



Press Release

For immediate release

Official opening of Holy Family Plaza with the inauguration of the public artwork by artist Marie-France Brière and the presentation of the restored carillon.

Montréal, September 12, 2025 – Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal officially inaugurates the Holy Family Plaza in continuation of the opening of the new Marcel Lalonde Reception Pavilion.

Holy Family Plaza is a pedestrian area built on the roof of the Reception Pavilion. It is a space to experience and to share—a place to admire, reflect, connect with others, or simply savor the beauty of a moment. Rising like a suspended haven above the city, it offers a privileged view that opens up the horizon and lifts the gaze.

"It is a joy to inaugurate this Holy Family Plaza. The Holy Family inspires us with values of welcome, fidelity, and communion—just as Mary and Joseph did in the manger for the shepherds and the Magi. May this plaza become a place of fraternity and sharing, where people meet in simplicity and joy, and where the spirit of peace and solidarity always finds a home. We invite you to discover this new space, which is a continuation of our shrine—uniting beauty and heritage, in respect for the legacy left to us by Saint Brother André," emphasized Bernard Antoine, CSC, Rector of Saint Joseph's Oratory.

The square features a monumental work of art by visual artist Marie-France Brière, titled *Rhizomes*. The sculpture was created following a public art competition held as part of Quebec's Policy on the Integration of the Arts into Architecture, under the Ministry of Culture and Communications. The jury overwhelmingly selected Ms. Brière's artistic proposal.

"This work invites people to move through a space of relational architecture. A small devotional object spotted in one of the Oratory museum's display cases—a white cord with knots—served as the main inspiration for my approach to this project. This rhizomatic form emerges: the knots become bulbs or tubers, the structure is multidirectional and polymorphous. From the idea of a fault line and the excavation of the rock arises this round, flexible cable-vein, traversed by seven knotted forms—most of them seemingly suspended in air," explained Marie-France Brière.

The new plaza also incorporates the imposing campanile that houses the fully restored 62-bell carillon. Initially intended for the Eiffel Tower, the carillon was loaned to Saint Joseph's Oratory in 1955 for its 50th anniversary and was later donated by generous benefactors. As the only traditional carillon in Quebec, it is a significant part of the province's cultural heritage. The restoration has greatly improved its performance, and the addition of six new bells has expanded its musical range.

"This year, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the first carillon recital at Saint Joseph's Oratory! This new installation brings new life to this unique instrument crafted by Paccard. It is both a privilege and a great joy for me to share my passion here. The music of the carillon brings me to the threshold of the eternal, alongside Saint Joseph and Saint Brother André," said Andrée-Anne Doane, Titular Carillonist of the Oratory.



The Grand Development Project

The Reception Pavilion marks a key milestone in the Grand Development Project, valued at a total of \$150 million. This ambitious initiative includes the reconfiguration of the gardens, the development of the museum space, and the enhancement of the Basilica's dome. These large-scale works have been made possible in part thanks to financial contributions of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada which contributed \$21,999,500 to the project under the Major Projects component of the Building Canada Fund and the Government of Quebec, which contributed \$30,800,500 through the Quebec-Municipalities Infrastructure Program. The City of Montreal (\$10 million) and numerous private donors, including the Friends of Brother André and religious communities, also contributed to financing the work. The subsequent and final phase, whose design is nearing completion and includes access to the highest viewpoint in Montreal, is expected to begin this year despite funding challenges related to rising material and labor costs.

This modernization, which expands services for pilgrims and visitors, reaffirms Saint Joseph's Oratory's status as a major tourist attraction. It continues to preserve its heritage and history while contributing to the economic development of the metropolis for the benefit of present and future generations.

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For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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