

Walking Art Tour

of the

Sylvania Franciscan Grounds



Walking Tour of the Sylvania Franciscan Motherhouse Grounds -Murals, Monuments and Shrines- Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, Ohio

Welcome to our campus and our home! May you find joy and peace as you wander these beautiful and sacred grounds.

The Sisters

Campus Overview

The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio have 89 acres, on which you will find:

- Umbria Hall, administration offices for the Sisters
- Maria Hall, a residence hall for the Sisters
- Rosary Care Center, a Medicare/Medicaid licensed facility for women religious, priests and lay persons
- Hermitages for prayer and solitude
- Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel
- Lourdes University, offering degrees in the Liberal Arts and Professional Studies
- Franciscan Theater and Conference Center
- Canticle Center, multi-purpose building on Silica Drive for Sophia Counseling and Testing Center, and Lourdes University Art Department.
- Lourdes University's Ebeid Recreation Center and practice fields are located on ten acres mid-campus, south of Convent Blvd.

The History of the Sylvania Franciscans

In 1916, Bishop Schrembs from Toledo invited the Rochester (MN) Franciscan Sisters to establish a province in the area. Mother Adelaide, who was serving as the directress/president of St. Teresa College in Winona, Minnesota, was chosen to be the foundress of the new province. At first, the administration team and the younger members lived in the former St. Hedwig's Church on Dexter Street in North Toledo.

In 1917, Mother Adelaide purchased 89 acres of land, a small house, two barns, and a hen house. The Bishop discouraged her from buying the property, as it was too sandy for farming. She picked up some soil and said, "We don't want a farm, we want a park." This campus is her vision come true.

Mother Adelaide quickly transformed the sandy farmland into a place that breathes beauty, culture, and the Franciscan spirit of living and giving praise to God. She wanted her Franciscan community to see beauty, appreciate it and, like Francis, see God in it.

In 1930, the community became autonomous, and was officially known as the Sisters of St. Francis of the Congregation of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sylvania, Ohio. The congregation has had 522 members, who have ministered in six states and beyond.

The mission of the Sylvania Franciscans is to extend the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus. As followers of St. Francis, they are peacemakers, take care of Mother Earth and all creation, and have concern for the poor and marginalized. Today, our Sisters serve in education, health care, social services, religious education and parish ministry work,



Portiuncula - 1936

media, law, retreat ministries, and spiritual direction. Some Sisters minister in outreach centers for the poor, care centers for the elderly, soup kitchens, and hospice care.

The years 1917 to 1949 were a time of hard work and many sacrifices for the Sylvania Franciscans. The fledgling community allowed themselves only the necessities of life to save money to build and beautify the campus, even during the Great Depression.

When Mother Adelaide finished her stay on earth on July 4, 1964, she bequeathed her dream to all her Sisters. It was for the Sisters to cherish what she initiated and provided. This tour is a pause from the urgency of life's demands, a chance to receive her blessing, which emanates from each stone of the architecture and every piece of art.

Architecture and the Tile Roofs

The California missions, where the first Franciscans came as missionaries, served as a model for the architecture of our buildings. Remembering the roofs in their native Spain, the missionaries began experimenting with curved tiles. Squares of clay were patted over curved wooden frames, which were sanded to keep the clay from adhering. Edges were trimmed and the clay was thoroughly dried in the sun and baked in a kiln. This type of roofing tile was quickly copied in all the other missions. Another feature of this style is the system of cloister walks that connect several of the campus buildings.

Artwork on the Franciscan Campus



Mother Adelaide purchased most of the art pieces you will see inside our buildings. An artist with a watchful eye, she obtained much of the outdoor Tondo art, (a Renaissance term for a circular painting, relief carving, plaque or mural

design), which was assumably installed during the construction of St. Clare Academy in 1930.

Spandrel Medallion // 18" diam//
American made to Mother Adelaide's
specifications at the Ceramic Factory
in Zanesville, OH // Christian Symbol
designs from Mother M. Justinian
research notebook dated 1936.



