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Oct. 14 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Abp. Vigneron to Hold Press Conference on St. Damien Relic

As the Detroit archdiocese hosts a relic of the newly canonized Saint Damien of Molokai, Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron will address members of the media at 8:15 a.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 14, at the offices of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. The press conference also will include the pastor and representatives from Pontiac's St. Damien of Molokai Parish, which was named recently in honor of the saint.

A relic of Saint Damien – whose canonization at the Vatican on Sunday has been widely publicized in local, national and international media – will be at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Tuesday evening, Oct. 13, and all day Wednesday, Oct. 14. Saint Damien was a Belgian-born priest known for his ministry to those with Hansen's disease (or leprosy) in a quarantined Hawaiian community in the 19th century. He is considered to be a patron of those with Hansen's disease, and to those who have AIDS or are HIV-positive. The relic to be hosted at the Cathedral is a bone from Saint Damien's heel.

Veneration of relics is a church custom that dates back to the time of the apostles, when early Christians would show reverence to the remains of martyrs. Catholics believe it to be a way to grow closer to holy men and women who intercede for them in heaven.

More resources on St. Damien of Molokai and the relic visit to Detroit can be found online at www.aodonline.org/stdamien.

The Cathedral is located at 9844 Woodward Avenue in Detroit. For the press conference, enter the Cathedral offices off the parking lot. Media inquiries can be directed to the Archdiocese Communications Office at (313) 237-5943. The attached page includes a detailed schedule of services surrounding the relic visit.

****Reporters, photographers and videographers are invited to cover the cathedral liturgies and silent veneration. If you are sending a journalist, photographer or camera crew, we respectfully ask that they respect the silent and prayerful nature of the events. Please heed any directions you may receive from church personnel at the cathedral.*

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Schedule for St. Damien of Molokai Relic Visit

The following is a schedule of services surrounding the relic of St. Damien of Molokai, to take place at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, 9844 Woodward Ave. in Detroit:

Tuesday, Oct. 13

- 7 p.m.** **Reception of Saint Damien's relic into the Cathedral**
The relic will be carried with ceremony into Blessed Sacrament Cathedral.
- 7:30 p.m.** **Vespers service in presence of the relic**
Following the reception of the relic, a Scripture-based prayer service will be led by Cathedral rector Msgr. Michael LeFevre.
- 8-9 p.m.** **Relic on display for silent veneration**
The relic will be in front of the Cathedral's altar and the faithful will be welcome to approach in prayerful silence for veneration.
- 9 p.m.** **The Cathedral doors close**

Wednesday, Oct. 14

The Cathedral will be open from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. for silent veneration of the relic. Veneration may be suspended during the services

- 7:15 a.m.** **Mass with His Excellency, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron**
- 8:15 a.m.** **Press conference with Archbishop Vigneron**
The Archbishop and representatives of the newly named St. Damien of Molokai Parish in Pontiac will speak about St. Damien.
- 1 p.m.** **Scripture service for priests and religious**
Retired Detroit auxiliary Bishop Moses Anderson will lead a scripture service for clergy and religious. The public is welcome.
- 3 p.m.** **Mass with the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick**
Detroit auxiliary Bishop Francis Reiss will preside. During Mass, priests will be available for those who wish to receive the sacrament.
- 7 p.m.** **Mass for the faithful of the Archdiocese**
Detroit auxiliary Bishop Daniel Flores presiding.
- 9 p.m.** **Cathedral doors close**