



Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
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February 11, 2018

Several weeks ago in this column I mentioned that later this month our parish will hold the funeral for Private Emmanuel Mensah, the National Guardsman who gave his life in the Belmont fire in order to save people in the burning building.

Now that all the family members living abroad have had time to make arrangements to come to New York City, the funeral date has been set for this Saturday, Feb. 17th at 10:00am. The funeral will be open to the public and we are expecting a large contingent of national, state, and city officials. The military will send high-ranking representation. The fire department will have a truck outside with the ladder raised and the American flag proudly displayed. Cardinal Timothy Dolan will be the primary celebrant.

An event like this is not easy to plan and it creates some inconvenience for us all. Understandably, we might prefer the calm of our regular activities. Being part of the universal Church, however, invites us to show God's love and mercy to everyone who comes knocking. This parish has been the focal point of the neighborhood for more than one hundred years and we are blessed to continue to be a beacon of hope, charity, and unity in these times.

On another note, this Thursday evening I will be leaving on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, together with Fr. Pio and Fr. Henry, and about seventy people from around the country. We would like to bring your special intentions there to the land of Jesus and pray for you in these holy sites. Please fill out a piece of paper and place it in the prayer intention box in the back of the church. I have no doubt that you will feel the power of prayer as we walk the footsteps of Jesus. I almost canceled the trip when I realized that the funeral for Private Mensah would be here on the 17th, but Cardinal Dolan graciously encouraged me to stick with my pilgrimage plans. Now that's kindness! Fr. Cosme, from St. Martin of Tours, will also be here that day to help coordinate, with the help of our own Fr. Israel.

God bless,
Fr. Jonathan