

CENTER OF THE DIOCESE

The Cathedral is the spiritual center, the " Mother Church" of the diocese, and stands as its most prominent and enduring symbol. It is different from other churches as it houses the "Cathedra," the bishop's chair and symbol of his epis- copal teaching authority. Here special events are held and the Bishop celebrates the major liturgical events of the year: Christmas Midnight Mass, Holy Week, Easter, the Rite of Election, Chrism Mass, Marriage Jubilee and other various diocesan celebrations.



LIVING PARISH FAMILY



The faith of generations has been nourished at the house of the dioce- san church. The Cathedral serves as the parish church to some 700 households hailing from fifty zip codes around the Capital

District. The Cathedral witnesses daily to God's presence through liturgies attended by people of all denominations. The Cathedral provides educational services and programs for the young people of the community. Cathedral Social Services, staffed by dedicated religious and volunteers, provides clothing, food and other necessities as well as referrals, to people in need.

JEWEL OF THE CITY

A distinguished feature of Albany's skyline, the Cathedral's trademark Gothic towers create a striking contrast against the modern forms of the Empire State Plaza. Iridescent 19th century stained glass windows imported from England, intricate Dutch and German woodcarvings, stunning plasterwork and soaring spatial splendor elevate the Cathedral as one of America's most unique and important church structures.



Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Schedule of Liturgical Celebrations

The Holy Eucharist (Mass)
Sunday Masses: (Anticipated Mass)
5:15 p.m. on Saturday
9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m.

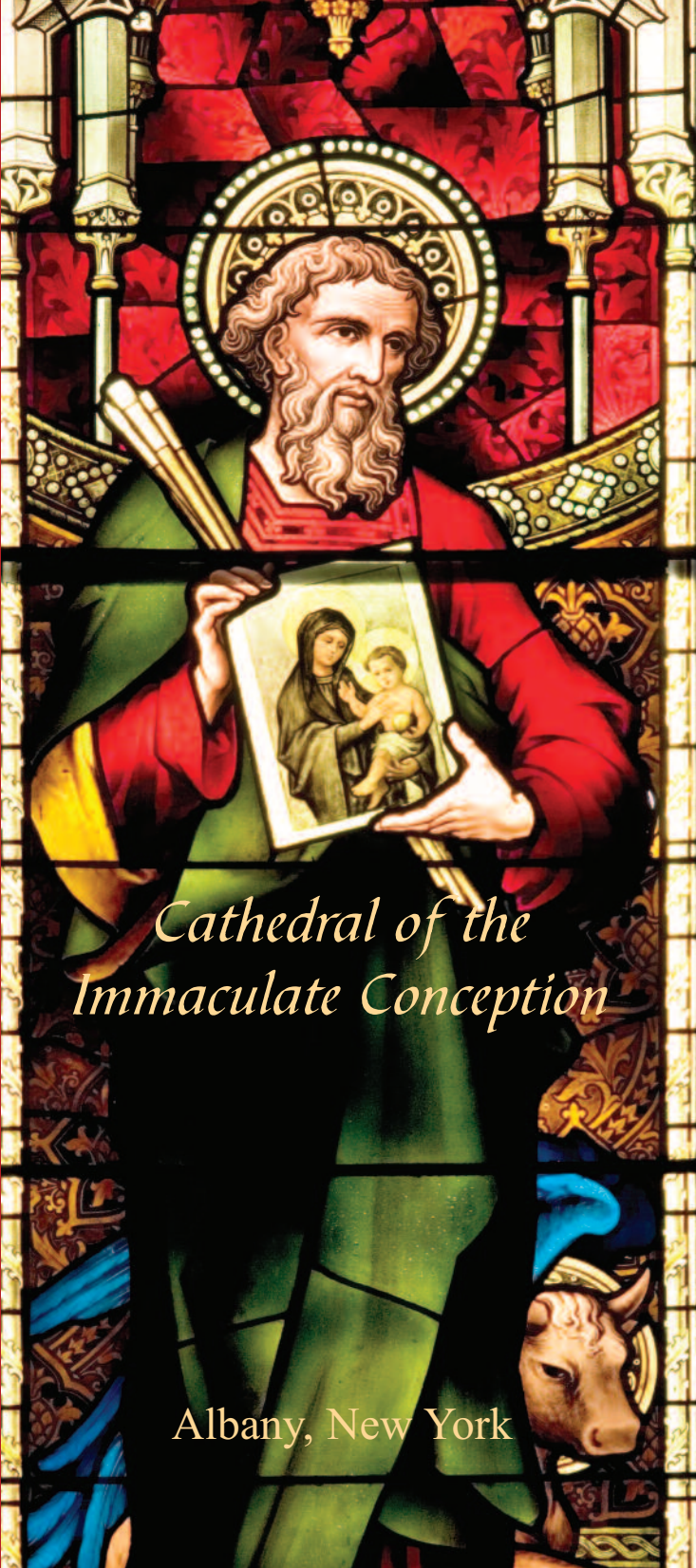
Holy Day Masses:
7:15a.m., 12:15 p.m., and 5:00 p.m.

