

1816

Patrick Charles Keely is born Aug. 9 in County Tipperary, Ireland. He learns the trade from his father, a local builder. There is no record of him receiving any education in architecture.



1842

Keely, age 26, lands in Brooklyn as waves of immigrants are subjected to anti-Irish and anti-Catholic hysteria. With his limited training, he finds work in construction.



1846

Keely marries Sarah Farmer and they have 17 children.

Two of his sons, John and Charles, follow his footsteps into architecture. Later, he and his brother-in-law, James Murphy, found Keely & Murphy architectural firm and take on two of Keely's sons-in-law, Thomas Houghton and William Turner.

# BUILDING FAITH ONE CHURCH AT A TIME

Patrick Keely's mark of mastery has been left on many of New York City's crown jewels. With estimates ranging from 600 to 700 churches, cathedrals, and associated buildings, Keely's architecture spans across the country and even into Canada. Although many of the buildings the "Prince of Church Architecture" designed in the Diocese of Brooklyn no longer exist, Keely's impact lives on nearly 200 years later. The following timeline includes a sampling of Keely's Brooklyn projects that still stand — unless otherwise noted.

1848

Keely makes a lifelong friend in priest and architect, Father Sylvester Malone. He commissions Keely to build a new church in Williamsburg named Sts. Peter and Paul, Keely's first. The mayor of Brooklyn prevents "know-nothings," anti-Irish nativists, from burning the church. The original building was demolished and is now located in a former opera house at 288 Berry St.

1853

Construction starts on St. Mary Star of the Sea, 467 Court St., Carroll Gardens in the newly formed Diocese of Brooklyn. Keely designs the church with a clear view of New York Harbor — a feature fitting of its "Star of the Sea" name. His future son-in-law, Thomas Houghton, serves as an apprentice.

1896

Keely dies on Aug. 11 at his home at 257 Clermont Ave. at age 80. He is among 1,500 New Yorkers who succumb to complications from a massive heat wave. He is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery with a simple granite stone marked only with the name "Keely."

1888

Construction starts on St. John the Baptist Church, 75 Lewis Ave., Bedford-Stuyvesant — the "crown jewel" of St. John's College campus. Keely spends six years on the project which is the final church of his career.

1860

Keely begins construction on St. Anne Church, 251 Front St. in Vinegar Hill, near Downtown Brooklyn. It is dedicated a year later. Today, condominiums have taken its place.

1873

Bishop John Loughlin lays the cornerstone for Keely's design of a new St. Stephen Parish at Summit and Hicks Streets, Carroll Gardens, to accommodate the growing immigrant population. A fire destroys most of the church in 1951, but it is rebuilt and includes Keely's signature spire salvaged from the burnt church.

1874

Keely builds St. Anthony of Padua Church, 862 Manhattan Ave., Greenpoint. The red-brick structure with limestone trim and a 240-foot spire is recognized in 1982 by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Committee. Today it is St. Anthony-St. Alphonsus Parish.

1865

Keely begins design work for a new diocesan cathedral in Fort Greene. Named the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the church never came to be. Bishop Thomas Edmund Molloy, third prelate of the diocese, cancels the project in the 1930s to fund more Catholic high schools and the building becomes part of Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School.

1869

Keely completes a milestone structure: his 325th holy building — St. Charles Borromeo Church, 19 Sidney Place, Brooklyn Heights, where much of his original design remains.

1868

Keely starts work on St. John's College Hall on a new Vincentian-run campus at 75 Lewis Ave., Bedford-Stuyvesant. The campus moves to Queens in the 1950s and becomes St. John's University.

1867

Keely builds the Oratory Church of St. Boniface at its new location, 190 Duffield St., in Downtown Brooklyn, to address an influx of German immigrants.

