

MOTHER OF GOD SHRINE ALTAR PAVILION

Sisters of Saint Basil the Great
Mount Saint Macrina
Uniontown, Pennsylvania

Every year, thousands of American Byzantine Catholics of Ruthenian descent come from across the country to gather for a special Pilgrimage in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Since 1934, this has been a faithful tradition for many people during the Labor Day weekend. They come to the home of the of the Order of the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great, of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Province, an international religious community of Byzantine Catholic women. They come to socialize, and to participate in a variety of services and functions which center around the veneration of their icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. This beautiful 257-acre property, called Mount Saint Macrina, is in the Western Pennsylvania Laurel Mountain foothills, on Route 40, west of the city of Uniontown.

In addition to the property's original structures that were part of the estate of Josiah Van Kirk Thompson, known as Oak Hill, many structures and shrines have been erected to serve the annual Pilgrimage. For the Pilgrimage celebrated in the first year of the new Millenium, a deteriorating 30-year old major structure was rebuilt. The Pontifical Altar Pavilion which supports the primary liturgies and services for the Pilgrimage was replaced with a structure designed by Design 3 Architecture to be reminiscent of the wooden churches built in the Carpathian mountains of Europe by the Ruthenian ancestors of many of the pilgrims. It is now called the Mother of God Shrine, and has the original Italian mosaic icon of the Mother of Perpetual Help renovated and reinstalled as the major focus.

Mount Saint Macrina is among the most popular Marian pilgrimage sites in the United States. This may be because so many people across multiple generations continue to find it important to gather and share in their unique ethnicity and spirituality; within such a peaceful setting that is full of preserved splendor. So it is with a fervent interest to perpetuate this Pilgrimage, that the Mother of God Shrine Altar Pavilion has been rebuilt. It is hoped that this structure will facilitate the continuance of the spiritual celebrations at Mount Saint Macrina for many more decades and generations.