Weekday Masses:
Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 12:15 p.m.
Tuesday, Thursday; 7:15 a.m.
Friday During Lent: Stations of the Cross 5:15 p.m.

Donations can be made toward the continued restoration of the Cathedral. Checks can be made out to The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Restoration. Donations can be mailed to The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception 125 Eagle Street Albany, NY 12202-1797 or on-line by visiting www.cathedralic.com



Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Eagle Street and Madison Avenue
at the Empire State Plaza in downtown Albany
518.463.4447 • www.cathedralic.com



Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception

Albany, New York



Dear Friends

Welcome to the historic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. I hope that you enjoy your visit and may you carry home an appreciation of why this cathedral is such a special place to the people of our city and diocese.

How the world, our nation and the City of Albany have changed since Albany's first Bishop, John McCloskey, opened the Cathedral doors to the public on November 21, 1852.

The Cathedral is today both the Mother Church of our diocese and a parish church with a congregation hailing from all around the Capital District. The parish operates a major social service outreach program that daily ministers to people in need. The Cathedral hosts major liturgical celebrations and diocesan gatherings as well as a variety of cultural events throughout the year.

During your visit you will see results of our efforts to restore and to renew this glorious structure as a jewel of the city and as the center of the Church at Albany. The South Tower has yet to be rebuilt and much of the brown stone on the exterior of the Cathedral needs to be replaced with new red sandstone imported from England. We have also refurbished the Cathedral's majestic interior space, to facilitate a renewal of its mission as the center of the Church, a dynamic gathering place for all of God's people to worship, to celebrate all that is noble in the human spirit.

The Cathedral possesses great potential to be a major part of a renaissance for the City of Albany. It is my hope that as you go from here you will tell others about the Cathedral and our efforts to preserve it.

If you would like to assist our efforts to preserve the Cathedral and be kept informed about the restoration and renewal project, consider joining Friends of the Cathedral, which is dedicated to the care and preservation of the Cathedral.

I pray that the Cathedral's soaring towers will stand as a beacon of hope and as a house of prayer, welcoming God's people for centuries to come.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+Edward B. Scharfenberger

Edward B. Scharfenberger
Bishop of Albany



"The Cathedral stands to challenge the imagination, to lift the heart where forever all is light. Here is an anchorage, and a refuge, a place to watch and pray, ..."
Edmund F. Gibbons, Sixth Bishop of Albany, November 1927

WITHIN THESE SACRED WALLS
By The Very Reverend William H. Pape
Rector

Welcome to the historic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. People from all over the world have crossed the threshold beneath the sandstone portals of this cathedral church.

From its lofty pedestal atop Madison Avenue hill overlooking the Hudson River, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception today stands watch over the City and Diocese of Albany. The Cathedral's spires have become a symbol of New York's capital city. For over one hundred and fifty years the Cathedral has served as a beacon of hope, reassuring us of God's enduring pres- ence in an ever-changing world.

