



Press Release

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Major Development Project Relunched at Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal

Montréal, June 6, 2016 – The management team at Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal is thrilled by the joint announcement today by the Québec and Canadian governments, as well as by the announcement by the City of Montréal, which confirmed a total financial support of nearly \$63 million for its major renovation and development project.

“This major renovation and development project will enable us to significantly improve our visitor and service facilities to better meet the needs of Montrealers and visitors from all over the world,” said Father Claude Grou, CSC, Rector of Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal. “When this project is complete, they will be able to enjoy a greener, more accessible, more user-friendly site. Moreover, the new Observatory atop the Basilica's dome – the highest window onto Montréal – will provide an exceptional tourist experience and help develop the sanctuary's full tourist potential.”

The Québec and Canadian governments have confirmed their financial support of nearly \$53 million to the Oratory for the completion of phases 2, 3 and 4 of its renovation and development project (phase 1 completed in 2009). This assistance has been granted as part of the Fonds Chantiers Canada-Québec, Grands Projets and the Programme d'Infrastructures Québec-Municipalités. This project represents a significant bequest as part of Montréal's 375th anniversary celebrations.

Moreover, the City of Montréal has announced its intention to contribute \$10 million to this project, whose total estimated costs hover near \$80 million.

Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal, with the support of its Foundation, will cover the remaining costs of nearly \$17 million, as well as any cost overruns, should these occur.

Accessibility and enhanced greenery

Phases 2 and 3 of this major project (2017-2019) include the construction of a new visitor and service pavilion, a low-rise building with roofs featuring greenery blending into Mount Royal's profile, which will offer easier access to all of the sanctuary's facilities from street level. A large, multipurpose outdoor plaza for pedestrians will also be added to the Crypt. The Oratory's carillon, the only one of its kind in Québec, will be restored and further showcased in a new structure overlooking the plaza.

The monumental garden marking the sanctuary's entrance will also be redesigned to feature fewer paved areas and more greeneries. Moreover, the lighting of all the sanctuary's areas and buildings will also be updated.

The highest window onto Montréal

The Oratory's major development project will culminate with phase 4 (2019-2021), which will feature the Oratory Museum's renovation, the reconfiguration of the Basilica's interdome area as a unique exhibition and immersive projection space, as well as the construction of an Observatory at the Basilica's skylight level (the highest point of its outer dome), 243 meters above the St. Lawrence River. These major renovations will give visitors safe access to the area between the Basilica's inner and outer domes – a rare architectural feature designed at the time of construction of the Basilica to save energy – as well as the very top of the outer dome, where the Observatory will offer a breathtaking, 360° view of Mount Royal, the City of Montréal and, weather permitting, the Laurentians and even the U.S. border.

“The reconfiguration of the Basilica's inner-dome area and addition of the Observatory will provide a unique view,” said the Rector. “Already part of the Basilica's initial plans, the Observatory will meet expectations often expressed by pilgrims and visitors from Montréal and abroad, and will most certainly become a popular attraction among tourists. This investment will add a very interesting dimension to this flagship site of our cultural, historic and religious heritage. In this sense, it will complete Saint Brother André's vision.”

Construction work for this major development project should begin in the first quarter of 2017.

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Photos and documents available upon request.

Source:

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