St. Ben’s Statues & Their Stories
To understand the story of the Grotto, first a little history -- dating back to February 1858, just months after the Sisters first arrived in Minnesota.

St. Ben’s Grotto
In 1858 a young girl in France named Bernadette Soubirous saw visions of Our Lady in a cave outside Lourdes. Bernadette followed Our Lady’s request to dig for water and revealed a stream that soon became a focal point of pilgrimage.

Bernadette reported 18 visions of Mary, from February to July 1858

Our Lady of Lourdes, France
Painting from http://acatholicview.blogspot.com/2013/02/our-lady-of-lourdes.html
Text snip from SBM brochure
In 1864, French sculptor Joseph-Hugues Fabisch was commissioned to create a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes based on Bernadette's descriptions.

The statue rests in the niche in Lourdes where the Virgin appeared to Bernadette.

It has become an iconic symbol of Our Lady of Lourdes, although it depicts a figure which is not only older and taller than Bernadette's description, but also more in keeping with orthodox and traditional representations of the Virgin Mary.

In 1864, sculptor Joseph-Hugues Fabisch was commissioned to create a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. Statue photo and text from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph-Hugues_Fabisch
The miracle at Lourdes was depicted in a classic movie in 1943...

“The Song of Bernadette” play was enacted in many places, including St. Ben’s. Statue photo from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph-Hugues_Fabisch
Play photo from SBMA 391
50 years after Bernadette’s visions, St. Ben’s builds a grotto

“The grotto at the cemetery was erected at a cost of $400 and the Blessed Virgin statue $100. The walk was beautified and trees on both sides planted. This grotto was dedicated on the last day of May. It soon became a favorite place for private devotion and even a number of pious lay persons from the village went there frequently.”

St. Benedict’s Monastery’s
Community Chronicles, 1910?

But was it a Lourdes Grotto?

Older pictures show that the 1910 grotto was smaller than the current version. The grotto was designed by Raphael Knapp, OSB, Saint John’s Abbey, brother of Felicitas and Justina Knapp, OSB, Saint Benedict’s Monastery. This earlier grotto, with a pair of flanking columns, was constructed of small, smooth field stones. Farm fields surrounded the grotto at that time.
1909 July 15 Daprato Statuary letter (from SBMA, RG14-02-01)
In the 19th century, Daprato Statues set the standard for religious art around the world. By turn of the 20th century, Daprato Rigali Studios operated locations in Chicago, New York and Pietrasanta, near the famous Italian Carrara Marble Quarry, which is still a source for many of our marble projects today.

In 1881, John Rigali, the great-great grandfather of the firm’s four current full-time family members, immigrated to Chicago after completing his art training with the well-known instructor Maestro Celogni of Florence. In 1900, John Rigali became a partner, and ultimately president of Daprato Studios. The firm was headquartered in Chicago at the corner of Van Buren and Canal Streets. Daprato Rigali steadily expanded its dedication to artistic church decoration and statuary over the decades, building a nationwide reputation of excellence and consistency. The company
Photos & text from SBM brochure
"The walk was beautified and trees on both sides planted."
"Farm fields surrounded the grotto."

Quote from
“Farm” text from SBM brochure. Photo: SBMA Grotto 003
Yes, it was St. Ben’s grotto
SBM Grotto brochure & SBMA College collection photo 029
In 1939 the grotto was covered with larger, rough-hewn granite rocks in a random, more natural pattern. The redesigned grotto was transformed into a devotional site for Our Lady of Lourdes, complete with a statue of Bernadette.
On Sodality Day Irene Buchl, last year’s prefect, and Mary Martin, prefect this year, present flowers to Our Lady of Lourdes at the Grotto.

Sodality Day at the Grotto: from 1945 *Facula* p. 41
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/3303/show/3282
1945 June *Benet* p. 1 – Ruth Nierengarten
Looking for Bernadette photo from *These Gentle Communists*, p.3
1945 *Facula* p. 5.
From an alum’s scrapbook album, ca. 1945-1949
From O:\Archives\csbarchives\Photos\Album 1945-1949 Beatrice Johnson, mother of Lisa Moschkau – page 7
Sodality Holds “Lourdes Day”

In honor of the Centenary of the appearance of Our Lady at Lourdes, the sodality held “Lourdes Day” on May 8. The theme: “Visit Lourdes in Spirit.” A solemn High Mass opened the day’s activities. Each hour during the day, volunteer sodalists made visits to the Lourdes grotto on campus.

