



March 8, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph Oratory,

Having witnessed firsthand over these last three years the vibrant renewal taking place in your parish under the pastoral care of the Canons of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the dedication of your priests, and for you, the parishioners whose sacrificial investment in your parish has allowed this spiritual springtime to come to fruition. I have heard from many of you that you are invigorated by the rich liturgical life at the Parish, and seeing that souls are flocking to St. Joseph Oratory, it is evident to me that it is fulfilling its mission as a personal parish for those seeking the Extraordinary Form of the Sacraments. I commend you, the parishioners of St. Joseph, for your fervor and commitment, and want to encourage you and assure you of my prayers for you as you strive to become incarnations of the Institute's motto, "living the truth in charity" (Eph 4:15).

Over the last couple of years, as I continue to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in our work to unleash the Gospel, I have been drawn often to a thought that Pope Francis expresses in his work on evangelization, *Evangelii Gaudium*. There he observes that expressions of popular piety – such as novenas, pilgrimages to shrines, and other observances – often provide the faithful an opportunity to be missionaries: sharing their faith by inviting their family, friends and neighbors to participate with them in their favorite devotions. Our Holy Father exhorts forthrightly: "Let us not stifle or presume to control this missionary power! . . . Underlying popular piety, as a fruit of the inculturated Gospel, is an active evangelizing power which we must not underestimate: to do so would be to fail to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit" (§124, 126).

It is in this context that I joyfully share with you the news of the establishment of your parish as an Archdiocesan Shrine. Over the ages, countless men and women have flocked to St. Joseph – the patron of fathers, workers, and indeed of the whole church – and found him to be a constant and reliable friend and protector. I know this is expressed in a particular way in your parish through the perpetual novena to St. Joseph on Wednesdays. With this designation, we recognize and celebrate the reality that the St. Joseph Shrine has been and will continue to be a sacred place of pilgrimage and a source of deep devotion to St. Joseph.

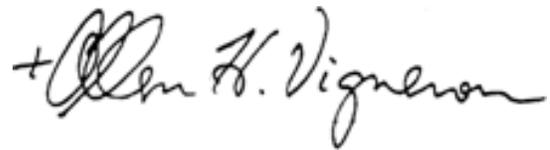
**UNLEASH THE GOSPEL**

In celebration of this occasion, I invite you to join me at 5 p.m. on March 19 as I read the official decree and subsequently lead the parish and visiting pilgrims in the annual St. Joseph Day procession here. After the procession, at 7 p.m., a Solemn High Mass will be offered at the Shrine.

It is fitting that this designation comes during the 150th year of St. Joseph's patronage of the Universal Church, as decreed by His Holiness, Pope Pius IX. As with the recent news about the Basilica of Ste. Anne, I hope that this recognition will stir up in our hearts a renewed commitment to the friendship in Christ we share with the saints, and challenge each of us to consider how we can deepen and foster these friendships.

Please be assured of my prayers for you, as I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Allen H. Vigneron". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron  
Archbishop of Detroit