Cathedral beginnings:
The Albany Diocese was erected by Pope Pius IX on 23 April 1847. Immigrants from Ireland, German principalities, Italy and other European countries were mostly Catholic. These immigrant people arriving in such great number stirred the pastoral concern of the Bishop of New York, John Hughes. His fast growing con- gregation needed closer shepherding. The Coadjutor Bishop of New York, the Rt. Reverend John McCloskey, was installed as the first bishop of Albany on September 10, 1847.

The Treasures of the Cathedral

The Stations of the Cross



The fourteen monumental Stations of the Cross were acquired by Bishop Burke and installed in 1900.

Executed in the Beaux Arts style, the stations won the Gold Medal of the Paris Exposition of 1888.

The High Pulpit



The monumental High Pulpit was hand - carved from quartered oak in Holland by Stolzenburg. It was placed in the Cathedral in 1902 as a gift from a parishioner, Mr. John Augustine McCall, Jr., in memory of his father.

The Gothic Choir Stalls



The neo - Gothic choir stalls located in the sanctuary are made of quartered oak. They were carved by Goyer of Brussels, Belgium. They were acquired by Bishop McNierney and arrived from Europe in 1894, just after the Bishop died. The choir stalls feature the only gargoyles found on the building, carved into the front of each stall.

The Last Judgement Window



The Last Judgement Window in the south transept was acquired by Albany's fourth bishop, Thomas Martin Aloysious Burke. It was made at the famed John Hardmann & Sons Stained Glass Studio of Birmingham England. The window was placed in the south transept in 1897. Hardmann Studio designed and produced stained glass compositions for Augustus Wembly Pugin; father of the neo-Gothic movement.

