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'I'm sure that Cardinal O'Connor is looking down from heaven'



Susan Stava for The Journal News

Cardinal Edward M. Egan anoints the walls of Dominican Convent's new chapel during yesterday's dedication. The late Cardinal John J. O'Connor helped break ground for the chapel three years ago.

## Sparkill chapel blessed

### Cardinal Egan hails nuns' work to create new place for prayer

Andrea Rubin  
The Journal News

SPARKILL — Cardinal Edward M. Egan blessed Dominican Convent's new chapel yesterday, nearly three years after his predecessor helped break ground for it.

"It's nice. It shows the continuity," said Sister Adele Myers, chair of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill's art and liturgy committee. "I'm sure that Cardinal (John J.) O'Connor is looking down from heaven and saying, 'I broke ground for that.'"

Egan led the nearly two-hour Mass, which included the anointing of Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel's altar and walls with special, blessed oils. The ritual, he explained, originated in Rome around the year 320 A.D.

"The oil symbolized dignity and strength," he said. "They anointed their royalty and they

anointed their sports heroes."

The cardinal joked that the reason for filling the air with fragrant incense may not have started as a spiritual one. He pointed out that there "was no air conditioning in ancient Rome."

Egan said the ceremony would closely match the one that was done in Rome.

"We're going to baptize it, we're going to anoint it and we're going to make it free," Egan said. "All set, monsignor. Let's see if we do it well," he said to William Belford, Roman Catholic vicar of Rockland County.

Egan circled the chapel, sprinkling holy water on the walls, floors and chairs. When he completed his work on the first floor, he climbed the stairs and repeated it on the second level.

Planning for the chapel began in 1994, and the groundbreaking was Oct. 19, 1998.

"This is indeed a day that we have dreamed of for so many years," Sister Maryann Summa, president of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, told the roughly 125 people who had gathered for the celebration.

The sisters said it was important for them to make the chapel accessible to older nuns who are in the infirmary. The top floor of the chapel is connected to the infirmary by a bridge.

The side of the bridge features the communion railing from the old chapel, said Sister Mary Dunning, a liaison for the chapel committee.

"The old sisters will see it when they go back and forth," she said. "I'm enormously proud of the amount of love and care that was put into building it."

While the chapel is bright and modern, several other items were taken from the old sanctuary. The legs that form the pedestal of the altar were taken from the old sanctuary, as were two angels that decorate the room.

Egan called the chapel "exquisite" and complimented the sisters on their seven years of work.

"I'd like to think this is where you will speak to your God. This is where you will pray," he said. "I hope it will always be a place of conversation with your God. I hope every conversation ends on a happy note."