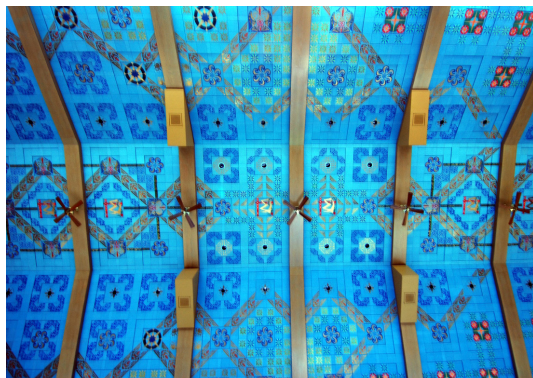
1 - Begin the Tour at Queen of Peace Chapel

The heart of the Sylvania Franciscan grounds, and the heart of the Sisters of St. Francis, is **Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel**. Dedicated in 1961, it was a dream come true for Mother Adelaide, the foundress of the Sylvania Franciscans.

Renovated in 1986, Queen of Peace Chapel is the spiritual center of the Sylvania Franciscan Motherhouse. Renowned for its beauty and exuding a sense of peace, the chapel has several notable features.

The Ceiling

A dramatic feature of the chapel is the ceiling. There are over 10,300 ceiling tiles (ranging from 6" x 5" to 36" x 29") in the chapel and entrance. They are of Travertine material (acoustical tile). Under the direction of Mother Adelaide, the ceiling tiles were designed and executed by Sister



Michaeline Lesiak. For 13 months, Sister Michaeline's art classes and many of the Sisters spent every spare minute stenciling the designs on the tiles.

Looking at the ceiling that begins in the organ loft, we can follow the line-symbols of the Seraphim, the six-winged angels, powerfully moving toward the sanctuary. In the center of the chapel, the symbolic Seraphim turns abruptly and encircles the Immaculate Mary under the sign of the initial “M”. The ceiling design culminates in the sanctuary with the gift of love. The intense hues of rich red, lively blue, and a brilliant gold emphasize love.

The San Damiano Cross

The large cross over the tabernacle, painted in an ancient egg tempera technique, was modeled after an 11th century cross now hanging in the Basilica of St. Clare in Assisi, Italy. The cross holds special honor among Franciscans since it was in the little chapel of San Damiano that the crucified Christ spoke to St. Francis, telling him to “Go, repair my Church.” This contemporary version, painted by Sister Ruth Marie Kachelek, reminds the



Sisters of their mission to the Church and world.



The Windows

The mood of the chapel changes with the play of light through the large and dramatic stained glass windows. The large Madonna and Child window and the clerestory (upper level) windows are based on designs of early Renaissance artist Fra Angelico.

In her writings, Sister Michaeline notes the connection between the great Virgin in Glory window and the worship that takes place nearby. She tells us that the sun walks through the images in the sanctuary window. The amber chunks begin to glow, a

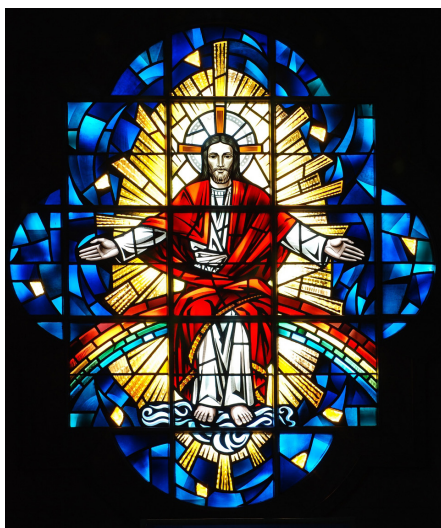


reminder of the fire which the Risen Lord made by the lakeside to prepare a breakfast for his fisherman. The Eucharist celebrated at the altar in the chapel is also a Thanksgiving Meal. The blues awaken next, then the vibrant reds, until the majestic mother with the tiny, but mature child on her knees, is immersed in the flames of love. Mary gives Jesus to the world, which he holds in his small hand just as the priest gives him to the worshipers in Bread

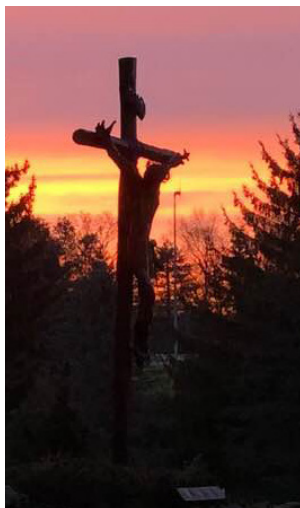
and Wine at the Eucharistic celebration.