The East Window

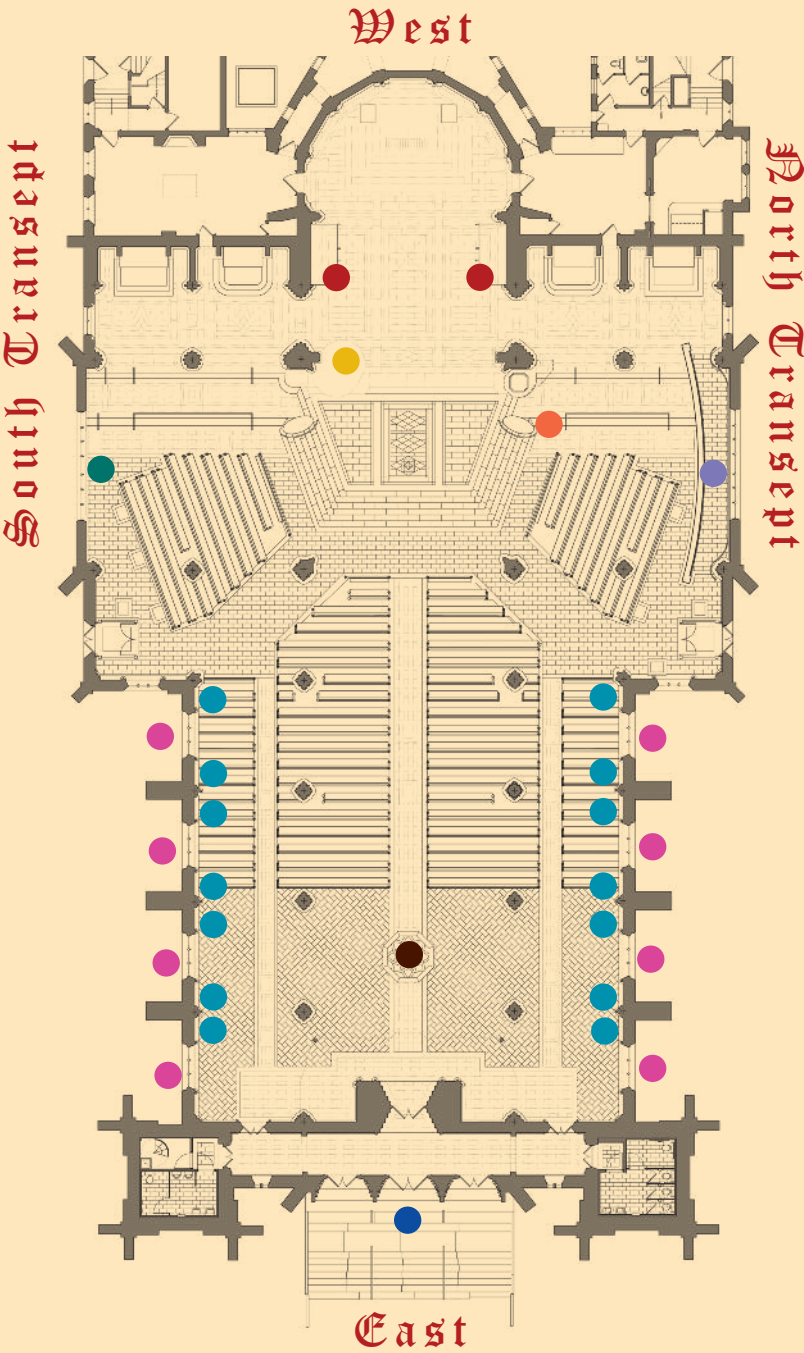


The richly figurative East Window enriches the majesty of the interior space with a kalideoscope of dazzling color as morning sunlight pours in from across the Hudson River. The East and Lady Windows are triumphs of mid 19th century neo-Gothic design. These pieces, produced for our Cathedral just when the neo-Gothic movement was gaining popularity, are very early examples of English neo-Gothic glass in America.

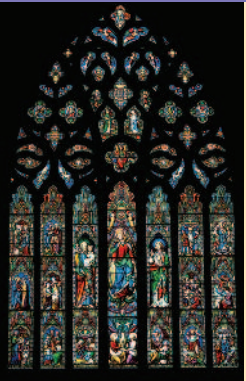
Stained Glass Windows



Between 1888 and 1902 the remaining stained glass windows were placed in the nave, the clerestories, and the sanctuary. These windows are also Hardman & Sons compositions. They were financed by Catholic sodalities, organizations and individuals of the city.



The Lady Window



In 1852, when the building was dedicated, the great Lady Window was set in the wall overlooking the high altar. It was designed and made in England for the Cathedral as a gift from the United Congregations of St. Joseph's in Albany, St. John's in the South End and St. Mary's. The window was designed in the 13th century style by H.W. Akeroyd from the studio of William Wailes of Newcastle upon Tyne, England. It was restored by Cummings Glass Studio of North Adams, Massachusetts, and was rededicated by Bishop Hubbard in 1996.

Caen Stone Baptismal Font



The 19th century Caen stone font was relocated to a place of prominence near the main entrance of the Cathedral to complement a new setting for the current rites of baptism in the Catholic Church.

The Cathedra



The Cathedra meaning "chair" is the symbol of the Bishop's teaching authority. This Cathedra was a gift to Bishop Gibbons from his brother priests upon his retirement in 1954. Bishop Gibbons resided at Mater Christi Seminary until his death in 1964. The Cathedra displays the Gibbons Episcopal coat of arms.

Within These Sacred Walls

John McCloskey, Shepherd of Exiles



The majority of Bishop McCloskey's immigrant Irish flock came to America from Ireland during the harrowing Potato Famine. Being poor and uneducated, they became the object of much ridicule and scorn from the Yankee establishment. The "Know Nothing Movement" at the time was strong in its attacks on immigrants, especially Catholics.

Bishop McCloskey realized that his first task was to help Catholics take their rightful place in their new country. One way for this to be done was by building a great cathedral of which all could be proud. Bishop McCloskey commissioned a young Irish architect, Patrick Charles Keely, (1816-1896) of Brooklyn, New York, to design and build Albany's Cathedral. Keely emigrated to New York in 1842 at age 26.

