



MEDIA Advisory

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Our Lady of Fatima Chapel in Riverview named Archdiocesan Shrine

Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron announced today that he has granted the title of Archdiocesan Shrine to [Our Lady of Fatima Chapel](#) in Riverview, in recognition of the chapel's service as a popular place of pilgrimage and its abundant availability of the sacraments.

The chapel and adjacent St. Joseph Catholic bookstore, at 18637 Ray Street in Riverview, is under the care of volunteers of the Detroit Archdiocesan Division of the [World Apostolate of Fatima](#), whose mission is to help people learn, live, and spread the messages of Our Lady of Fatima in communion with the Church and in concert with the New Evangelization. Father John Hedges, pastor of St. Stephen Parish in New Boston, serves as the Detroit apostolate's spiritual director and rector of the Shrine, celebrating Masses, offering the Sacrament of Penance, and conducting other Catholic devotions.

“With its designation as an archdiocesan shrine, we recognize that Our Lady of Fatima Shrine will continue its service as a sacred place of pilgrimage, a source of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, and a welcoming place for all the faithful seeking lives of peace and holiness,” Archbishop Vigneron said.

The Catholic devotion to Our Lady of Fatima began in May 1917 when the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared in Fatima, Portugal, to three shepherd children: Lucia dos Santos, age 10, and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, ages nine and seven. Visitors to the new shrine have the opportunity to venerate relics of the Fatima saints and enjoy the beauty of stained-glass windows and life-size statues depicting Our Lady of Fatima's apparitions. Pilgrims also can attend Mass and participate in other Catholic devotions.

To mark the new shrine's designation, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit Gerard Battersby will publicly read the Archbishop's decree and celebrate Mass at 7 p.m. October 13 at the shrine. The proclamation and Mass coincide with the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima and the 103rd anniversary of the “Miracle of the Sun,” when over 70,000 people witnessed a solar phenomenon of the sun dancing in the sky and unexplainable spiritual and physical cures among many of those gathered in Fatima.

All are welcome at Mass but seating inside the shrine is limited due to capacity restrictions. All visitors and media are required to wear a mask and observe social distancing procedures.

"Our desire is for the faithful who visit Our Lady of Fatima Shrine to receive the same joy and spiritual blessings experienced by millions of pilgrims who visit Fatima, Portugal each year," Father Hedges said. "We are deeply grateful to Archbishop Vigneron for establishing Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in reflection of its service as a destination site and sacred place for all those seeking a closer relationship with our Blessed Mother."

The World Apostolate of Fatima was founded in 1947 as The Blue Army. The Detroit chapter later was established in September 1955 by Father George Leszczynski of St Andrew Parish in Detroit. The lay-apostolate moved to its current location in 2006 and Cardinal Adam Maida, former Archbishop of Detroit, designated it a private chapel on April 4 of that year.

Our Lady of Fatima Shrine is now one of three shrines encompassing an entire campus in the Archdiocese of Detroit, along with St. Joseph Shrine in Detroit and the Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica in Royal Oak, which was designated in 1998 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and thus will continue to hold a preeminent place in the Archdiocese of Detroit. In addition to these three campus shrines, there are several smaller shrines in locations throughout the Archdiocese, including a Shrine to St. Anne inside the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit and a Shrine to St. John Paul II within Our Lady of Orchard Lake Chapel.

Our Lady of Fatima Shrine and the adjacent St. Joseph bookstore is open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m., with Masses celebrated at 7 p.m. on the First Friday of each month, 8 a.m. on the First Saturday of each month, and 7 p.m. on the 13th of each month from May to October in honor of Our Lady of Fatima. The Rosary is prayed before each Mass and confessions are offered on First Friday and First Saturday before Masses. More information about Our Lady of Fatima Shrine is available online at fatimashrinedetroit.org. Group pilgrimages may be arranged by calling (313) 320-7887. Please note that capacity restrictions are in place due to the ongoing pandemic.

Notes to media:

- Father John Hedges, spiritual director and rector of the Shrine, is available for interviews about this new designation. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Michelle St. Pierre, volunteer with the Detroit Archdiocesan Division of the World Apostolate of Fatima, at stpierre.michelle@aod.org or (313) 805-1408; or Holly Fournier, associate director of communications, at (313) 237-5802 or fournier.holly@aod.org.
- Archbishop Vigneron also shared the news in a letter to the faithful, which can be viewed [here](#).
- More information about Our Lady of Fatima Shrine is available online at fatimashrinedetroit.org.

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