



To: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

From: Fr. Michael M. DeLaney, C.S.C.
Rector, Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal

Date: February 2, 2024

SUBJECT: 4th CENTENARY OF THE DEDICATION TO CANADA TO SAINT JOSEPH

Excellencies,

I send you my prayers and greetings from Saint Joseph's Oratory in Montréal.

The year 2024 will be significant for the Canadian Church and the Saint-Joseph Oratory of Mount Royal as we mark the 4th centenary of the dedication to (what is now) Canada to Saint Joseph!

We know that the consecration took place in 1624, but we do not know the exact day of this event. However, if we refer to the work *Devotion to Saint Joseph in New France**, page 6, the consecration would probably have taken place between July 16 and August 15, 1624.

In 1834, Gregory XVI definitively approved the vow of 1624 and Saint Joseph officially became the first Patron of Canada; he was honored as patron and protector of the Church of Canada, before being declared patron and protector of the universal Church by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1870.

As a world center of devotion to Saint Joseph, the Saint-Joseph Oratory of Mount Royal undoubtedly has a key role to play in this 4th centenary anniversary.

The Oratory also has other moments to celebrate in 2024:

- The first centenary of the blessing of the cornerstone of the basilica.
- The 150th anniversary of the perpetual vows of Brother André, founder of the Oratory, pronounced on February 2, 1874.

One of the strong points of Brother André's spirituality is to lead pilgrims to Saint Joseph: "Go to Joseph".

In this context, our leadership team of the Oratory believes that it is appropriate to open the doors of the Oratory even more widely to all the dioceses of Canada for a period of 7 months of celebration. The opening of the year of the 400-year pilgrimage would be from March 10, which marks the beginning of the annual novena dedicated to Saint Joseph, until October 19, the date of the foundation of the Oratory.

With the collaboration of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, which has always supported the mission of the Oratory in the Church and society, all dioceses, all parishes and all religious communities would be invited to make a pilgrimage to the Oratory during this period, accompanied or not by a priest or a bishop. The planning of these celebrations would be to be determined between the pilgrims' companions and the Reception and Pilgrimage Office of the Oratory.

We hope you will be interested in having a group or groups from your diocese join us during this important year dedicated to the anniversary of the patronage of Saint Joseph for all of Canada.

May Saint Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church and Patron of Canada, watch over you and protect the nation always.

The Lord's blessings to each of you.

I send these sincerest greetings with much wishes for much Peace.


(Rev.) Michael M. DeLaney, C.S.C.
Rector

*<http://histoiresainteducanada.ca/la-consecration-du-canada-a-saint-joseph/>