



the local history files of the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum*) says, in part: "Three years ago a group of the inmates and guards worked together to convert a small office into **St. Jude's Chapel**. A place where a man could get away from the prison environment and be alone with God. Never a day goes by that at least a few men don't take advantage of their little chapel. This tiny room has proved so beneficial to so many men that now the inmates and guards are anxious to build, within the walls of the institution, a chapel that would be big enough to hold all the men attending Sunday Mass and other Catholic ceremonies, at which large numbers would be present. Until now such functions have been held in a gymnasium." He goes on to ask for the donation of trading stamps for the project.

The goal of the campaign was 65,000 books, or the equivalent of \$150,000. The nationwide trading stamp collection drive was launched in February 1962. Boxes and posters were placed in local stores; radio stations and newspapers publicized the drive. The State Council of the Knights of Columbus, a nationwide organization of Catholic men, gave their cooperation and support. The response was tremendous. Stamps flowed in: full books, partial books, loose stamps by the thousands.

Groundbreaking took place in August 1963 with Bishop John J. Macguire, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of New York (*photo below, right*), and Commissioner of New York State Department of Correctional Services Paul D. McGuinness (*below, with shovel*). Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, celebrated the Dedication Mass in June 1964.

According to a recent press release from *Eastern New York Correctional Facility* about the history of **St. Jude's**, the architectural firm donated its services and designed a glass and brick structure to be erected on the inside south-east corner of the yard. Many others joined in offering



their labor and services: inmates of all faiths, community volunteers, trading stamp company executives, and other businessmen. An Irish artist sculpted a statue of St. Martin de Porres and shipped it across the Atlantic. A Jersey City artist painted the Stations of the Cross.

Institution trucks salvaged goods from New York City churches slated for demolition. Eastern's carpentry shop instructors and inmates made benches that the paint shop finished and varnished. The mattress shop made mats for the chapel entrances, and the machine shop made gates for the baptismal font. Other inmates worked on construction.

In June 1984, Eastern's residents celebrated the twentieth anniversary of "the chapel that trading stamps built" with a special Mass and ceremony. The Mass was celebrated by the Most Reverend Austin B. Vaughan, Vicar of the Prison Apostolate, and included an ecumenical benediction, as well as comments by Eastern's Superintendent Philip Coombe, Jr., and psalms by the St. Joseph's Seminary Choir. The commemorative celebration was planned by a committee of staff members and inmates, co-chaired by Father Eugene Sheridan and Deputy Superintendent Robert Hoke.



The *Fortieth Anniversary of the Dedication of St. Jude's* was celebrated November 22, 2004, (*procession, above, led by Deacon Doherty, with area and prison clergy, and Cardinal Egan*) following months of organizing and restoration work by an impressive number of correctional officers and inmates. The program gives special thanks to Officer David Zweck (*below, right*), with the assistance of Officer Arthur Alzamora, for his outstanding effort in the restoration project and also lists 12 inmates who were the Restoration Crew.



Restoration work was extensive: a new roof was the first step, since roof leakage had damaged the ceiling and pillars; wood surfaces were refinished; the exterior was freshly painted. An inmate artist refurbished statues to a highly professional level.

His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan (*above, with Fr. Puduchery, left, and Deacon Doherty*) celebrated the special anniversary Mass on November 22, which included readings and music in both English and Spanish. ➔