The angels float from the sanctuary to the side windows on swirling blue clouds of dawn, daylight, and dusk, making music and dancing. The recurring angels are based on the musical angels of Fra Angelico.

In the Prince of Peace window, located in the organ loft, Christ rests on the rainbow, the universal symbol of peace. With his arms outstretched, Jesus offers his kind of peace, peace which the world cannot give. We absorb from this quiet space the peace of Christ and take it out to our world.



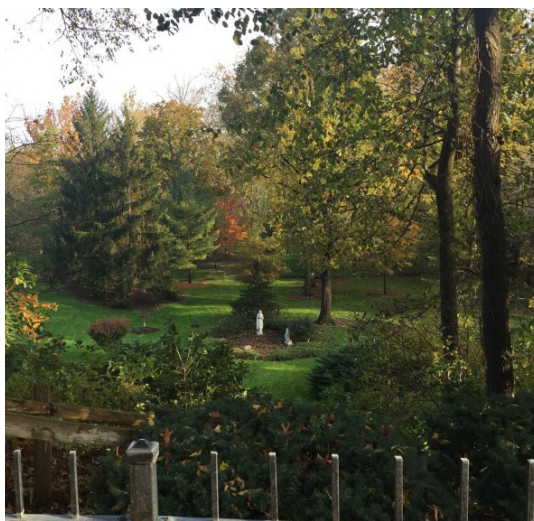
2 - Outdoor Shrines



Exit Queen of Peace and turn right. Across the road and down the hill from Queen of Peace Chapel, you will see two hermitage cabins nestled among the trees. Our Franciscan hermitages provide a place for persons to come away for solitude. The hermitages are scheduled for anyone wishing to take time for prayer and reflection. We ask that you do not go down to look at the cabins, out of respect for those who may be praying there.

Continuing north on the chapel road, look to the left to see a magnificent **25-foot Crucifix**, standing 18 feet above ground, and weighing about 1,500 pounds. The crucifix was carved by Sister M. Jeremias Stinson and Sister Grace Ellen Urban, Marcia Malys, and Joe Eby from black locust trees on campus. The four worked part-time on this project for two years. It was dedicated on April 26, 1984.

Continuing on the chapel road is the **Canticle of Praise Prayer Garden**, on your left. This quiet space is reserved for prayer. A pond, Stations of the Cross, Isaac's Altar, and Our Lady of Lourdes shrine add beauty to the area. A stairway with a wrought iron gate is at the top



of the hill behind the Greccio House and crucifix; the steps are

steep, though, so you may want to walk down the fire road (next to the crucifix) and turn right.

3 - Return to the front of Queen of Peace Chapel

Walk down to the right and see the lovely statue of **Our Lady of Sylvania**. Mother Adelaide commissioned Sister Michaeline to design a statue for the Sylvania Franciscans. It was dedicated on May 15, 1951.



Next, on the right is a shrine depicting **St. Francis with the Animals**.

The statue is a reminder of the love Francis had for all of God's creatures. Each revealed to him the magnificence and diversity of God's love. Note the variety of creatures surrounding the saint.



On your left is the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, located in the Sunken Garden. The statue, which had been a gift to the Sisters by Sister Mary Casimir's family, was returned from North Platte, NE where the Sisters had St. Mary Hospital until the early 1970s. The space is also a native plant garden.

Just across the bridge, on the right, is the **Portiuncula Chapel** (Italian for Little Portion). Built in 1936, it is a replica of the chapel in which St. Francis received his first followers. The original chapel in Assisi, Italy was a gift to Francis from the Benedictine monks (the "little portion" that was given in exchange for an annual payment of bread and fish, still given

today). It is often called the birthplace of the Franciscan order. Open daily from dawn to 5 PM, you are welcome to spend time in prayer inside.

In front of the Portiuncula is a bronze sculpture of the Founder

of the Sylvania Franciscans, Mother M. Adelaide Sandusky. It was designed and sculpted by Sister Magdala Davlin OSF, and Lourdes University Art Instructor, Patrick DuBreuil, and installed in March, 2021.



Across the road from the Portiuncula is a statue of **St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio**, installed in 1938. The statue reminds us of the time when Francis brought understanding between the townspeople of Gubbio, Italy and the wolf who was menacing the town. It is an example of Francis as peacemaker.

