



Press Release

For immediate release

The Oratory welcomes a work paying homage to migrants and refugees

Montreal, November 3, 2022. - An imposing sculpture in tribute to migrants and refugees was unveiled today at Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal in the presence of dignitaries and the Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz.

Saint Joseph's Oratory, located in Montreal's multicultural district of Côte-des-Neiges, also known as the neighbourhood of nations, welcomes the sculpture **Angels Unawares** the meaning of which is in keeping with the mission of its founder, Saint Brother André, CSC. An international crossroads, the Oratory is a significant place of welcome for many people when they arrive in Canada.

The sculpture installed on the terrace depicts, huddled on a boat, a group of migrants and refugees from different origins and times. Angel wings emerge from the middle of a diverse group of people, inferring the presence of the sacred among them.

"For the realization of this sculpture, I was inspired by this excerpt from the New Testament: Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Letter to the Hebrews 13:2.) Several of my sculptures depict the sacred; they are to me visual prayers," explained Timothy Schmalz.

"We are honored to welcome this beautiful sculpture which reminds us of the duty of hospitality and solidarity with every human being. With this sculpture reflecting the situation of thousands across our world, we will be reminded each day of all those who leave their homeland in search of a better life. We will include them in our prayers in special ways," said Father Michael DeLaney, CSC, Rector of Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal.

The three-and-a-half-ton bronze sculpture, which measures 20 feet long by 12 feet high, is on loan to the Oratory for one year. With several reproductions on display, Pope Francis initially inaugurated the sculpture at St. Peter's Square in Rome in September 2019, on the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

Artist of the divine - The sculptor, Timothy P. Schmalz, is an Ontario artist whose works can be admired in many countries. One of his most famous creations, "Homeless Jesus," depicts Christ as a vagrant sleeping on a bench. Sculpture that speaks the language of humanity.

About Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal

Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal is the largest shrine in the world dedicated to Saint Joseph, serving as guardian of a precious material and spiritual heritage. It receives some two million pilgrims and visitors each year, making it a unique spiritual and tourist destination and an unmistakable symbol of Montreal. Open to the world, it is a place of peace and unconditional welcoming.

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Photos and documents available upon request

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