

Bishop blesses St. Bernards new tower construction

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



JONESBORO — Bishop Anthony B. Taylor blessed the construction of a new tower Feb. 15 for St. Bernards Healthcare on the hospital's main campus.

Bishop Taylor blessed the construction site with Mother Johanna Marie Melnyk, OSB, prioress for the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters, who own the hospital, assisting.

The addition of the tower was possible when St. Bernards purchased the church and former school property from its neighbor, Blessed Sacrament Church. The church building was decommissioned Oct. 1 and torn down.

The parish now holds its weekend Masses in the St. Bernards Auditorium temporarily while a new 800-seat church is built on East Highland.

The construction is part of the \$130-million master plan initiated by St. Bernards in 2015 set to be completed in four phases. The five-story surgical and intensive care tower is Phase Three of the plan.

While on the hospital campus, the bishop also blessed the recently constructed Cancer Center, as well as the newly renovated Emergency Department and Heartcare Center. These areas were the first two phases of the master plan.

The 245,000-square-foot tower will feature an entrance into an atrium on the ground level with access to admissions and registration and visitor-friendly amenities, such as a coffee shop,

education rooms, a chapel, improved wayfinding for families and visitors and support services for surgery and critical care areas.

The first level of the tower will house 14 surgical suites, along with support programs such as pharmacy and the GI Lab. The second level will house a 40-bed critical care unit. The third level will be shelled in to allow for future growth and expansion, while the top level will be a mechanical area.

Steel for the tower was sourced from Nucor in Mississippi County.