



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rev. Francis J. “Rocky” Hoffman appointed as President and Rector of National Shrine

CHAMPION, Wisconsin- Bishop David L. Ricken, 12th Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay, has formally announced the appointment of the Rev. Francis J. “Rocky” Hoffman as the president and fifth rector of The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, the first and only Church-approved Marian apparition site in the United States.

The appointment comes during a remarkable season of growth and grace at The Shrine, marked by the opening of the cause for sainthood of Servant of God Adele Brice, record participation in the Walk to Mary, and as The Shrine prepares to welcome thousands of pilgrims for the Solemnity Mass of Our Lady of Champion on October 9.

“‘Fr. Rocky’, as he is more commonly known, has deep roots throughout our diocese and across the nation, and has long been a devoted champion of The Shrine. We are blessed that he joins us at a time when his more than 16 years of executive experience and gifts as a faith leader will draw many more people to Jesus Christ through His Blessed Mother,” said Bishop David L. Ricken.

Fr. Rocky will continue his work in media evangelization as CEO and Chairman of the Board of Relevant Radio while answering Our Lady’s call to serve in this new, additional but distinct ministry at The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion.

Fr. Hoffman said, “It is my hope that every baptized Catholic in America and Canada, and any other person of good will, make a pilgrimage to this Shrine at least once in their life, and experience the life changing graces of a good confession, as well as the mercy of God through the powerful intercession of Our Lady of Champion. This is the only Church approved apparition of the Blessed Mother in the United States, so we all need to make the most of it.”

Rev. Anthony Stephens, CPM, who has faithfully served as rector since 2024, will transition into a new role at The Shrine as Director of Sacramental Life and Pastoral Care of Souls.

“Fr. Tony and his fellow Fathers of Mercy will continue to provide for the sacramental needs of The Shrine, celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, and guiding the liturgies,” said Bishop Ricken.

“I am grateful to His Excellency for entrusting me with my new appointment. I am honored to continue my ministry at The Shrine, serving alongside Fr. Rocky and my fellow Father of Mercy priests, Fr. Nathan Mudd and Fr. Zachery Feldker,” said Fr. Anthony Stephens, CPM.

“Although my title is changing, my commitment to The Shrine and its pilgrims remains the same. The Fathers of Mercy have a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother, and we desire to minister the Sacraments to all those who are in need of God’s mercy. My new role allows me to continue living out my vocation as a Father of Mercy, ministering to pilgrims who have come to Champion to pray at Our Lady’s Shrine.”

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