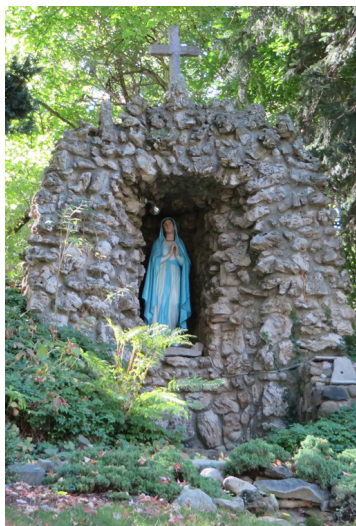
Further down on the right side of the road is the **Shrine to Honor the Unborn** which was created in 1994 by Sister Jane Mary Sorosiak.

Behind the shrine is the road to **Porta Coeli Gate of Heaven Cemetery**, where over 400 Sisters are buried. At the entrance of the *Gate of Heaven* is a lovely, large mural that depicts angels trumpeting the call to resurrection.



Return to the cemetery road and turn right on the first narrow sidewalk. As you walk the path, notice on the right between the trees a pair of murals, created by former Lourdes College student Svetlana Cholvadova Ottney, depicting St. Francis and creation.

Just ahead on your right is **Carmel Hall** built in 1940. It was once the home for Sisters in formation. The ceramic mural of *Our Lady of Mt. Carmel* on the entrance to Carmel Hall, dedicated on July 16, 1996, was created by a student, Patrick Landis, with the encouragement and direction of Sister Jane Mary of the Lourdes University Art Department.



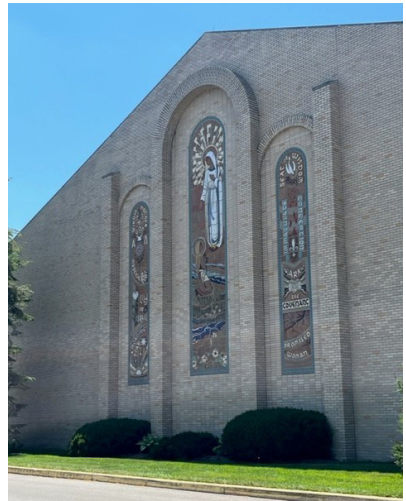
Pass Carmel Hall and turn left past St. Francis Hall. To your right, on the hillside in the wooded area at the southwest corner of the grounds is the **Grotto** with the **Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes**, built in 1921. The pioneer Sisters carried the stones for the Grotto from Ten Mile Creek, located on the north end of campus behind Queen of Peace Chapel. Building the shrine was a labor of love.



4 - Lourdes University

As you turn away from the Grotto, look up to the left and see murals of Francis and the Risen Christ on the **Franciscan Theater and Conference Center**, which was built in 1981. It includes a gymnasium, meeting rooms and a theater. Visitors to the center primarily come from the surrounding areas of Ohio and Michigan. Performers hail from across the nation.

Sylvania Franciscan Sisters created these murals under the direction of Sisters in the Lourdes College Art Department: Sisters Jane Mary Sorosiak, Agneta Ganzel and Helen Chmura. They used 14 tons of clay. The figure of Christ is in a panel 80 feet high. The head of Christ measures five feet and the distance from His wrist to the tips of His fingers measures three feet. The mural in its entirety is 140 feet. The entire project was executed in Alverno Studio located on campus.



Additional stoneware murals on the outside of the Franciscan Center include:

- Cloister Walk Walls – *Cloister Walks are covered walkways running along the wall of buildings. (You will see Cloister Walks on many campus buildings). Above the Cloister Walk are six Tondos of Women Saints*
- East Wall – *Our Lady of Lourdes*
- Convent Boulevard - *Peace Murals*

Across from the Franciscan Center, on the way to Mother Adelaide Hall, stop to view the mural of *Christ Blessing the Loaves*, located outside the university cafeteria (added in 2011). The mural was also designed and executed by Sister Jane Mary. Each of the tiles comprising the mural were cut, glazed, and kiln-fired in Alverno Studio.



Mother Adelaide Hall

The building of Mother Adelaide Hall began in 1963 and it was dedicated in 1965, with every detail planned by our founder Mother Adelaide. Unfortunately, Mother Adelaide died a year before its completion. In her memory the original name, Padua Hall, was changed to Mother Adelaide Hall. Today this wing houses Financial Aid offices, the





science labs, the Paul R. Koester Greenhouse, and classrooms.

