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Cathedral of St. Joseph rededicated

by **Cameron Gerber** | *May 6, 2023 at 4:00 a.m.*

Julie Smith/News Tribune Fr. Greg Meystrik, foreground left, enters in a procession of priests, bishops, archbishops, deacons and seminarians Friday at the Cathedral of St. Joseph. Meystrik grew up in this parish and was part of the long procession as dozens of participants from the Jefferson City and neighboring diocese took part in the rededication of Cathedral of St. Joseph. The church has undergone a major renovation and the rededication ceremony was set to coincide with the 49th anniversary of the original dedication.

The Most Rev. W. Shawn McKnight, bishop of the Diocese of Jefferson City, addressed a large crowd at the rededication of the Cathedral of St. Joseph with a message about the church and its people.

"The liturgy of dedicating a church and altar for God's service review reveals just how important the physical structure of the cathedral is to our faith and mission to evangelize," he said. "Catholic churches stand as sacred symbols, as important reminders to the whole community of the presence of God and the presence of the real church -- that we're the people who are the living stones of God's building."

McKnight delivered the homily Friday at the Rite of Rededication for the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Jefferson City, marking the unveiling of new artwork and liturgical features.

While the time has come to unveil the fruits of the approximately $15 million project, McKnight noted there was more on the horizon: Bronze doors and bronze reliefs have yet to come, and there is still stained glass and a new pipe organ to be installed.

While the project remains a work in progress, McKnight reminded listeners that they were as well.

"Just as this renovated cathedral is still unfinished, so we are imperfect in living out the mystery of Christ," he said. "We are still on the journey of conversion to living the light of Christ in a world that desperately needs it. We too as individuals, and at times corporately as the church, are still works in progress when it comes to our communion with God and one another."

Friday's mass featured the anointing, incensation and lighting of the altar and the church, with the presiding celebrant role filled by the Most Rev. Christoph Pierre, the titular archbishop of Gunela and apostolic nuncio to the U.S.

"Therefore, oh Lord, we beseech you: Graciously pour forth from heaven your sanctifying power upon this church and upon this altar, to make this forever a holy place with a table always prepared for the sacrifice of Christ," Pierre prayed.

The renovation project addressed mechanical and accessibility issues within the structure, also focusing on enhancing the church's spiritual functionality and hospitality, according to a news release.

It was hoped the project would be complete earlier in 2023, but shortages and supply chain issues pushed the rededication to May. Diocese leadership pointed out that May 5 is a "providential date" for it -- the cathedral was first dedicated on May 5, 1974.

Around 700 people joined local Christian leaders as St. Joseph Cathedral was the home for vespers Thursday night for the first time since its remodel began more than a year ago.

The cathedral is the spiritual home for the more than 75,000 Roman Catholics who reside in the diocese, which covers 38 counties in Central and Northeastern Missouri. The Cathedral remains the mother church of all the parish's churches. It holds the seat of authority for the successor to the apostles (the bishop). All priests of the diocese draw their ministry from the bishop. He draws his ministry from Jesus Christ.

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The public is invited to tour the Cathedral, 2305 W. Main St., during an open house from 1-4 p.m. Sunday. McKnight previously said individual tours may be requested by contacting the parish.

McKnight said the rededication was more than a commemoration of the building, but a reminder of what it represents to the church and the world.

"What we celebrate today is not simply the blessing of a physical structure, but our renewal of dedication to God, through our belief in the teachings of the Catholic Church, through our charitable works, and through our sacramental life," he said. "Although the people are the living stones of the true Church of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit, this physical structure is nonetheless a necessary means of evangelizing in a very real sense. This church still speaks loudly of our family, especially in its beauty, and is a place of prayer and devotion."

Julie Smith/News Tribune Led by Kevin Myers, choir and orchestra members from across mid Missouri provide instrumental and vocal performances for Friday's rededication of the Cathedral of St. Joseph. Although the renovation is not complete, the ceremony date was set to coincide with the 49th anniversary of the original dedication in 1974. Myers is director of music and liturgy at the Newman Center in Columbia.

Julie Smith/News Tribune Most Reverend Christophe Pierre rubs6 chrism oil on the new marble altar at Cathedral of St. Joseph during Friday's Mass of Rededication following over a year of renovation. Pierre serves as the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America and visited Jefferson City for this solemn celebration.

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Julie Smith/News Tribune As Fr. Jeremy Secrist, pastor of St. Peter Church, at left, looks on, Bishop Shawn McKnight makes a Sign of the Cross on an interior pillar during Friday's Mass of Rededication at Cathedral of St. Joseph.

Julie Smith/News Tribune A large incense bowl placed on the altar at Cathedral of St. Joseph releases a steady smoke during the blessing of the altar at Cathedral of St. Joseph Friday. The church celebrated it's 49th anniversary with a rededication following a major renovation.

Julie Smith/News Tribune Smoke from burning incense filled the church and sanctuary Friday during rededication of Cathedral of St. Joseph following over a year of renovation at the west side Catholic Church.

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Julie Smith/News Tribune Most Reverend Christophe Pierre concecrates the host during Friday's Mass of Rededication at Cathedral of St. Joseph. Pierre is the titular archbishop of Gunela and Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America and served as the presiding celebrant at the mass. Standing at right is John Gaydos, Bishop Emeritus of the Jefferson ity Diocese and at left is Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop Emeritus of St. Louis.

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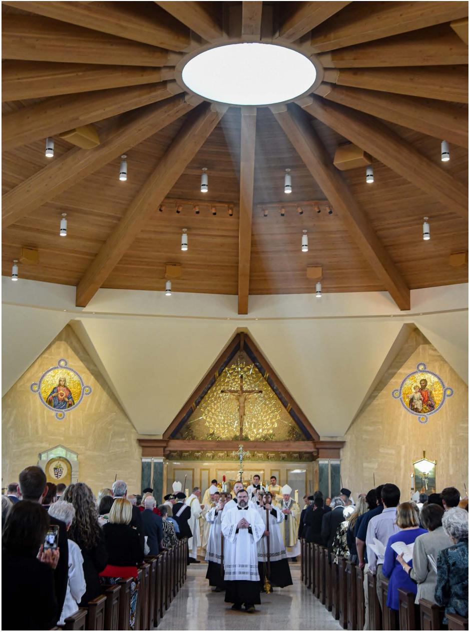

Julie Smtih/News Tribune Following Friday's rededication ceremony at Cathedral of St. Joseph, the multitude of priests, deacons, bishops, seminarians and Knights of Columbus processed to the narthex of the church, followed by attendees to the ceremony.

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