

Remarks of His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo Archbishop of Galveston-Houston

Following the Blessing of the Land and Litany of the Saints
Groundbreaking Ceremony for St. Athanasius Chapel/Hall
December 20, 2014

Note: The day before the ceremony, torrential rains turned the site into a quagmire. The location of St. Athanasius Chapel/Hall was submerged in water. The day itself was overcast, windy with damp chill. Mud and standing water everywhere. Ceremony was held in a tent.

Before I join the others in the ceremonial groundbreaking, sisters and brothers, I think you should be seated. It was a *long* litany. *[Laughter]*

We have invoked just about everyone in the Litany. Although in general, we invoked him, we did not invoke by name St. Athanasius. He was one of the *Doctores Ecclesiae*, one of the teachers of the church. In the Greek Orthodox Rite for the feast of St. Athanasius on May 2, the text starts out in Greek *[His Eminence quotes the Greek, then translates]:* “You have become the very style or image of right belief - orthodoxy. You have established right ways of teaching.” It is a great name for the first building you have on the land. St Athanasius – “the deathless one” - exiled at least six times from Alexandria for his defense of the *Nicene Creed* which we sing or recite every Sunday. And so we open up the groundbreaking in his name and our thoughts are about him.

We are grateful to Fr. Van Vliet and to all of you that you have reached this point where we can break ground today of Regina Caeli Parish. Obviously, most of all, for the prayers of the Mother of God, Queen of Heaven, as she smiles upon the Jordan River here this morning. We hope that she continues to divide the waters so that the buildings can go up. *[Laughter]* But that’s all good [meaning the rain was needed].

In the language of German, clearing of the land, “erleuchten”, also means “to enlighten”. And if you have been here before - I presume, because I was not here – you and Fr. Van Vliet and all of the volunteers would have seen much forest. It was beautiful, but the clearing of the land allows a “lightening up” so that what appears can have human habitation. And indeed, in this case, the habitation for a church building and for a chapel in which you can celebrate the Divine Mystery.

And so, congratulations to you all! It is good to be here and I hope to be back and bless the chapel. I hope the priests' residence can also go up very quickly. You have been very generous and gracious. If only I can say: just keep being generous! *[Laughter]* That's the way things get built, particularly in this diocese.

You may not realize this, but in the last twenty years, the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in its variety of parishes has given to the city, the county and all the surrounding counties \$330 million in construction. It is amazing what is happening in this neck of the woods of Texas. You are adding your own dimension here, the Extraordinary Form Latin Rite Parish. We ask the Lord to bless you, your work and your labor. And keep always in mind the Lord's precious blessings through the prayers of His most holy ones.

Thank you all. It is good to be here today. I think we have a ceremonial breaking of the ground next, but before we begin, we thank the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter and those priests present and Fr. Eurel, my secretary. Now there is a supposed to be a group of us for the ceremonial groundbreaking, including the architect and Frank Rynd, our diocesan attorney. Make sure you always love him. *[Laughter]* I say that, and I'm serious. *[His Eminence smiles at Judge Rynd]:* stubborn thing, you! *[More laughter. Note: Judge Rynd was instrumental in the negotiations with the Fraternity and establishment of the parish.]* He is very important, but also a very nice man. And we would like to thank Fr. Paul Lockey, who has allowed St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish to kindly host you from your earliest days until you come into your own house.

[His Eminence turns toward Fr. Van Vliet.] So with all that said, Father, you may want to say a few words before we commence the groundbreaking. But listen: I blessed the grounds; even so, I am not going out there! *[Laughter]*