CHAPEL REBUILD

CARMELITE MONASTERY ~ CHRISTCHURCH ~ NEW ZEALAND

November 1, 2026

A very blessed Solemnity of All Saints!

In late October, almost five months after our building plans were lodged for city council consent, we heard the welcome news that consent had been granted! Tomorrow, All Souls Day, our builder will begin setting up the site to commence work on Stage 1.



Tree removal inside the enclosure in preparation for St Joseph's Project

Those of you who have received our Christmas newsletters over the years know that the Chapel Rebuild Project didn't drop out of the air. It was an unexpected outgrowth of what we called our St Joseph's Project. This had its beginning in May 2023, when a canonical visitation to our monastery recommended we improve our entrance and visitors' area. Those plans were almost ready to lodge for city council consent in October 2024 when we were informed that fire compliance regulations meant that we would need significant changes to our Chapel to comply. Thus, was born the Chapel Rebuild Project. Both sets of plans, combined into one, were lodged on 2nd June 2026. We are beginning St Joseph's Project first (Stage 1) so as to continuing having a daily public Mass here for the duration of the build. The Chapel (Stage 2) will follow straight after St Joseph's Project.

In the two years that the St Joseph's Project has been paused, construction costs and compliance regulations have risen beyond the funds we had in place for it. To share one example, we are required to have the whole monastery brought up to the current code for fire compliance, including installing an expensive linked alarm system, replacing our traditional monastic door latches and ensuring cell doors are sealed to prevent smoke inhalation in the case of a fire. The extent of the necessary upgrades means that our building projects have a significant shortfall. However, given that costs will only increase, we have decided, after prayer and



Sophie undertakes ongoing building inspections.

discernment, to proceed in the hope that funds will be there when needed. We will continue to gratefully receive any donations toward the completion of these projects.

Given these new developments, we have decided to simplify the interior design of our Chapel and the Sacred Art items, and a few weeks ago we took over the design work ourselves. We are currently working through the details of this and hope to be able to share images with you soon. But just to give a glimpse of our plans, the two beautiful French statues of Our Lady and St Joseph that we had in the Chapel in 1933, which were eventually deemed too big for the sanctuary and moved into the cell corridor, will be returning to the Chapel in the dedicated alcoves for them at the front. We are so excited about this, as we are about the other beautiful arrangements being made.

It is our intention to keep everyone who is interested regularly updated on our website as the building proceeds. We have added a new page on our website called "Follow Our Progress" where we will regularly post images of construction. We will continue to send out occasional updates via email (feel free to click unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive them, though we'll try not to inundate you 😉).

Since we last wrote, we farewelled our beloved Sr Elizabeth, who went home to God on 2nd August, aged 96, after 75 years in Carmel. She would have loved to supervise the building, but we believe she will be doing so now from a better vantage point.

Thank you so much for your continued support.

With loving prayers from your Sisters in Christchurch Carmel.



Community in June 2026 with the relics of St Carlo Acutis.
Sr Elizabeth is in the front middle.