During the regular convocation period, a public procession to the grotto was made by the entire CSB community during which time the Rosary was prayed. The prayer of Pius XII for the Lourdes Centenniel was recited, followed by a sermon and the Priest’s Blessing given by Father Jerome Docherty, OSB, chaplain. As the procession returned, each one blessed herself with water from the famed Lourdes shrine in France. At 5:30 May devotions were held and Benediction given in Sacred Heart chapel.

That evening the members of the Works of Mercy Committee had a dinner at the Children’s Home in St. Cloud where they have been giving volunteer service all year. The day’s activities concluded with a sodality meeting and a night of recollection for the sodalists.

Grotto photo from With Lamps Burning, p. 109 of the pdf
The Benet v.23 n.5 1958 May p.3
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/1784
Celebrations of the Grotto
Inset from Benedictine Sisters & Friends winter 2010
The Grotto
Color photos from CSB Archives

Sometime in the 1960s the statue of Bernadette disappeared.
In 2010, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the grotto, Oblates Lynn and John Crowley donated a statue of St. Bernadette for the grotto’s centennial.

The statue arrived in Minneapolis from Rome on May 10.

The Crowleys carefully put her on a truck for the trip to St. Joseph.

St. Bernadette is now permanently in place at the grotto.

From the May 18, 2010 entry on the Sisters of Saint Benedict’s Monastery blog, posted by Kathryn Casper, OSB
http://stbensisters.blogspot.com/search?q=grotto
Center photo by Linda Dusek OSB from SMB blog; others April 2013 by the archivist
May 12, 2010, Bernadette returns to the Grotto.
From the May 18, 2010 entry on the Sisters of Saint Benedict’s Monastery blog, posted by Kathryn Casper, OSB. http://stbensisters.blogspot.com/search?q=grotto. Petitions photo by Linda Dusek OSB.
1954 Sagatagan

St. John’s has its own Lady of Lourdes Grotto

...complete with a Bernadette
St. Joseph: 1924, 1925, or 1926?

May 1924:
“The statue of St. Joseph was erected on West Campus. Blessed on Reception Day June 1.”
*Chronicle* Grace McDonald
SBMA RG 15-1-1

1924-25:

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[Note: year 1924-25]

In May, the statue of St. Joseph was erected on West Campus. Blessed on Reception Day June 1.
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SBMA RG 15-01-01 f.7 p.98

1926:
“St. Joseph blessed 6/16/26 by Bishop Busch”
SBMA note cards RG 14-2-1 Box 3

St. Joseph statue erected in May – but which year?
During the year quite a number of improvements were made on the premises. A large statue of Our Holy Father St. Benedict was erected on the South Campus and a large Lily pond was built in at the South-west Side of the main building. A lifesize statue of Our Lady was procured for the park around the pavilion. The latter was paid for by donations received by the novices.” 15-1-1 file 6 p.15, SBMA
During the year quite a number of improvements were made on the premises. A large statue of Our Holy Father St. Benedict was erected on the South Campus and a large Lily pond was built...”

SBMA RG 15-01-01 f.6 p.94

(fate unknown)

Ca. 1926-27 St. Benedict statue at St. Ben’s
Blessed 6/5/59 “on front lawn”; removed Fall 1990 – from SBMA note cards [RG14-2-1 Box 3]
photo from These Gentle Communists, p.3
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/6078/show/6069
“During the year quite a number of improvements were made on the premises. A large statue of Our Holy Father St. Benedict was erected on the South Campus and a large Lily pond was built in at the South-west Side of the main building. A lifesize statue of Our Lady was procured for the park around the pavilion. The latter was paid for by donations received by the novices.” 15-1-1 f. 6 p.15, SBMA
Ca. 1926-27 St. Benedict statue at St. Ben’s
near the parish cemetery

Ca. 1926-27 St. Benedict statue at St. Ben’s
Blessed 6/5/59 “on front lawn”; removed Fall 1990 – from SBMA note cards [RG14-2-1 Box 3]
Ca. 1927 St. Benedict statue from SBMA
Traditional Vigil Held On December 7th

The traditional vigil of the Immaculate Conception was held in the Rotunda December 7. Inaugurated and sponsored every year by the girls themselves, this vigil is one of the loveliest events of the year. Our Lady’s Committee gave a program in the early evening centered around the Immaculate Conception. The statue of the Blessed Virgin stood surrounded by rose and fern and bouquets of flowers while girls, kneeling on their pews-diors, prayed throughout the night. Groups changed every half hour. The vigil culminated in Holy Communion and the nightly rosesfast next morning. The High Mass, sung in Gregorian by the students, was an appropriate close to this beautiful tradition.

