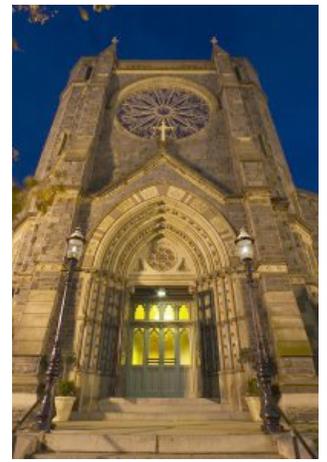


SAINT PATRICK CHURCH

The Oldest Catholic Parish in the Federal City



- Saint Patrick Catholic Church, located at 619 Tenth Street, NW, in Washington, DC was the first church of any denomination to be erected in the “Federal City.”
- Saint Patrick’s, which was established to serve the Irish immigrants who came to the city to work on the federal building projects, was named after the “Apostle of Ireland,” St. Patrick. He is the primary patron saint of Ireland and is credited with the conversion of the Irish people. He died on March 17, 461, which is also his feast day.
- The parish was established by Bishop John Carroll in 1794. The initial meeting place of the congregation was a house at the corner of 10th & E Streets, NW. They worshipped in three other locations until the fourth location was blessed on November 3, 1872 and twelve years later, on November 2, 1884, the first Mass was celebrated in the new church. The official dedication took place on December 28, 1884.
- The new church quickly became the venue for national and international events, most notably the First National Eucharistic Congress in 1895. At the same time the parish was fast becoming the “downtown” church of a thriving commercial area.
- The first American to be ordained a priest in the United States, Fr. William Matthews, was named pastor in 1804 and occupied the post for 50 years, during which time he was also President of Georgetown University, Administrator of the Philadelphia Diocese, co-founder of the D.C. Public Library, long-time member of the D.C. Public School Board, as well as founder or promoter of innumerable institutions, including Gonzaga College, Visitation Convent, and St. Vincent’s Orphan Asylum.
- Father Jacob Walter, its fourth pastor, was especially outspoken in the defense of Mary Surratt, a parish member who was convicted of complicity in Lincoln’s assassination. The pastor stood beside her on the gallows at her execution.
- The Victorian Gothic style church underwent renovations in anticipation of its 1994 bicentennial, yet it still retains most of its historical character; the baptistry, holy water fonts, stained glass windows depicting Marian themes and scenes from the life of St. Patrick. Statuary, icons and other works of art executed and dedicated at various times throughout the church’s history still grace the worship space.
- Each year, St. Patrick’s celebrates a St. Patrick’s Day Mass, as traditional Irish music and dance fill the streets of downtown Washington in honor of St. Patrick. The parish also hosts the Blue Mass each year in May to pray for those in law enforcement and fire safety and remember fallen officers.
- As a spiritual and cultural oasis in the heart of a booming neighborhood of office workers and residents, St. Patrick’s continues its grand tradition of liturgy and music, now in its third century of service to the Church and to the Federal City.

*St. Patrick’s is located at 619 Tenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C.
For more information on Saint Patrick’s, go to saintpatrickdc.org*