



Historic Detroit Catholic Church Successfully Restores 200-ft Steeple and Bell Tower

Restoration of St. Joseph Oratory steeple of bell tower is part of parish's \$2.5 million Historic Renewal Campaign

Thursday, September 12 – St. Joseph Oratory on Monday will announce the completed historic restoration of its 200-foot steeple and bell tower, located across from Eastern Market in Detroit. Media is welcome to attend a press conference detailing the project at 10 a.m. Monday, Sept. 16 at 1828 Jay St., inside the social hall.

The historically accurate restoration was part of a \$2.5 million Historic Renewal campaign launched by St. Joseph Oratory in October 2017. The bell tower was built in 1873 and the steeple was added in 1892. At the time of the tower's original completion, the German Gothic church was the tallest building in Detroit.

Heavy winds in the spring of 2016 severely damaged the steeple, forcing the church building to close for a few months until temporary emergency repairs could be made. Now, just a year after raising the necessary funding, the steeple and bell tower restoration is complete. Detroit Cornice & Slate, founded in Detroit in 1888, accomplished the detailed work. The steeple project included all new slate and wood underlayment, and full restoration of the historic, decorative copper work. The bell tower received much needed repairs to its bell louvers and exterior stonework. Many new stone pinnacles and capitals, produced by Atlas Cut Stone, grace the iconic steeple once more.

In October 2016, Archbishop Vigneron entrusted the parish to the care of the Institute of Christ the King. Canon Michael Stein, Pastor of St. Joseph Oratory and member of the religious order, guided the parish through the repairs and likened the community to the wider “revival” in Detroit.

“The casual onlooker often says Detroit is back, to which Detroiters commonly reply, ‘Detroit never left.’ In a similar fashion many people are remarking that St. Joseph is back. We too respond, ‘St. Joseph never left.’”

One individual embodies this heroic perseverance in particular: Patrick Degens, a long-time parishioner who has given a devoted nine decades of service to the parish community. During the Sept. 16 press conference, Canon Michael Stein will officially recognize Mr. Degens with the parish’s Decades of Dedication Award.

Fundraising continues for needed repairs to the building’s historic stonework, roofing and other critical repairs. Anyone seeking additional information, or desiring to make a donation, is encouraged to join the Living Legacy online at HistoricRenewal.com or on social media: @StJosephOratory on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Those wishing to see the historic restorations in person are invited to attend Mass anytime with the parish. The public also is welcome to attend the parish’s Annual Oktoberfest, including a preview party on Saturday, Sept. 21st from 5-8 p.m. and all-day festivities on Sunday, Sept. 22.



ST. JOSEPH ORATORY • INSTITUTE OF CHRIST THE KING
1828 JAY STREET, DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48207
OFFICE: 313.784.9152
EMAIL: SJDETROIT@INSTITUTE-CHRIST-KING.ORG