How’s your Lent going?

We are about half-way through our 40-day Lenten journey, and, if you’re like me, you may be finding yourself challenged at this time. Maintaining our fasting, abstinence and almsgiving can be difficult, as Ash Wednesday starts to feel like a distant memory and Easter can still seem far away. What a perfect time to re-commit to those three Lenten pillars of prayer, sacrifice, and acts of charity.

One of the most common Lenten practices is “giving something up,” a way to make a small self-sacrifice in order to unite with the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the Cross. But think about it. When we give up something, we’re also creating more room inside ourselves – more room for Jesus to live in our hearts.

Yes, Lent is a time when we contemplate more deeply the reality of Jesus suffering, passion, and death. But, it is also a season of spiritual renewal and hope. By challenging ourselves to greater self-denial and deeper prayer, and being sure to receive the sacrament of confession and attend Mass as frequently as possible, we rebuild the foundation that will make the joy of the Risen Christ that much more powerful.

As children we were all taught that we were created to know, love and serve God here on Earth, so that we might be happy with Him forever in Heaven. Lent and Holy Week are wonderful times to get to know, love and serve Him better, and show our gratitude for Jesus’ greatest sacrifice which made our redemption possible. I invite you to join us at the Cathedral for the remainder of Lent to reflect on your journey so far, and look forward to Christ’s passion, suffering, and death – and, most of all, the joy of His Resurrection!
Good Friday is a rather ironic name. When we think about what took place on this day, there is actually nothing good about it. Good Friday brings feelings of sadness, sorrow, and meditation. At St. Patrick’s Cathedral, we begin Good Friday with Tenebrae, extinguishing candles and entering into darkness. This is followed by the Meditations on the Seven Last Words, illustrating Jesus’ final moments, and ending with the Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion and Death. At the end of the evening, we walk the Via Dolorosa, the Stations of the Cross. All of these services bring a somber feeling. I find the Meditations on the Seven Last Words to be our strongest testimony to our sharing in the Lord’s Passion.

The Meditations on the Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ allow Catholics to reflect on the way Jesus suffered and died for us. It gives us an opportunity to understand what he might have been thinking as he breathed his final breath and spoke his final, dying word.

We meditate and reflect on each word, all holding so much importance in the final moments of Jesus’ life. Jesus surrenders himself to the cross and gives his spirit to God. We too surrender ourselves during Lent. Through fasting and abstinence, we surrender ourselves to Christ as we prepare for his arrival. Though we recognize Good Friday as a day filled with silence and meditation, we also recognize that Jesus’ journey does not end on the cross with his Seven Last Words in Jerusalem. This Good Friday, let us meditate on Jesus’ great sacrifice and reflect on what we have surrendered this Holy Lenten Season.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Robert T. Ritchie, Rector
After landing in the new world many pilgrims pushed no further than a few blocks from where the coffin ships docked carrying their meager belongings with them. As immigrants, they embraced their new home and customs. They yearned to know what it took to be an American. They marveled at the genius and treasures of their new home and all they and their children could become. The opportunities were limitless. They were convinced that hard work, perseverance and sacrifice would be the road to success. However, they brought with them a piece of where they came from. Most importantly they brought their faith, in their hearts and on their lips. Their hearts as the chalice to hold the love of their God and on their lips to pray and exalt in this devotion. Painfully a faith that made them an outcast in their own land.

We know that the people of the Emerald Isle took their Patron Saint to heart. We know this by examining the magnificent churches and cathedrals in the old and new world that carry his name, Saint Patrick. Houses of worship, more importantly homes of worship. They built magnificent churches and cathedrals that would mark their presence as a permanent part of the Emerald Isle. We can never examine all the cathedrals named for Saint Patrick. Though we will examine four cathedrals that bear his name proudly, two in the old world and two in the new.

