



St. Joseph Church: “A Place of Reverence and Beauty”

 December 30, 2021

SHELTON– “I hope that you are proud of all that you have accomplished here at St. Joseph’s, for you are a parish of great generosity, great dedication, and great faith. And you have made your church ever more a beautiful place in which we can be sent out in mission,” said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano at the recent Pontifical Mass of Blessing at St. Joseph Church.

The Bishop came to Shelton’s mother parish on Saturday December 18, to bless the renovations and celebrate the parish’s 115th anniversary. It was an evening of joy and remembrance that brought the St. Joseph Parish family together.



With parishioners filling the Church, the Bishop blessed the renovations including new pews from New Holland Church Furniture Company in Pennsylvania, carpeting from Coyne’s Carpet, Inc. of Bridgeport, and painting and new wainscoting. The renovations were made possible through the parishioners’ successful participation in the “We Stand with Christ” capital campaign.

“Why do you and I come here to this sacred place, come here every Sunday. We do it in part to give right worship to God and to give thanks for the blessings, big and small, that you and I receive every day. That is why this sacred place is a place of reverence and beauty– we offer the best we can to our God,” said Bishop Caggiano. “And that is why I am delighted to be here, to re-dedicate the church, and Father Dogali, to again thank you for the work you have done to bring the church to ever greater beauty and reverence.”

Bishop Caggiano was joined around the altar by St. Joseph Pastor, Fr. Michael F. Dogali; senior priests and weekend assistants Msgr. Matthew Bernelli and Fr Raymond Petrucci; and Permanent Deacons Guillermo Bernal and Bradford Smythe.

In his homily the bishop reflected on the visitation of Our Lady with her cousin, Elizabeth. He said that as an older woman, Elizabeth fully expected that she would not survive childbirth. As a result, Elizabeth had gone into seclusion, a time of loneliness and isolation, but Mary risked her own health to visit Elizabeth.

“Our Lady having conceived the one who is love himself, even though she herself would be in need, felt impelled to go to her cousin in the hour of her greatest need, and in that very act, she begins to explain the powerful mystery of her own life,” the Bishop said.

“My dear friends, it is that great gift that empties us for the beloved. It’s the occasion and opportunity, the choice and decision to do what is good and right for the other, not expecting anything in return. It is self-gift and our way carrying the love of Jesus himself.”

At the end of Mass Fr. Dogali, was visibly moved by the celebration and expressed his personal gratitude to all parishioners, benefactors and parish leadership. “Everyone here has done something– and this is why tonight is your night of joy,” Fr. Dogali said in brief and gracious remarks. “This is your parish, and I want you to always be proud of it. God bless My dear friends.”

Fr. Dogali personally recognized St. Joseph Parish trustees Mr. Joseph Kudravy and Ms. Mary Jane Parisalong with Finance Council Chairperson Mr. John Lawrence for their leadership in the capital campaign the renovation project. “We’re blessed to have magnificent trustees here in St. Joseph and I thank them for their service and their work.”

In acknowledging that the gifts were brought down the aisle by the finance council, Fr. Dogali said, “Each and every member has served the parish for years and assists me week after week, month after month– you know how much I depend upon your council!”

He also thanked the Rosary Society and women volunteers along with the lay staff including the receptionists, custodians, and “all those who come in each and every day to make every parishioner and everyone who dials our telephone number feel welcome. And they show everyone the face of Jesus to all.”

“Every person here in one way or another has been a benefactor,” he said in gratitude to all who made the renovation a success.

Before giving the final blessing Bishop Caggiano thanked Fr. Dogali “for his great leadership of St. Joseph Parish,” as parishioners offered spirited applause.

Music for the celebration was provided by the St Joseph Church choir under the direction of Dan Horstmann.

In a reflection Fr. Dogali wrote for the parish bulletin following the Mass and dedication, he said that “While every year in the life of parish is special, 2021 was extra special as we celebrated 115 years of Catholic faith with the blessing of our new church pews and renovations. The blessing today by Bishop Caggiano is a reminder of those who have gone before us, leaving a splendid example of faith, prayer and stewardship... As we pass the Catholic faith on to our children, may they see us recommit ourselves to the work of evangelization, love of neighbor and a more fervent celebration of the Holy Eucharist. May St. Joseph, pastor of the universal church, intercede for us.”

Founded in 1906, Saint Joseph Church is the mother parish of the Catholic community of Shelton and a part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport. The cornerstone was laid in 1907. It is located 50 Fairmont Place, Shelton, CT 06484 phone: 203-924-8611. On the web: <https://www.sjcshelton.org>.