Pass Mother Adelaide Hall (heading East) to find the **Lourdes University Welcome Center/Ebeid Hall**. A Welcome mural is located near the entrance and a mural of St. Francis adorns the outside (east-facing) wall, both created by Sister Jane Mary.

St. Clare Hall

St. Clare Hall is located past the mural of St. Francis. Take the first path on the left by Delp Hall and head toward the Cloister Walk of Lourdes Hall. Turn right, following



the walkway heading left. Take a quick right and go inside through the doors with the etchings. The etchings on the glass doors, depicting *St. Francis' Canticle of Creation*, are the work of Sister Sharon Havelak.

On the right, framed by an arch of the former cloister walk is a mural of *St. Clare of Assisi*; the large-scale painting is based on a medieval Italian painting depicting the saint's life. Art student Svetlana Cholvadova Ottney painted it under the direction of Sister Jane Mary Sorosiak.





Step outside the single door to the exterior of the building where there is a mural of St. Clare, created by Sister Jane Mary.

This building was built in 1930 and formerly housed administrative offices and St. Clare Academy (a high school for the young Aspirants), and the resident quarters for the Sisters until the late 1970s. In 1989 the elevator core and St. Clare mural were added.

At the end of the walkway go through the double doors and enter **Annunciation Lobby**.

Duns Scotus Library

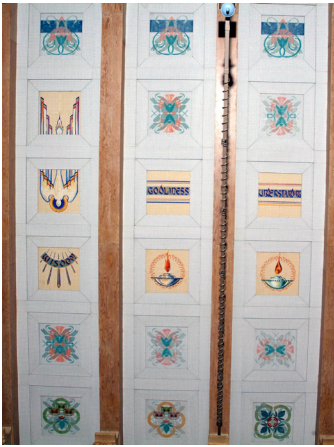
Duns Scotus was completed in 1951.

It was named for the thirteenth century Franciscan scholar and theologian,

John Duns Scotus. He taught that Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is the center of creation. The library is dedicated to the spirit of wisdom and used mainly by Lourdes University students.



One of the notable features of Duns Scotus Library is the ceiling. Some of the symbols represent Ohio: the many lakes and rivers (the ribbon of blue, which flows through the top of the ceiling), the scarlet carnation (the State Flower), and the horse chestnut



called “the buckeye.” The cardinal was deliberately omitted for graphic reasons. Other symbols highlight learning. The owls represent secular learning; the doves and flames, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, are signs of God’s wisdom.

The workers were under contract to complete the building by a specific date. On August 4, 1950, Mother Adelaide asked Sister Michaeline and Sister Agneta to design and make the ceiling tiles. Twelve days later the

project was completed. A host of Sisters was engaged in cutting stencils and spraying the designs.

Another feature of the library is the *Great Window*. This large stained glass window is the product of research and planning by the Sisters under the supervision of Mother Adelaide. It was executed by Stephen Bridges in the Rambusch Studios in New York City. It has five parts:

1. A scroll with a text from Corinthians is in the center. The quotation was selected by Mother Adelaide and designed by Sister Michaeline.
2. At the top of the scroll is Aldus’ printer’s mark.
3. Bottom Scroll: Figure of Aldus Manutius (1450-1515). He was the scholar and printer from Venice who invented italic letters.



4. Bottom, in a row: The guild marks of the writers, printers, and paper makers of the Middle Ages.

5. In the four corners of the window: university seals of four early European universities:

- a. Upper left: Oxford in England, 1133.
- b. Upper right: Bologna in Italy, 1088.
- c. Lower left: Cracow in Poland, 1364.



On the west wall are 12 roundel ceramics representing the months. They are in groups of threes, one group for each season. On each

wall next to the 12 are more roundels picturing some of the great scholars in the fields of philosophy, science, and the arts from Charlemagne to Thomas Edison. In the center of the side windows are small works in Italian stained glass that illustrate the Cantic of the Sun and the Virtues.

Face the entrance of the library and take note of the tapestries. In 1938, while in Paris, Mother Adelaide ordered these tapestries of St. Joan of Arc and St. Louis of France. The library was only in her mind at that time, but she knew the place for these treasures even then. They represent the feminine and the masculine element struggling for peace and justice. This, too, is the mission of the Sylvania Franciscans – to strive for peace and justice in our ministries.