The two we will stroll through in Ireland are, Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin and Saint Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh. Two cathedrals-built centuries apart. Two cathedrals that embody the enormous span of European history, one constructed between 1219 and 1260 A.D. The second traces its history back to 445 A.D. What a magnificent span of history in a world that dates the past in centuries.

Looking at the two cathedrals, we find Saint Patrick’s Cathedral of Armagh is the earliest of the two that again dates to 445 A.D. Armagh is the seat of Saint Patrick and one of the four counties of Northern Ireland to have a predominantly Catholic population. Given the Cathedral’s location, it has witnessed a turbulent history. Thankfully time is such that visitors can marvel at the beauty of this magnificent house of god in peace. In 445 A.D. a local Chieftain granted St. Patrick a site on a hill where the church now stands. There is very little known about the church or the original church (structure) remaining. The church did remain an important site for prayer and religious observance. A new church began construction on the same site in 1261 A.D. and after numerous stages of growth continued through the centuries.

Our footsteps next bring us alongside Saint Patrick himself. Our road will now lead us approximately 83 miles south to Dublin. A city that dates its history to the 7th Century. Would an examination of the Cathedrals of Ireland be complete without a visit to the magnificent Saint Patrick’s Cathedral of Dublin? A cathedral that embodies the beauty of the work of Saint Patrick. Saint Patrick’s Cathedral of Dublin stands on the spot where Saint Patrick himself is said to have baptized the local Celtic chieftains in the 5th century. We know that the Cathedral dates to 1220-1259 A.D. Construction having started 759 years after the passing of Saint Patrick and built on the site of an ancient well which may have been used by Saint Patrick himself. The cathedral replaced an earlier (almost certainly wooden) church. We know that Archbishop John Comyn was responsible for elevating Saint Patrick’s to Cathedral status. There is a Life of Saint Patrick’s window that tells the life of Saint Patrick in 39 windows. A tradition carried on in our own Saint Patrick’s Cathedral on 5th Avenue (New York City) which utilizes 18 stain glass windows to depict the life of Saint Patrick.

As we depart the old-world sailing across the Atlantic Ocean to the new, we cannot help but wonder what endless challenges faced our travelers. However, they brought their faith with them. This faith would make it possible to have a piece of home in this new land and a chance for a better life worshiping in peace. They would become part of the fabric of New York City and this would be the first of their footprints in this new land. As in the old world, they decided to honor their patron saint by naming their cathedrals in
his honor. The first cathedral they would build is in one of the original locations where immigrants settled. It was a place for these new immigrants to come together and worship. It would be built in an area that was mostly meadows, hills, wooded areas and would be known as “the new church out of town”. In 1808 Pope Pius VII established the Diocese of New York to address the needs of the growing Catholic community. This new Diocese would include New York State and a portion of Northern New Jersey. Plans were made to build New York’s first Cathedral on Old St. Patrick’s Cathedral - Mulberry St. Mott Street and the corner of Prince Street (now Mulberry Street). The cathedral would be paid for by poor Irish Immigrants and wealthy Catholics. On June 8th, 1809 Father Kohlmann set the cornerstone for St. Patrick’s Cathedral before a crowd of 3,000. This would be the second Roman Catholic Cathedral in America (the first in Baltimore). The first in America named after their patron saint, Saint Patrick. The new Cathedral would be designed by Joseph Mangin a French born architect along with John McComb. It was (and still is) a magnificent church, the biggest in New York at the time. The new St. Patrick’s Cathedral was also one of the first Gothic Revival Churches in America.

In 1838 the Rev. John Joseph Hughes was appointed Coadjutor Bishop to Bishop Dubois and immediately had the vision, foresight and capacity to put his plans into action. In 1842 after the death of Bishop Dubois Rev. Hughes became Bishop. Then in 1850 with New York becoming an archdiocese Bishop Hughes became the first Archbishop of New York and would become an unstoppable force in the church, New York City and the country. In 1853 he proclaimed that there would be a new Cathedral. It would show that Catholics, more specifically Irish Catholics, were now a power and growing by the minute. This new Cathedral would be built of marble and granite and would be a permanent part of New York City. The land he would build the new Saint Patrick’s Cathedral on the church had owned since 1810. Though it was so far out of town the project was given the name “Hughes Folly” by many of the newspapers for its distance outside the city and the belief that no one would travel that far to merely pray. He would ask noted architects James Renwick and Hughes’s brother in law William Rodrigue.

