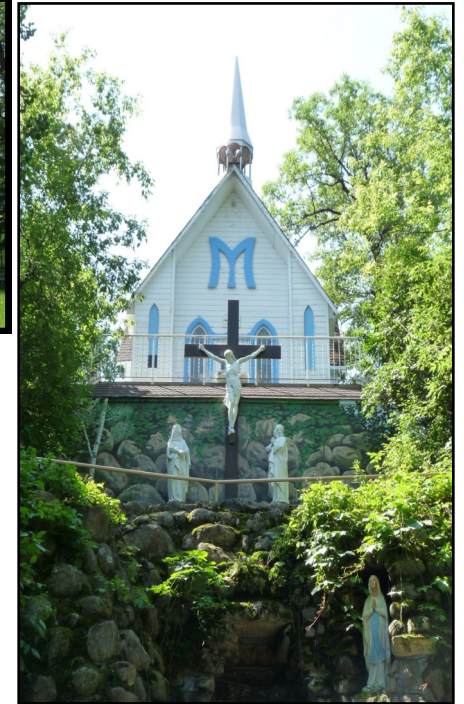
# St. Malo's Shrine

**An annual pilgrimage  
is held at this grotto usually  
the Sunday closest to the 15th of August.  
Masses : English 9 a.m.—French 11 a.m.**

**In the summer of 2007 the stairs were reconstructed,  
thanks to the many volunteers who donated their time,  
equipment, material and energy to make it all possible.**

A special thank you to  
**M.D. Steele Construction Ltd.**  
who donated all the treated wood.  
Without their generous contribution,  
this project wouldn't have been possible.

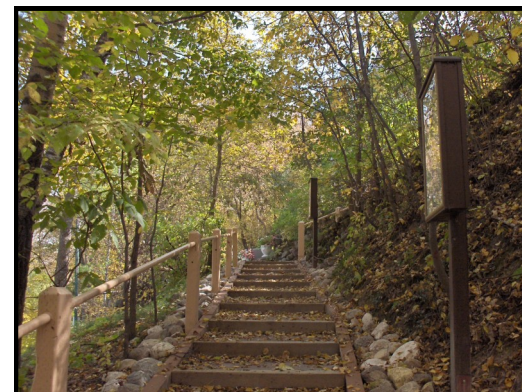
This site relies totally on donations and volunteers.  
*God Bless them all !!!*



**Your donations are very important  
for the maintenance & upkeep of this grotto,  
if you wish to make a donation,  
please make cheque payable to the:  
*Paroisse Saint-Malo*  
(please note on cheque 'for Grotto').  
**A tax-deductible receipt will be issued  
for all donations.****

**Address: Paroisse Saint-Malo  
Box 69, St. Malo MB R0A 1T0**

*Thank you and God Bless.*



*Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto*

**St. Malo's second parish priest, Father Abel Noret, arrived on November 5, 1895. Of French origin, he brought with him from France, his country's popular devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes.**

Exploring the parish domain a short time after his arrival, one site, in particular, caught his attention — the Grotto's present location. It was a quiet, remote spot before the advent of Highway 59 and the construction of the Provincial Park. Its wooded charm and the proximity of the little river reminded him of the Grotto of Lourdes in France, where the Blessed Virgin had appeared in 1858. He decided to erect a grotto here which too, would honor her as Our Lady of Lourdes.

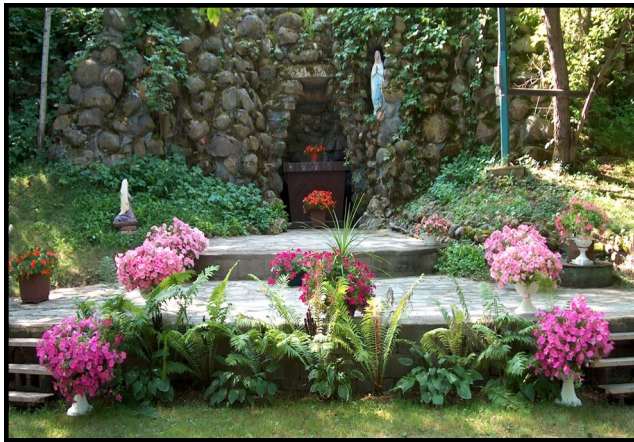
In July 1896, Father Noret with the voluntary aid of some of his parishioners began working on his project. A clearing was made as they cleared brush and filled hollows and a small chapel was then constructed on the south bank of the river.