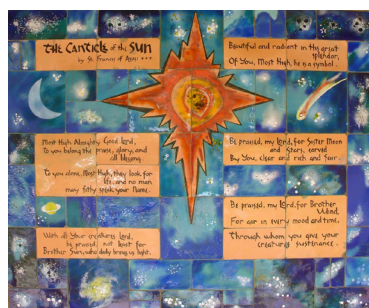
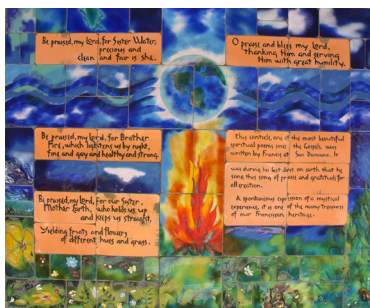
5 - The Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis

Going back to the double doors, exit Duns Scotus Library and turn left. You are now on the **Umbria Hall** Cloister Walk. It houses the administration offices for the Sisters of St. Francis and the offices for their various ministries.

Built in 1958, Umbria Hall was named for the area in Central Italy where St. Francis of Assisi lived. As you walk, view the mosaics of the 12 apostles. The Sisters did much of the work on these mosaics.



Continue on to the **Madonna Hall** Cloister Walk. Note the copper mosaics of the Cantic of the Sun and ceramic tile of the St. Francis Peace Prayer.



Both art pieces are the work of Sylvania Franciscan Sister Ruth Marie Kachelek and Gladys Parris.



Return to the double glass doors and turn left down the inside hallway toward Queen of Peace Chapel. Immediately to the

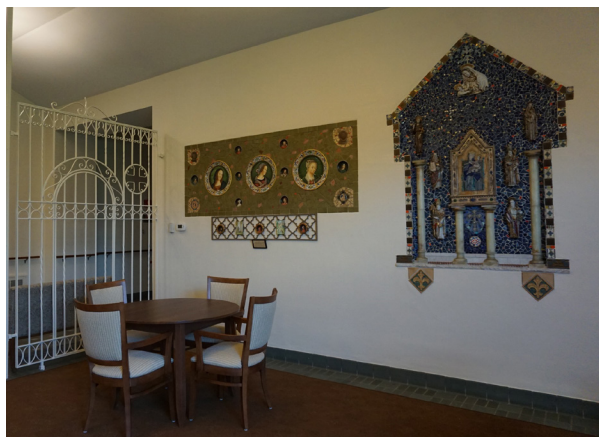


right you'll find **All Good Things Art and Gifts**, a shop offering a variety of artwork created by the Sisters including paintings, cards and prints, soaps and lotions, jewelry, and ceramic tiles. Fair Trade items are also available for sale. All Good Things is open from 10 AM to 5 PM Tuesday through Friday and from 10 AM to 2 PM on Saturdays.

Just down the hall from All Good Things is the **Heritage Room** of the Sylvania Franciscans. Video projections and visual displays offer a glimpse of the Sisters' history and the variety of ways they are living out their mission as Franciscan Sisters. The Heritage Room is open daily from 6 AM to 7 PM.

Madonna Hall

is so named because of the various depictions of the Madonna above many of the doorways and on the walls of the hallway and lobby. Ceramic reproductions



of famous Renaissance depictions of Mary can be found in the lobby, as well as the large oil painting portraying the *visit of the Magi*, "*The Epiphany*" by A. Bradish.



At the end of the hallway, just before the entrance to Queen of Peace Chapel, is a triptych by Robert Lenz, OFM, depicting the meeting of *St Francis and the Sultan Malek al-Kamil* in 1219. The icon conveys how, despite their religious differences, the two found common ground in their understanding of prayer and the mystical life. Just as the story of St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio underscores St. Francis' desire for harmony with all creation, this icon symbolizes his desire for God's peace to permeate human relationships.

The Sisters of St. Francis thank you for touring the Sylvania Franciscan campus and hope it was a pleasant experience. It is our home, now shared with the students of Lourdes University, the residents at Rosary Care Center, the patrons of the Franciscan Center, the clients at Sophia, the retreatants at the hermitages and visitors like you.