Blessed Virgin statue in the Rotunda
(Teresa Hall 3rd & 4th floors)

The Handshake Jan. 1937 p.3
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/1679
Photo from Vivarium: SBM14b05__RotundaResidence
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/406
1945 in the Rotunda: BVM statue replaced by new crucifix

http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/1721
Photo from Vivarium: SBM14b05__Rotundaresidence
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/406
Statue of Our Lady, for the “Pavillion” [in the woods?]
From an alum’s scrapbook album, ca. 1945-1949
From O:\Archives\csbarchives\Photos\Album 1945-1949 Beatrice Johnson, mother of Lisa Moschkau – p. 4
“During the year quite a number of improvements were made on the premises. A large statue of Our Holy Father St. Benedict was erected on the South Campus and a large Lily pond was built in at the South-west Side of the main building. A lifesize statue of Our Lady was procured for the park around the pavilion. The latter was paid for by donations received by the novices.” 15-1-1 file 6 p. 15 [and p.94?]
Our Lady in the Park
Photos 2013 0422 by the archivist

She’s still there
80 years later
Our Lady of Perpetual Help outside Aurora Hall
Mary Commons and Aurora Hall opened in the fall of 1956
Inset from “Statues We Have Known And Loved, Part 1” by Owen Lindblad, OSB, Oct. 2004
Community News, St. Ben’s Monastery
SBM.14c05b From Monastery PP record: “With donations from friends, Sister Leona Ryan had a statue in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help erected in the field (near what is now Mary Hall) to procure new buildings for the college. The first donation for the statue came from Eddie Linneman. The base of the statue enclosed papers with fervent petitions to Our Lady - mostly for blessings upon the future expansion of CSB. Twenty years later when Mary Hall was built (1955-57), Mr. Greene, the architect, fumed about the statue - it should be moved. There was reluctance to move that weather-battered statue under the pine trees even though no one remembered that Mary was placed there to procure new buildings.”
Our Lady of Perpetual Help outside Mary Commons

“Statues We Have Known And Loved, Part 1” by Owen Lindblad, OSB, Oct. 2004 Community News, St. Ben’s Monastery
Our Lady of Perpetual Help was removed in May of 1998 when the bookstore addition was built onto Mary Commons.

In need of cleaning, “Some zealous workman took it to an ‘artist’ who painted it to look [outrageous]: pink, blue, gold, green...

Now, the paint has been removed with difficulty and we plan to put the statue up on the south side of Mary Hall.”

S. Colman O’Connell, March 2013
Some 3000 guests, including representatives of twenty religious Orders, and many of the hierarchy, joined the community in its Centennial Day celebration of thanksgiving. The major events of the day included the blessing of the statue of St. Walburga, the gift to the community from Mt. Saint Scholastica Convent, Villa Sancta Scholastica Convent, Annunciation Convent, St. Bede’s Priory, St. Paul’s Priory, St. Placid’s Priory, and St. Mary Priory.

A statue of Saint Walburga was given to the community by all of its daughter-houses during its centennial in 1957.

From a file in RG 14 4-2-1 file 2 with notes about the statues, in SBMA
(The Walburga statue’s original home was in a niche like this in the north cloister walk, which no longer exists.)
The Angels
Sacred Heart Altar, pre-1980s renovation

SBMA photo sbm11c01b
SBM.12b05g St. Mary's Basilica in Minneapolis, MN, purchased the six angels and placed them in the choir nave of the Basilica.
SBM.12b06b The parish of St. Mary's Basilica in Minneapolis
These three stayed in the renovated Sacred Heart Chapel:

The Blessed Virgin Mary  St. Benedict  St. Scholastica
A tale of statues on the old stairway of St. Gertrude Hall

1988 Fall St. Benedict’s Today, p. 3

http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/4402/show/4370
Dr. Angeline Dufner '57's essay about college life, about statues of St. Anthony & St. Joan, pranks, disappearance and speculation about them being in the depths of Lake Sarah. Angie graduated in 1957, one year after Mary Commons opened.

A tale of statues on the old stairway of St. Gertrude Hall.

1988 Fall St. Benedict’s Today, p. 3
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/4402/show/4370
Google Map of St. Ben’s, ca. 2010
Google Map of St. Ben’s, ca. 2010
Statues made a comeback on campus, especially when Joe O’Connell’s works, commissioned by the Monastery, begin to grace the Gathering Place in the late 1980s.
Installation photo by Jim Parsons; closeup by the archivist 2013 0422
Compiled in March & April 2013 from resources in the CSB, St. Ben’s Monastery, SJU and St. John’s Abbey Archives by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist.

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