

## SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH OF ALBANY TO BE DECLARED THE FIRST DIOCESAN SHRINE.

Last November 16, 2025, His Excellency Most Reverend George Kolodziej, SDS, DD declared the first Diocesan Shrine in the Diocese of Bunbury, Western Australia.

The promulgation or decree for the declaration of Saint Joseph Church as a Diocesan Shrine was read and presented by Bishop George to the parish priest Fr. Vincent Comple, OSJ, and to the Catholic faithful of Albany. The Rite for the Solemn Declaration will take place on March 22, 2026, 9:30 in the morning. Incidentally it will happen within the bicentennial celebration of the city of Albany.

As a Diocesan Shrine of Saint Joseph, it will be a centre of pilgrimage for the whole diocese for a diligent proclamation of the Word of God, promotion of liturgical life especially through the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. (cf. canon 1230-1233) This will also be a centre for the Josephite Spirituality promoting devotion to Saint Joseph as patron of family, of workers, of migrants, of unborn children, of youth and of universal church. A partial indulgence will be granted to everyone who will visit and pray during the Solemnity of Saint Joseph every March 19 and on the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker every May 1.

The first Catholic Church in Albany was built around 1855-1859 on the western side of Aberdeen Street. However, the current St. Joseph's Catholic Church was constructed later, with its foundation stone laid in 1877 on the eastern side of Aberdeen Street. The church was consecrated in 1878.

Interestingly, the Catholic community in Albany had begun even earlier, with Lawrence Mooney, an ex-soldier, holding prayer meetings on Mount Clarence in 1835. The first Mass was celebrated at Mass Rock (also known as Balancing Rocks) in 1843 by Fr. Brady, Fr. Joostens, and Catechist Patrick O'Reilly. Today, the Albany Catholic Parish is part of the Diocese of Bunbury and is served by the Oblates of St Joseph since 2009.

There will be prelude celebration on Friday March 20 with Holy Hour at 4:30 then to be followed by Healing-Mass at 5:30. On March 21, there will be a pilgrimage walk from the site of the Mass in Western Australia (Mass Rock) tracing the religious historical places in Albany.