The Sisters invite you to celebrate Sunday Liturgy with us in Queen of Peace Chapel, usually at 9:00 AM. Weekday liturgies are usually celebrated at 8:00 AM. The liturgy schedule is posted outside Queen of Peace Chapel and can be found at www.lourdes.edu/chapelcalendar. All are welcome!

Feel free to walk the grounds or to spend time in prayer by returning to a favorite shrine. Prayerful **Reflective Walks** are conducted throughout the year. Please watch for these at the website of the Sisters, www.sistersosf.org, or contact Sister Nora Klewicki at nklewicki@sistersosf.org, 419-824-3528.

More information about the art collection is available by contacting the art curator at 419-517-8914.

May you return to your homes filled with Franciscan peace and joy!

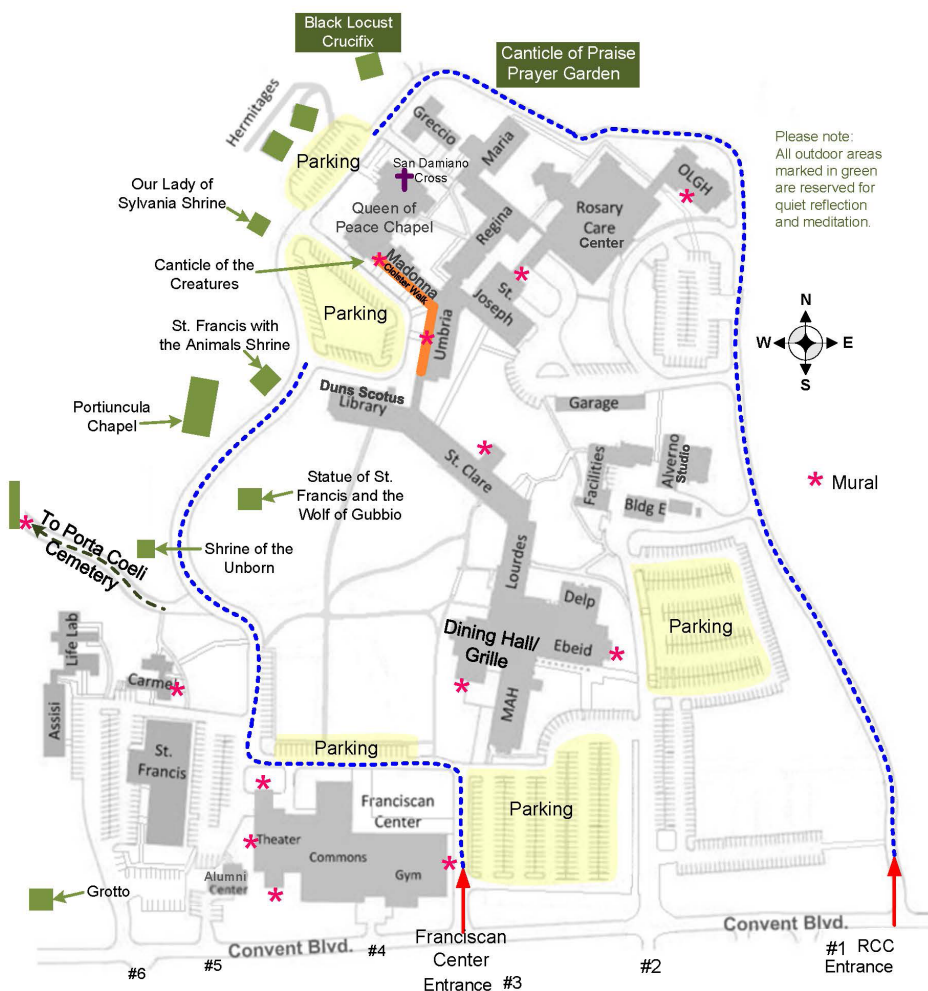
Pax et bonum!
Pace e bene!
Peace and all good!

Sylvania Franciscan Campus • Lourdes University

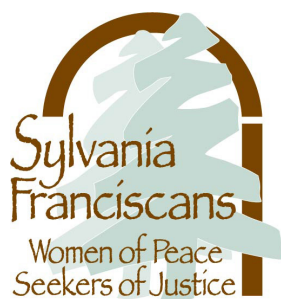
Walking Tour Map

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*Cover drawing by
Sister Jane Mary Sorosiak, OSF
Sisters of St. Francis, 2012*

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