After working to secure funding Archbishop Hughes was able to set the corner stone on August 15th, 1858 with well over 100,000 faithful in attendance. The Cathedral was then blessed with a leader that continued in the tradition of past leaders. Archbishop John McCloskey would continue the work of Archbishop Hughes and lead his flock forward. On May 25, 1879 Cardinal John McCloskey dedicated St. Patrick’s Cathedral on 5th Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets. The newspapers saluted the new Cathedral as “the noblest temple ever raised in any land to the memory of Saint Patrick, and as the glory of Catholic America.” Saint Patrick’s Cathedral would become “America’s Parish Church”. What a grand title for a church built on the nickels, dimes and hearts of immigrants that came to America for the right to pray.

We looked at four magnificent cathedrals and how they left footprints from the old world to the new. These cathedrals are footprints that at times were quiet or other times a roar. Most importantly they are the footprints of the souls that continued to practice their faith in good times and bad, adversity and triumph. They never gave up, they never turned away.
Easter Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral!
Sunday, April 12th
10:15 AM
Live stream Mass at:
saintpatrickscathedral.org/live
**A Coffee Break in the Vatican - How Began the Friendship of Dolan & Bergoglio**

By Deborah Castellano Lubov

“On a break I was getting a cup of coffee when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around and he stuck out his hand and said, ‘My name is Jorge Bergoglio. I think you are Timothy Dolan, and I wanted to meet you...’

This, Cardinal Timothy Dolan explains, is how the first encounter between him and then-Cardinal Bergoglio took place during the General Congregations before the 2013 Conclave. Until then, Cardinal Dolan had heard how the Argentinian prelate very humbly and generously offered to help Cardinal Edward Egan during the 2001 Synod, especially when he had to return to New York for the 9/11 Memorial Services.

Deborah Lubov seen with Pope Francis

This episode, along with various others, were told by the Archbishop of New York in a book, “The Other Francis: Everything They Did Not Tell You About the Pope,” written by Deborah Castellano Lubov, Senior Vatican Correspondent of the International Catholic news agency, ZENIT. Also NBC & MSNBC Vatican Analyst, Lubov is based in Rome, often travels on the papal flight, and covers papal trips on the ground, has done numerous television and radio commentary, including for AP, Reuters, BBC, EWTN, Euronews and Vatican Radio. She also collaborates with other Catholic outlets.

Featuring the preface of Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the book, now published in five languages (Italian, Spanish, Lithuanian, Polish and English), was written to give an unfiltered account about Pope Francis himself and his attention to human dignity, through various cardinals, friends and relatives who know him best or worked with him closely.


“People still ask me, ‘Do you think we will ever have an American Pope?’” Dolan acknowledged in his interview, responding: “I always reply, ‘We have one and I am proud of him!’”

“As Pope, he is the supreme teacher of the Church, and he is faithfully passing on the substance of the faith, and so I do not see any difference from his predecessors in this regard.”

“I do see,” New York’s Cardinal stated, “a nuance in approach and style that I welcome.” Pope Francis, he said, has talents we need today.

Francis, Cardinal Dolan shared, “has affirmed some of the hunches I have had for a long time, namely that you can never go wrong in being with people; that joy is the infallible sign of God’s presence, that without prayer and faith anything we do is useless.” The Holy Father, Dolan also said, reaffirms like his predecessors that we need to be a light to the world.

“His teaching on the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of human life is as ringing and effective as those of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope St John Paul II, and Pope Francis adds very radiant examples,” such as going to Lampedusa, homeless shelters, and washing the feet of young people in a facility for troubled youth.

