

+ Maria

Dedication of the new Saint Albert's Priory – March 19, 2022

Solemnity of Saint Joseph

Dear Brothers and Sisters –

Good morning. Thank you for joining us this morning for the dedication and first Mass in our new Saint Albert's Priory. In particular, my gratitude and that of all the friars must be extended to our dear friend Bishop Gerardo Colacicco who is presiding today, blessing our building and dedicating our new chapel and altar. We are eternally grateful for your many kindnesses to us, Your Excellency, and for being with us on this Solemnity of Saint Joseph. Your ministrations today have claimed this space for God – and in honor of our Mother Mary, Saint Joseph and Saint Albert of Trapani, and we thank you. The Bishop also passed along to us the relics of the martyrs Saints Nectarius and Victoria which were inserted into our altar this morning.

I would like to begin by saying that I hope to be brief, but I don't really want to lie to you. Today is the day that the Lord has made, and for us it is a wonderful day because it brings to completion a long process of planning and building a new home, what Venerable Mother Mary Angeline Teresa McCrory would have referred to as a "new tabernacle" where the Lord will be present to His people. In fact, this is not a new tabernacle, but one that has traveled with the Carmelites from the Transfiguration Priory chapel to Brandsma Hall in Purchase and finally to Saint Albert's community chapel across the road – and now will serve us here as a privileged place where the Eucharistic Lord can dwell. While today marks a completion, it also marks a new beginning as the Saint Albert's community moves and transitions into this new home where our precious senior friars can live and thrive in a space created for their comfort and ability to live their religious lives peacefully and conveniently. This transition will take time, and with God's help, will go smoothly.

For almost a decade, this building has been in the planning and construction stages. This is the third site on the same property for Saint Albert's which was founded on September 17, 1917 – 105 years old in 2022. Many discussions went into the planning of this building and consultation with architects and the members of the Province. Great gratitude must go to Father Michael Kissane for taking up in 2015 the task left to him to move this building forward. Thank you so much, Father Michael for the many hours of work you put into this project and we are honored to have you concelebrating this first Mass in the new building. The Councils, staff members and Procurators who worked with you – and then later myself – need to know how grateful we are. Thank you to Mayor Joseph DeStefano (Happy Feast Day, Mayor Joe) who is here today with Maria Bruni the Director of Community Development and who, from the point of view of the City of Middletown, offered us nothing but support and encouragement. We are grateful to Mr. Paul Checco the architect who designed this Priory and stayed on course for many years, as well as Mr. Joe Gingras and Bobby Pinkman from Billman Ross who built this house. Thank you to all of you gentleman, and ladies for your professional and careful workmanship. Together we have faced innumerable delays and yet are now, finally, nearly, almost, not quite finished. And.. this beautiful chapel was designed and constructed by Mr. Brian Baker and his firm. Our chapel is the center of this house and we can only marvel at how beautiful the stained-glass windows from our beloved Our Lady

of the Scapular of Mount Carmel Church in Manhattan look here, and the many other artistic elements, such as the original seal of our Province in marble, and other features. The Carmelite Friars sincerely thank every artisan and construction person who contributed to this fine building.

I cannot possibly remember and include everyone who has assisted us, but I must mention a few individuals. Most sincere gratitude must go to Fathers Mark Zittle, Provincial Procurator, Francis Amodio, Prior of Saint Albert's, Thomas Zalewski, Procurator of Saint Albert's and the entire staff of the Development Office and Provincial Offices, as well as Tim Conklin and all who work in maintenance on the property – and our Brother Gregg Durham who has patiently assisted everyone. Really, without such people: Martha, Gloria, Stephanie, Lorraine, Gen, Anne, Wilma, Vincent and so many others, including Paul Denault who served as Procurator until recently, we would not be where we are today, as well as Peter Botti our Attorney and his firm. Especially to Fathers Francis, Mark and Tom, as well as Tim Conklin: there are no words to express the appreciation I have for your hard and generous work. Blessings upon you always and, as you know, in fact, things are not finished quite yet.

Thank you to Father Joseph Nguyen for the beautiful flowers today, to our professed Brothers who are serving and singing from Saint Eliseus Priory: Brothers Dominic, Joseph Mary, Nicholas and Joseph Titus, as well as Maxine our musician and Brother Schafer – all of you have added so much to this celebration. Bless you. Mr. Khiet Nguyen our videographer, gratefully, is assisting us and I can tell you that this Mass is being watched on at least three continents.

Finally – and with hearts full of gratitude – I must publicly thank our benefactors who made this new house possible. Every one of you are remembered either on the memorial wall inside the front door of the Priory, or in our donor book, or in both places. Every name and every dollar are of equal weight in the sight of God and in our hearts. Thank you to all of you. In particular, we thank our dear Father Raymond Dolan and his family which, through his Estate and Trust, contributed so much to this project. May he rest in God's good peace. Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing." Never have truer words been spoken. Without Our Lord and the help of His Holy Mother and Foster Father, we Carmelites could do nothing. But with their grace and the help of our innumerable benefactors, this new tabernacle has been built for God's glory and to strengthen our Carmelite Province of Saint Elias. Thank you.

Father Mario Esposito, O.Carm.
Prior Provincial
March 19, 2022