

“Motown and the Turbocharged Church”

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That’s how George Weigel, biographer of Pope St. John Paul, sees us, the Church in Detroit after Synod 16. His is a well-informed opinion. Weigel is a distinguished scholar of Catholic studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, and author of *Evangelical Catholicism*. He sees the promise of Archbishop Vigneron’s *Unleash the Gospel* in ways we are just coming to appreciate. Weigel wrote that the “... people of the Archdiocese of Detroit have faced the facts: Catholicism-by-osmosis,” (i.e., us becoming Catholic because our families are Catholic), “... is over in America” (firstthings.com). Weigel praised “the Detroit process” that prepares us to live a “missionary discipleship,” a process characterized by an intense period of prayer, lay involvement, encounters with Jesus, and that “faced squarely the challenges of ... witnessing to [the Gospel] in a hostile cultural environment.” Others across the country writing in *National Catholic Reporter*, the *Catholic News Agency*, and more, are recognizing the value of the Spirit-inspired initiative we have in *Unleash the Gospel* (e.g., see unleashthegospel.org/news.html).

Tim Glemkowski of L’Alto Catholic Institute, a group promoting the New Evangelization around Chicago, wrote with enthusiasm about the vision for Detroit in *Unleash the Gospel*, and with gratitude for its “encouragement that the Church truly can become effective at forming missionary disciples.” He praised the accessible language of a Letter “to be read by, and inspiring to, normal ‘in-the-pew’ Catholics.” He hopes *Unleash the Gospel* will show “a path to renewal for all of the dioceses of the Church in America” (laltocatholic.com/news/detroit).

George Weigel also concluded that “Motown may no longer be the epicenter of the global automobile industry. The Archdiocese of Detroit, however, is well on its way to becoming a shining model of how to gather and organize a local Church for the New Evangelization.”

Have you had a chance to see what the excitement is all about? Begin reading *Unleash the Gospel* today. Watch this column and the STM website for brief comments that may help us see how relevant its vision and action steps are to us, our families, our parish, and our community. See: stthomasmoretroy.org/unleash-the-gospel

Also, follow the series Archbishop Vigneron began last week in the *Michigan Catholic*. He is unpacking in “bite-sized chunks” how *Unleash the Gospel* calls all Catholics in the Archdiocese to become “joyful missionary disciples.”

Let us pray that together we may hear the call to become joyful missionary disciples and respond to the challenge of implementing the action steps in the Pastoral Letter, and so *Unleash the Gospel* in our parish.