Dedicated November 21, 1852

Bishop McCloskey of Albany and Bishop John Hughes of New York laid the cornerstone of the Cathedral on July 2, 1848 with over ten thousand people watching in the rain. Bishop McCloskey campaigned throughout the United States and the world for funds to build this cathedral. The Cathedral was built for \$250,000 (\$6.5 million in today's dollars).



In just five years the nave and towers of the Cathedral were built by an immigrant work force, which included many volunteers. The Cathedral was dedicated by Bishop McCloskey, Archbishop John Hughes of New York, and other major church leaders, on November 21, 1852.

When the Cathedral doors opened to the public in 1852, the structure was somewhat different than it looks today. The Cathedral's trademark spires had not yet risen above the north and south towers. The Cathedral's western wall stood where the choir stalls now stand and the Lady Window was set over the altar. The magnificent ornate plasterwork, faux stone walls, carved ribs, ceiling bosses, vaulting and statuary all date from the original construction.

Construction of the Cathedral Spires

The Cathedral's graceful north and south spires were built approximately twenty-five years apart. The north tower spire was completed in 1862. The Cathedral's south tower spire was constructed in 1888.

The Cathedral's bells were blessed by Bishop McCloskey on November 16, 1862. They were placed in the north tower and rang for the first time on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1862. The bells were cast in West Troy (Watervliet), New York, in the legendary Meneely Bell Foundry.

Later additions:

Between 1891 and 1892, during the reign of Bishop Francis McNierney, the apse and adjoining sacristies were added, completing the Cathedral structure. On November 16, 1902, marking the fiftieth anniversary of its dedication, the Cathedral was consecrated by Bishop Thomas M. A. Burke.

The Cathedral through the 20th Century

Throughout the twentieth century until the mid 1960s, the Cathedral served as a parish church to some 3,000 households. The Cathedral served as the parish church to Governor Alfred E. Smith. His daughter Catherine was married here in 1928. The Cathedral has witnessed many historic events: the consecration of bishops, the ordination of priests and deacons, the visits of Cardinals, the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury the Right Reverend Michael Ramsey.



In the mid 1960s the construction of the Empire State Plaza reduced the parish congregation to about three hundred households, threatening the very existence of the Cathedral itself. Due to the vision and foresight of Albany's seventh bishop, The Most Reverend William A. Scully, and Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, the Cathedral was not razed. The Most Reverend Edwin B. Broderick, the eighth Bishop of Albany, was the first to propose

a major restoration of the Cathedral. In 1977 the Rev. Howard J. Hubbard became the ninth Bishop of Albany. Bishop Hubbard was the first native of the Albany Diocese to become Bishop of Albany.

Portal

In 1986 the Cathedral became the site of the first ever service of forgiveness between Christians and Jews on Palm Sunday. This event is commemorated by the sculpture "Portal", which is located outside the Cathedral just west of the sanctuary.

Restoration & Renewal

Since the year 2000, under the leadership of Bishop Emeritus Howard J. Hubbard, the Cathedral has been undergoing a major process of restoration and renewal.

Deteriorated stone on the north tower and clerestories has been replaced by new sandstone imported from England. A rolled lead roof, the only one of its kind at present in America, was installed. You might say the roof is the modern version of what was used in medieval times. The east façade, or main entrance to the cathedral, has received new granite steps in addition to richly carved sandstone portals adorning the doorways. More stone restoration is planned for the east façade, south tower, transepts and aisles.

The spacious and soaring interior of the Cathedral has been repaired and renewed to its original artistic beauty. The main interior enhancements completed in 2010 feature improved seating, lighting, and plaster repair. The crowning achievement of the interior restoration is a magnificent paint scheme, evoking the original design of Patrick Charles Keely. The restored worship space brings a fresh vitality to the Cathedral's role as the center of Diocesan liturgy and community celebration.

On behalf of the Cathedral Parish Family, we thank you for visiting and pray that you will keep us, our Bishop and this historic edifice, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, in your prayers.