



## SAINT JEAN BAPTISTE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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January 22, 2012

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Saint Jean Baptiste:

I want to take this opportunity to update you on repairs to the church towers. First, we apologize for the presence of the scaffolding and the pedestrian bridge on Lexington Avenue and 76th Street for so long, but these must remain until the work is safely and fully completed. City ordinance requires it.

Two years ago when this project began, our contractor (West New York Restoration of CT, Inc.) believed, on first inspection, that it was simply a matter of making minor repairs to some of the steel and limestone in the columns at the top of the towers. The exact nature of the problem, however, could not be determined until probes were undertaken.

Since Saint Jean Baptiste Church is a landmarked building, *any work* on the exterior of the building has to be approved by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. This includes probes and repairs. Once probes were authorized and done, they revealed significant corrosion and expansion in the steel of the columns examined, resulting in cracking in the limestone.

We have proposed repairing the steel and replacing the 24 limestone columns of the towers with fiberglass composite ones, identical in form and appearance to the existing limestone columns but resistant to water permeation, in order to obviate the problem in the future. The LPC, which has approved this approach in projects elsewhere in the city, initially rejected our application. We subsequently resubmitted the request, along with additional documentation, and were told that the Commission would consider it on visual inspection of a prototype in place (and perhaps a public hearing).

The prototype of the fiberglass column is scheduled to be installed this week, weather permitting, for representatives of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to view and hopefully approve. Fabrication of this column has taken several months.

Once approved, needed repairs, fabrication, and installation on the columns of the towers will take one year. Work cannot proceed without LCP and Department of Buildings approval. The cost of this work is \$1,000,000. Thank you for your patience and your understanding.

Sincerely,

Reverend Anthony Schueller, S.S.S.  
Pastor