

Inauguration of Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel



*Saint Mary-Saint Catherine of Siena Parish
Charlestown, MA
December 10, 2011*



To those who are presently members of our community, to guests and to returning parishioners, a warm welcome!

This day has been a focus of our work and dreams for several years, and it is the fruit of the hard work, generosity, amazing enthusiasm and inspiring creativity of many members of the Parish. It is not possible to call out the many whose efforts have made this magnificent chapel come into being. And it is likely a good thing to realize that it is the work of many hands and loving hearts.

Above all, Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel is a sacred space for prayer and worship. Gatherings of all sorts will likely happen during which this local Church will grow in Grace. Here we will hear God's Word proclaimed and celebrate the Holy Mass. Here we will welcome new members of the Church in the Baptism of infants. Here couples will celebrate the Blessed Sacrament of Marriage and, from time to time in this beautiful space, the Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated.

Hours of adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament will be held here. Regularly, the Rosary will be prayed before Masses. And, times for quiet private prayer will be cherished by many. The children, parents and faculty of Good Shepherd School will come here often as children are taught about their faith and times of prayer are celebrated. Precious children will be led to a deeper awareness of the Sacred and of God's immeasurable Love through time in this Chapel.

The size and beauty of this Chapel will make it appealing for smaller groups of parishioners, such as youth, young adults, and ethnic groups to gather for prayer, contemplation and Eucharist. The lovely Parish Hall adjoining the Chapel makes it an ideal place for small functions combining prayer and social events. In reality our new chapel will soon find a special place in the heart of our faith community and we will come to love this holy place, a sacred space that more easily helps us lift our minds and hearts to God.

And so, on this most special day in our Parish, it is my particular joy to openly and enthusiastically thank all who form this community and have worked to make the dream of this Chapel a reality. And to thank Cardinal Seán who graciously made time to be with us in our joy and to celebrate the inauguration of Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel with the blessing of the altar and the ambo.

Rev. James J. Ronan, Pastor, St. Mary - St. Catherine of Siena Parish

Liturgy of the Eucharist For The Dedication of an Altar

Presider

His Eminence Seán Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap
Archbishop of Boston

Concelebrants

Revered William Carroll
Reverend James DiPerri
Reverend James J. Ronan, Pastor

Introductory Rites

The introductory rites of the Mass of the dedication of an altar take place in the usual way except that in place of the penitential rite, the bishop blesses water and with it sprinkles the people and the new altar.

Entrance Song - One Spirit one Church—#416

Blessing & Sprinkling of Water

Water of Life - #927

Gloria: - Pg. 7, # 6

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Maccabees 4:52-59

They celebrated the dedication of the altar and there was great joy among the people.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 122: Con Qué Alegria / Let Us Go Rejoicing
Con que alegria vamos a la casa del Señor. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord!

Second Reading: Acts 2:42-47

The believers devoted themselves to the communal life and to the breaking of the bread

Gospel Acclamation: Celtic Alleluia

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:23-24

Go first and be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift.

Homily: Cardinal Seán

Profession of Faith

Litany of Saints—#741

The general intercessions are omitted, since the Litany of the Saints is sung in their place.

Prayer of Dedication

The celebration of the Eucharist is the most important and the one necessary rite for the dedication of an altar. Nevertheless, in accordance with the universal tradition of the Church in both East and West, a special prayer of dedication is also said. This prayer is a sign of the intention to dedicate the altar to the Lord for all times and a petition for his blessing.

Rites of Anointing, Incensing, Covering, and Lighting the Altar

The rites of anointing, incensing, covering, and lighting the altar express in visible signs several aspects of the invisible work that the Lord accomplishes through the Church in its celebration of the divine mysteries, especially the Eucharist.

Anointing of the Altar

Anointing of the altar with chrism makes the altar a symbol of Christ, who, before all others, is and is called 'The Anointed One'; for the Father anointed him with the Holy Spirit and constituted him the High Priest so that on the altar of his body he might offer the sacrifice of his life for the salvation of all.

Incensing

Incense is burned on the altar to signify that Christ's sacrifice, there perpetuated in mystery, ascends to God as an odor of sweetness, and also to signify that the people's prayers rise up pleasing and acceptable, reaching the throne of God.

The Fragrance of Christ

Covering

The covering of the altar indicates that the Christian altar is the altar of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the table of the Lord; around it priests and people, by one and the same rite but with a difference of function, celebrate the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection and partake of his supper. For this reason the altar is prepared as the table of the sacrificial banquet and adorned as for a feast. Thus the dressing of the altar early signifies that it is the Lord's table at which all God's people joyously meet to be refreshed with divine food, namely, the body and blood of Christ sacrificed.

Christ Be our Light—#542

Liturgy of the Eucharist

After the altar has been prepared, the bishop celebrates the Eucharist, the principal and the most ancient part of the whole rite, because the celebration of the Eucharist is in the closest harmony with the rite of the dedication of an altar:

For the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice achieves the end for which the altar was erected and expresses this end by particularly clear signs.

