

St. Peter's Church, 22 Barclay Street, New York, NY 10007

November 16, 2017 / Month of the Holy Souls

Dear Parishioners:

Pastoral Letter Concerning the End of the St. Joseph's Chapel Lease in Battery Park City

I am writing to let you know that St. Joseph's Chapel will be closing in January 2018. The difficult decision to end the lease was made, following careful discussion and consultation over a number of years with Parishioners, Pastors, Priests, Lay Trustees, Parish Finance Council, and the Archdiocese of New York among others.

Since 1983, parishioners of St. Peter's Parish have worshipped at St. Joseph's Chapel, a space leased from the owners of Gateway Plaza, located in Battery Park City. Over the years, the Chapel has played an important role in the lives of many Parishioners. This was particularly true during the years after September 11th 2001 when the Chapel was used to comfort first responders, workers and each other.

The past few years have seen a remarkable transformation of our neighborhood and our parish.

First, the completion, reconstruction and community redevelopment around "Ground Zero" has made St. Peter's at 22 Barclay Street and our Lady of the Rosary at 7 State Street, more accessible to the people of Battery Park City than any time in history. Areas that once prohibited pedestrian transit to our parish church at St. Peter's now feature underground walkways, covered overpasses and free bus service that will facilitate participation at our two church locations.

Second, the completion of our new Parish Center at St. Peter's in 2016 has created a community space that can be used for a wide variety of parish activities. The Center includes a handicap accessible elevator, six classrooms, reception space, office space, and a small auditorium, that will provide a better, safer learning environment for our children in our expanding Religious Education Program and a centrally-located gathering space for the parish community.

Third, with the merger of St. Peter's and Our Lady of the Rosary in 2016 we have two worship sites that can accommodate all our parishioners for religious services and private worship.

During that same time, the cost structure of our parish has also changed dramatically, despite the unwavering generosity of our parishioners. As many of you are aware, for a number of years, the Parish has borrowed significantly (now totaling over \$1.2 million) from the Archdiocese of New York to subsidize the operating expenses of the parish.

Pursuant to our request, the owners of Gateway Plaza have voluntarily agreed to release us from our lease in January 2018. In acknowledgement of the Chapel's role in a very difficult time for parishioners, they have kindly made an additional financial contribution of one hundred thousand dollars to assist in preserving and relocating the statues that represent our parish's tributes to the events of September 11, 2001. The 9/11 Catholic Memorial at the Chapel will be moved to St. Peter's and a rededication will take place at St Peter's, on or before September 11, 2018.

The closing Masses at the Chapel will be on Sunday January 7th, the feast of the Epiphany. On Sunday January 14th, the First Sunday in Ordinary Time, a special Mass of Welcome for the Parishioners moving their regular Sunday worship from the Chapel to St. Peter's will be offered at Noon. The celebrant will be Bishop John O'Hara, Episcopal Vicar of South Manhattan. A new evening Mass will commence at 6:30 PM on Sunday January 14th at St. Peter's.

There will be a warm welcome and support for those Parishioners coming from the Chapel to St. Peter's and Our Lady of the Rosary. We pray that through the intercession of St. Peter, St. Joseph, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Our Lady of the Rosary, we will move forward together to a new chapter in the religious life of our historic Parish which has served as a spiritual home for Lower Manhattan since its foundation in 1785.

Prayerfully yours,

Fr. Jarlath Quinn

Pastor