

**REDEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
DIOCESE OF PATERSON
SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2017
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS OF
HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Dear Bishop Serratelli, my brother archbishops and bishops, dear priests, deacons, consecrated religious and lay faithful of the Church in Paterson:

At the beginning of this solemn re-dedication of this Cathedral of St. John the Baptist on the Solemnity of the Nativity of his birth, we have cause for rejoicing! This holy place, filled with beauty, possesses an architecture and spirituality of communion, which causes us to rejoice, just as John the Baptist rejoiced, leaping in his mother's womb at the encounter with Christ in the womb of the Virgin!

This is in fact the Mother Church of the Diocese. It is the largest church; one of the oldest, founded in 1820; was home to the first priest assigned to permanent residence in New Jersey; gave rise to the first priestly vocation in the state; and had stability in leadership under Father William McNulty who served here as pastor for 59 years!

After many years of labor and great sacrifice, today this beautiful cathedral is being renewed and restored for the greater glory of God, to whom its beautiful spires point. Just as many years ago, Father McNulty and the people of this church, using brownstone from Little Falls, built this church with labor and sacrifice, so now a new generation of believers builds on the foundation of faith left to them by their fathers and mothers in the Faith. St. Paul tells us that *No other foundation can be laid other than the one that has been laid already: I mean Christ Jesus.* (1 Cor 3:11)

In this Cathedral once more, the Eternal Word of God, whom John the Baptist heralded, will be proclaimed and in the Most Holy Eucharist, God will dwell with His people. In this historic place, as preceding generations have, the Catholic faithful gather to worship the Triune God.

While today, this Cathedral will be re-dedicated, the work of God continues. The Church, built of living stones, is a work in progress, still under construction, as Saint Augustine reminds us: **"The work we see complete in this building is physical; it should find its spiritual counterpart in your hearts. We see here the finished product of stone and wood; so too your lives should reveal the handiwork of God's grace. Let us then offer our thanksgiving above all to the Lord God, from whom every best and perfect gift comes."** (St. Augustine of Hippo, Sermon 336, PL 38, 1475)

Finally, as the Holy Father's personal representative to the United States, I want to express his warm greetings, spiritual closeness and heartfelt congratulations to you, Bishop Serratelli, to Msgr. Giordani, the Rector of the Cathedral, and to the people of the Diocese of Paterson, especially the benefactors, artists, contractors and all those who made this day possible.

May God bless you all! Thank you!