Furthermore, the Eucharist, which sanctifies the hearts of those who receive it, in a sense consecrates the altar, as the ancient Fathers of the Church often assert: 'This altar should be an object of awe: by nature it is stone, but it is made holy when it receives the body of Christ.'

Finally, the bond closely connecting the dedication of an altar with the celebration of the Eucharist is likewise evident from the fact that the Mass for the dedication has its own preface, which is a central part of the rite itself.

Preparation of the Gifts

Preparation Hymn: Ubi Caritas - #340

Holy - Pg. 14

Mystery of Faith - Pg. 10

Doxology - Pg. 26

Lamb of God - Pg. 28

Communion Hymns - Panis Angelicus
Pan de Vida - #345

Recessional Hymn - Holy God We Praise Thy Name—#195



By nature a Parish is a faith community, a willful gathering of persons who come together to practice the greatest of all gifts received: ***faith***. At the same time, a community is a living entity! We are continually in a state of “being and becoming” all that God has called us to be.

This moment in the history of this Community is noteworthy for many reasons. The principle one is that the blending of two parish communities has happened, and this magnificent worship space is a physical expression of our unity in the most essential and appropriate ways.

To accomplish such a feat is only possible when and if people come together and, in faith and with generosity, work to make it happen. We did and it has!

As pastor of this wonderful faith community, I am grateful beyond the telling for everyone who has participated in any and every way to build up this local Church in Charlestown. This is a moment to celebrate God’s Goodness once again.

Father Ronan

Saint Catherine of Siena Parish was established in the late nineteenth century. The parish thrived as the spiritual center of Hayes Square for many years. It was a place of friends and family, of sacraments and almsgiving and of numerous religious vocations. The parishioners' love for God and for those who served them formed the underpinning of their welcoming community.

Saint Mary Parish was established in 1828, the first parish founded in the metropolitan area after the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. The Parish grew rapidly and the original Saint Mary Church was soon inadequate to meet the growing need of the community. The present Saint Mary Church was founded in 1886 and is widely regarded for its beauty and structure. Along with the other great Parishes in Charlestown, Saint Mary's was always a warm, dynamic and generous community of faith for generations of proud Townies and "newcomers."

In the early twenty-first century, due to shifting demographics and declining church attendance, a need to consolidate arose. After months of productive dialogue, representatives of both Saint Mary and Saint Catherine of Siena parishes proposed to Cardinal Seán that the two parishes merge. The Archdiocese agreed and two historic parishes were closed and one new parish was born: Saint Mary-Saint Catherine of Siena Parish. In time parishioners recognized the need to have the new parish worship together in one space and Saint Catherine of Siena Church was closed on February 10, 2008.

At the closing liturgy of Saint Catherine of Siena Church, we dreamed of a way to keep alive the essence of this beautiful structure that represented the spirit and history of worshippers of so many generations by building a chapel in the lower level of Saint Mary Church dedicated to Saint Catherine of Siena. Our dream is fulfilled with the dedication of this beautiful Chapel.

The Chapel has been painstakingly designed and built in an impressive resemblance of the original Church. Within the chapel are many items that have been removed from the church, such as pews, doors, oak wainscoting and 10 stained glass windows. Everything else, if not from the church itself, has been designed as a replica of items in the church, such as the arches, the coffered ceiling, the painting and stenciling, the altars, flooring and the tabernacle.

The future of Saint Mary-Saint Catherine of Siena Parish goes forward on solid footing, a foundation built of unselfish collaboration between two communities who loved their

respective parishes but were willing to make a sacrifice to bring forth a new vision, and it is a beautiful vision. We have a magnificent church, a glorious chapel and we have become one – one very strong and vibrant Parish. With the dedication of the Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel, within Saint Mary Church, we have solidified our unity in a special way. The chapel symbolizes our growth as a faith community and it is the faith and generosity of the community itself that has made all of this possible.



The Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel project carefully balances historic preservation and new construction to deliver an accurate recreation of Saint Catherine of Siena Church, opened in 1895. The project's design objective was to build a space in the lower level of Saint Mary Church that truthfully reflects the Romanesque architectural style, character, and feel of St. Catherine of Siena Church.

The Chapel seats approximately 100 visitors. Wherever possible, reclaimed woodwork, altars, doors, glazing, pews, wainscoting, and other architectural details and ecclesiastical furnishings are used. An impressive feature of the Chapel is installation of reclaimed early 19th century German, romantic style stained glass windows with realistic treatments of figures and background decorative elements.

These impressive works of art wrap the walls with images of The Blessed Mother, Saint Catherine, and The Good Shepherd. Cast stone niches are installed in both side walls and display statues of the Holy Family. In addition, clear viewing windows with appropriate stained glass borders have been installed in the back wall so that visitors and students from Good Shepherd School can gaze into the space when not in use. The elaborate coffered ceiling, including 14 dramatic arches, hundreds of rosettes, carved wall brackets, dome, and Corinthian capitals, are painted with original murals and specialty paint treatments that recreate religious icons and stencils. Nearly a dozen different types of theatrical lighting fixtures provide for dramatic lighting of the sanctuary.

