



MEDIA Advisory

Media Contacts:

For the Archdiocese of Detroit:

Michelle St. Pierre

313-805-1408 or stpierre.michelle@aod.org

For The Catholic Initiative:

Michelle Martinez Bassett

313-965-3010 or MMB@BassettBassett.com

Transformational Partnership Between Sainte Anne Parish In Detroit And The Catholic Initiative Nonprofit To Facilitate \$30 Million Restoration Of Basilica, Create \$20 Million Endowment

DETROIT, Mich. – March 9, 2025 – Ste. Anne Parish in Detroit and The Catholic Initiative, a nonprofit created by The Pulte Family Charitable Foundation, announced a transformative partnership to restore the historic Basilica of Ste. Anne and secure its future as a place of sacred worship and historical landmark in southeast Michigan. The announcement was made to parishioners on Sunday, March 9, by Monsignor Charles Kosanke, Rector of the Basilica and Moderator of the Priests *In Solidum* responsible for the parish.

The Catholic Initiative will embark upon a \$30 million rehabilitation of the Basilica building and property and create a \$20 million endowment to provide for future capital needs and operational support in perpetuity, including repairs, routine maintenance, and the financial support of a priest on site. A significant part of the restoration funding will come from a \$111 million commitment the Pulte Family Charitable Foundation announced today toward providing funding for its ***“Legacy of Hope”*** Projects. The remaining funds will be raised from donors across the U.S.

Archbishop Emeritus of Detroit Allen H. Vigneron expressed his gratitude for the partnership, a creative solution to the familiar problem of parishes struggling to maintain their historic worship spaces.

“Due to the Basilica’s age and significance, Ste. Anne Parish would have needed to enter a state of perpetual fundraising, often at the expense of its missionary efforts, to undertake the extensive renovations and costly maintenance work required,” he said. “I am deeply grateful to the Pulte Family Charitable Foundation and The Catholic Initiative for answering the call to help preserve the Basilica and thereby strengthen the parish’s ability to further its missionary presence in the community.”

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As part of this innovative Vatican-approved partnership, ownership of the church building and campus will shift to a newly formed nonprofit organization created solely for this purpose, with The Catholic Initiative assuming all responsibilities associated with renovating and maintaining the property going forward. The agreement legally ensures that the Ste. Anne Parish community retains exclusive and permanent rights to use the property as a Catholic parish, most especially the Basilica. This is expressed, in part, through a 200-year renewable lease.

“Ste. Anne is more than a building; it is a community hub, a town within a city,” said Kevin Doyle, President of The Catholic Initiative and COO of the Pulte Family Charitable Foundation. “This innovative partnership ensures the Basilica of Ste. Anne de Detroit, a cornerstone of the community, will continue to thrive for generations to come.

“To our knowledge, this is the first time in United States history that the Vatican has approved a shift in ownership of a parish church to a dedicated nonprofit,” Doyle continued. “We are pioneering a new model of investing in vibrant churches, schools, and parishes, securing their long-term viability and strengthening their ability to serve their communities. We hope we can shift the conversation for priests and parishioners—from one of constant fundraising to one of renewal, sustainability, and the needs of the community.”

Restoration of the Basilica is expected to take three years. In addition to the complete restoration of the basilica and parish facilities, the project will include a new outdoor pavilion, enhanced walkways, landscaping and lighting, and a prayer wall for reflection. The \$50 million restoration and endowment secure the building's preservation, but also its ongoing operational needs, freeing up priests and church leaders to focus on providing spiritual guidance, pastoral care, and fostering a sense of community among the parishioners. Archbishop-designate Edward J. Weisenburger, who will be installed as the sixth Archbishop of Detroit on March 18, also expressed his enthusiastic support of the effort.

“I am both honored and inspired to continue the legacy of Archbishop Vigneron’s leadership through my support of this partnership between Ste. Anne Parish and The Catholic Initiative. It is a remarkable example of how creative and faithful stewardship can ensure the preservation of our sacred heritage while advancing our mission,” Archbishop-designate Weisenburger said. “I look forward to seeing this collaboration bear fruit for the glory of God and provide the resources needed to sustain the Basilica of Ste. Anne for generations to come.”

About Ste. Anne de Detroit:

The parish community of Ste. Anne was founded on July 26, 1701—just two days after Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac and his companions, including two Catholic priests, established the settlement of Fort Ponchartrain du Détroit—making it the second oldest continuously operating parish in the United States. The current church building, located at 1000 St. Anne Street in Detroit, is the eighth church constructed for the use of the parish community, consecrated on October 30, 1887. The building was granted the title of “minor basilica” by Pope Francis in 2020, in recognition of its heightened liturgical activity and its architectural stature. It stands today as the home of an active parish, shrine, historical treasure, and landmark in a revitalized, multi-ethnic, bilingual neighborhood in southeast Detroit.

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About The Catholic Initiative:

The Catholic Initiative is an innovative, Vatican-approved funding model created to restore and endow vibrant Catholic churches, schools, and parishes for generations to come. The model is the first of its kind in the world in faith-based fundraising and shifts ownership of church buildings and campuses to a newly created nonprofit organization created solely for this purpose, with The Catholic Initiative assuming responsibility for renovating and maintaining the property going forward, while the parishes or schools retain exclusive and permanent rights to use the property, without risk of vital funds being redirected to other purposes. The model also creates a dedicated endowment to guarantee a reliable, steady income stream to support churches, schools, and parishes long into the future. Find out more at www.thecatholicinitiative.org.

About The Pulte Family Charitable Foundation:

Guided by the belief in the inherent dignity of all people, the Pulte Family Charitable Foundation works to meet the basic human needs of the most marginalized members of the human family, including socioeconomically disadvantaged youth; the aged; persons with physical, emotional, and mental disabilities; and those with the fewest material resources.

In addition to the above, the Foundation seeks to serve religious communities and correlative organizations of Judeo-Christian beliefs. To this end, the Foundation strives to enact through its grantees the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; care for captives; shelter the homeless; visit the sick, and assist the mourning.

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