“These are all extraordinarily effective because they are just like Jesus, who always seemed to have a radar for those at the side of the road, who needed His blessing and embrace! That is what really gives teeth to his teachings on the dignity of the human person and sanctity of human life.”

Pope Francis, the Cardinal underscored, “is very sensitive to wherever human life is threatened, whether it be the baby in the womb, our elders, the starving, the war-torn, or persecuted Christians.”

When responding to those who call Francis anti-capitalistic, Dolan reminds: “His words about the dangers of riches are not any stronger than those of Jesus. Jesus is our model, the Supreme teacher, and Pope Francis does a good job articulating the teachings of Jesus and applying it to today when it comes to the danger of riches and wealth.”

These expressions, the Archbishop says, are not unique to Pope Francis. “We always prefer to cherry-pick; when the Pope says something we like, we applaud, and when the Pope says something we do not like or do not agree with, we try to wiggle out of it.”

“All you can do is continue to preach the Gospel, articulate the Truth with love, as Pope Francis does.”

Reflecting on Benedict and Francis, Cardinal Dolan observes: “What unites them most closely is a fidelity to the Truth, a passion for Jesus and His Church. In his undeniable love and tender embrace of Pope Benedict, Pope Francis shows us his respect and admiration for his predecessor.”

“I would bet that Pope Francis would be the first to admit that Pope Benedict had a sense of scholarship and erudition that all of us...
A desire for deeper spirituality is a notable development in the Church today. Many people have carved into their lives a practice of daily Mass and time for daily prayer. The result is a quiet yet unmistakable resurgence in spirituality. An esteem for a contemplative dimension of spiritual life has accompanied this turning to prayer. Many people in taking prayer seriously find themselves in need of some form of direction and guidance. Indeed, a dedication to a practice of interior prayer, when it is pursued over some time, seems inevitably to open doorways that lead through labyrinths of perplexity and shadow. Many people find this daunting, not knowing where to turn for instruction and clarity in problematic areas of contemplative experience.

This book by Father Donald Haggerty, *Contemplative Enigmas*, is a sequel to two prior works, *Contemplative Provocations* (2013) and *Contemplative Hunger* (2016). These earlier works addressed, firstly, the contemplative experience of God’s concealment as a provocation to deeper spirituality; secondly, the soul’s contemplative hunger for God as it affects a dynamic of self-giving and prayer. This third book concentrates on the mystery of interior trial and difficulty in the contemplative life. The hardships experienced in the interior life by souls who give themselves to God wholeheartedly are often little acknowledged; yet they are seen with some regularity in contemplative lives.

This book offers more than a summary of the symptoms of trial to be expected in a contemplative spirituality. The concise, carefully crafted comments of this book delve into spiritual difficulties and conundrums in a uniquely personal and penetrating manner. Throughout the book, the writing invites the reader to ponder the subject of spiritual darkness and perplexity and simple struggle in the spiritual life always in the light of the loving hand of God drawing the soul into a greater surrender to himself. The book offers a unique aid and stimulus in the quest for a deeper spirituality.
Easter Bunny's Amazing Day

Meet the Risen Jesus with an amazing bunny—and his amazing tale—in this beautifully illustrated hardcover children’s book. Children will learn about Jesus’ friendship and comfort through the eyes of a timid bunny rabbit who experiences firsthand the love and joy Jesus brings. Easter Bunny's Amazing Day is sure to be a family favorite every Easter.

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Easter Bunny's Amazing Day

Written by Carol Benoist and Cathy Gilmore
Illustrated by Jonathan Sundy
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St. Patrick’s Cathedral is the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of New York and the seat of its Archbishop. Built by contributions large and small, it remains emblematic of the ascendancy of religious freedom in the New World.

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**Contact Us**
We would be most grateful for the opportunity to discuss these gift arrangements and other giving ideas with you, your family and your professional advisers.

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