The grotto site was separated from the parish church and the village by dense and tall trees. A trail was needed to link the grotto and the village. To do so they had to ring the church bell and from the grotto site Father Noret and his wood choppers began cutting a path towards the sound of the bell. Since the opening of Highway 59, this sylvan path still exists today but is no longer used.

The first pilgrimage was not a large one. It occurred that Fall on September 8, 1896, on the feast of Mary's Nativity. For the inauguration and first annual pilgrimage, a procession wound its way from the village to the little sanctuary. Damase Malo walked at its head carrying the statue of the Blessed Virgin. Several years later a change in date was made and the annual solemnity was kept on the feast of the Assumption.

By 1902 Father Noret's plans for the sanctuary had become more impressive. The little chapel was replaced by an actual grotto built with fieldstones so abundant in this area. Father Noret was working with David Morin and Léger Lambert. They had completed the stone walls and the niche of the Madonna. There still remained the closing of the arch of the main vault. A keystone was needed.

Hunting about, they found, high on the bank, a large flat stone of the proper dimension. But how to get it into position? They had no crane. The stone was very large, very heavy and the bank very steep. Dilemma. "If we roll it down," said Father Noret, "we risk smashing everything — rock and grotto. Yet we'll risk it." The three men heaved, and the large flat rock started to slide down the bank. Chance, luck, heavenly intervention, call it what you will, but the rock stopped at the precise place destined for it as the keystone of the arch. Father Noret and his helpers did not budge it one inch from the place it still is today. Lovers of Mary attribute this feat to the Madonna of Lourdes who chose to be honored in this sylvan place.



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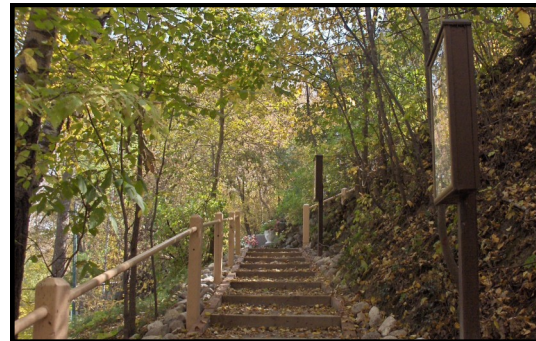
On July 28, 1906, His Grace, Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface presided the pilgrimage and blessed the new chapel which brought together a large number of people.

Father Noret was probably thinking only of his own parish as he worked and planned for the sanctuary. But little by little, people from neighboring parishes joined those of St. Malo in its annual pilgrimage and it grew in importance. In 1939 some 7,000 people attended the annual pilgrimage.

Father Arthur Benoit who was parish priest in St. Malo between 1936 and 1941, did much to develop the site of the grotto. Almost immediately he had pavilions constructed for the use of visitors.

In 1939 the biggest change came about. The old altar shelter was replaced by a much larger canopy. Unfortunately, from the sinner's point of view, it practically hid the little chapel of 1904, which was located higher up on the slope. The aesthetic lost out to the practical. Visitors could no longer catch the enchanting panorama of the little valley that had hitherto been one of the joys of anyone emerging from the chapel.

Other changes were made. To obtain more seating space before the grotto, the little river had to be directed to a new channel. From the bank to the altar descending paths were constructed to be able to go down to the shelter and grotto area. Though a bit steep and causing one to descend somewhat breathlessly these semi-circular ramps added another note of resemblance to the Lourdes cenacle in France.



when the water was at low levels.

The little wooden chapel weathered the years but with time, renovations were necessary. Its modern form emerged more denuded without its former little turrets.

On the interior walls of the chapel are ex-voto plaques placed there by those who have received favors, especially sickness recovery, from the Madonna of Lourdes, such as Mr. David Morin, Miss Marie Hébert, Alice Elémond and Anna Desrosiers.



These are not cures which have been studied by a medical commission, nor officially approved by the Church, but they do accentuate the condition laid down by Christ to those seeking his healing: **"Be it done onto you according to your faith."**