

❧ A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR ❧

I announce to you a great joy...

Dear Friends,

At long last, it is my joy to announce to you the date for the **Consecration of Saint Catherine of Siena Church:**

Sunday, March 24, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

The culmination of thousands of hours of discussing, planning, designing, and building – and praying – this will truly be a **once-in-a-lifetime** experience, and I hope that as many of our parishioners as possible will be there to witness it. Please save the date, and plan to join us!

But once-in-a-lifetime... why's that?

Here's a little bit of history: when our church was built in 1957 and 1958, this diocese – as many other dioceses did at the time – had a policy whereby the church would be **blessed** when it was ready for liturgical use, but **consecrated** only when the mortgage was retired. So our church was blessed (but not consecrated) by the Most Reverend Lawrence J. Shehan, the first Bishop of Bridgeport, on September 21, 1958.



Many years thereafter, as a young child, I was present for the mortgage burning celebration which took place one afternoon in the parking lot of the church. It was in the early 1980s, and I was a student at St. Catherine of Siena School; I must have been in Kindergarten or First Grade. I remember that someone (possibly Father Monahan, who was pastor at the time) ceremonially threw the mortgage into a fire in one of those old-fashioned metal garbage cans. Then everyone cheered and clapped, and ate hot dogs and hamburgers. But, for whatever reason, the church wasn't consecrated when the mortgage was retired.

Following the renovations of 1997, I was present for the Mass in which then-Bishop Edward Egan anointed the Altar – which has now been relocated to the Memorial Chapel. He did not, however, anoint the walls of the church, and the anointing of the walls is an integral part of the consecration of a church.

All of this is to say that, believe it or not, our church actually never has been formally consecrated. Every church building is intended to be consecrated – and this can happen only once. So, when we resume liturgical worship in our church, it will be much more than moving back into our house of worship. It will be, in some ways, the culmination of over 60 years of faith, labor, and prayer.

When Bishop Caggiano celebrates Mass in our church at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 24th, it will be indeed a full **consecration** of the church – complete with the sprinkling of the walls with holy water, the depositing of the Relic of Saint Catherine of Siena within the altar, the anointing of the new Altar and the walls of the church, the lighting of the church, and the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. A Mass of Consecration is perhaps the most intricate liturgy the Church has, and one of the most beautiful. It is so filled with layers of meaning.

But because it happens only once in the history of any parish, most people never get to see it. It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime event. So I hope you will plan on being there!

There will be open seating for the Mass of Consecration. No tickets will be required. There will be reserved seating for Concelebrating Priests, Religious Sisters, and Major Donors.

We will ask everyone to be there and in their seats by 1:00 p.m. From 1:15 to 1:45 pm, I will give everyone a “tour” of the Rite of Consecration, so that you will know and understand exactly what will be happening – and why – each step of the way. There will be some prelude music after this introduction, and then the Mass of Consecration will begin promptly at 2:00 p.m. A reception will follow downstairs in the Church Hall.

We are also planning a commemorative booklet for that Mass. It will include not only the music for the Mass, but also a history of the parish, a description of each of the new liturgical and architectural elements in the church, and various other tidbits of history and special significance.

More information will follow as the event gets closer, and we will re-print the above information in the bulletin.

But for now.... Save the Date!

God bless you!
Father Marcello