

The Diocese of Brooklyn might not be listed in traditional travel guides, but it has plenty to offer visitors who are interested in immersing themselves in history, patriotism, and the razzle-dazzle of movies and television. From the Cathedral Basilica of St. James in Downtown Brooklyn (the diocese’s oldest church) to St. Patrick’s Church in Bay Ridge (where scenes from the television series “Blue Bloods” were filmed), the diocese boasts numerous spots worth a visit.

1 CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF ST. JAMES
250 Cathedral Place, Downtown Brooklyn
The oldest church in the Diocese of Brooklyn is actually older than the diocese itself. Established as St. James Church in 1822 at the behest of Irish immigrants, it was elevated to cathedral status in 1853 when the Diocese of Brooklyn was created. One of its most historic moments came in 1979, when St. Pope John Paul II stopped in front of the cathedral and greeted enthusiastic crowds. In 1982, when the cathedral turned 160, it was elevated to the rank of a minor papal basilica, giving it the full title of cathedral basilica.

2 9/11 TRIBUTE: ST. EPHREM CHURCH
929 Bay Ridge Parkway, Dyker Heights
Situated within a hedge, there is a faithful tribute to 9/11 victims in the garden outside of St. Ephrem Church. The brass statue depicts Jesus cradling the Twin Towers, highlighting his closeness to the attack victims. The statue was commissioned by a parish committee, which included parishioners who lost loved ones in the attack.

3 MOTHER CABRINI SHRINE: SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY-ST. STEPHEN CHURCH
125 Summit Street, Carroll Gardens
St. Frances Cabrini, also known as Mother Cabrini, served at what is now Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary-St. Stephen Church in 1889, so perhaps it is fitting that the diocese erected a shrine there dedicated to the patron saint of immigrants. The centerpiece of the shrine is a statue of Mother Cabrini standing on a cobblestone street with two children on either side of her. The statue, which depicts Mother Cabrini wearing the habit of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the religious order she founded in 1880, is a tribute to her role as an educator who established schools for immigrant children. The shrine was dedicated by Bishop Emeritus Nicholas DiMarzio in 2021, with members of the Missionary Sisters in attendance.

4 PADRE PIO PRAYER SPACE
45-32 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck
Joe Oppedisano, owner of Il Bacco restaurant in Little Neck, has a deep devotion to Padre Pio (1887-1968), the Italian friar and mystic who bore the stigmata — Christ’s injuries from the crucifixion — and wanted to share them with the larger public. So, he built a park on a plot of land he owned around the corner from his popular eatery, containing a statue of Padre Pio as well as statues of the Holy Family and other saints. Complete with benches to allow visitors to sit and enjoy a moment of quiet contemplation, the park was dedicated by Bishop Emeritus Nicholas DiMarzio on April 26. Designed to be a quiet, peaceful oasis where people can



pray, meditate, or just sit and contemplate life, the park is open to the public from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week. Oppedisano has had a lifelong reverence for Padre Pio, whom he said has helped him through two major turning points in his life, including surviving a plane crash in 2020. He has previously told The Tablet that he believes that the friar saved his life and helped him in his recovery from the near fatal incident. He had the prayer space’s life-sized statue of Padre Pio, depicting the stigmata on his hands, shipped from Italy to New York and placed in the park. “I truly believe Padre Pio helped me. I’m alive, and I’m here today,” Oppedisano said. “Look at what he did for me. He can help you, too.”



5 CHAPEL OF MARY, MOTHER OF THE UNBORN: BASILICA OF REGINA PACIS
1230 65th Street, Dyker Heights
The Basilica of Regina Pacis has a chapel dedicated to the unborn, meant as a place of hope for couples who are having trouble conceiving children. Since its dedication in 1989, the Chapel of Mary, Mother of the Unborn, has served as a place where people can come to pray to become parents or ask for the Blessed Mother’s intercession during a difficult pregnancy. The chapel features a statue of the Blessed Mother kneeling in prayer, and its walls are lined with hundreds of photographs of babies who were born after their parents prayed there.

6 CARLO ACUTIS SHRINE: SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH
215-35 38th Avenue, Bayside
There are many statues of St. Carlo Acutis throughout the diocese, but only one official diocesan shrine dedicated to the millennial saint nicknamed “God’s Influencer.” The Diocesan Shrine of St. Carlo Acutis, located inside Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, was dedicated on Oct. 12, 2025 — the saint’s feast day — at a Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert Brennan. Msgr. Thomas Machalski, the church’s pastor, read aloud a decree from Bishop Brennan declaring the church as the official shrine for the diocese.

The shrine houses a first-class relic of St. Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006 at age 15. The relic is a piece of the lining of his heart. St. Carlo Acutis, a tech-savvy Italian teenager, gained fame for creating a website that chronicled all the Eucharistic miracles worldwide.

7 STATUE OF MARTYRED VIETNAMESE PRIEST: OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH
23-25 Newtown Avenue, Astoria
Vietnamese priest Blessed Father Francis Xavier Truong Buu Diep (1897-1946) was murdered by Japanese soldiers who remained in Vietnam after World War II ended (Japan had occupied Vietnam during the war) and blamed Catholics for their plight. He was beatified on July 2 and on July 12, Msgr. Cuong Pham, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, who is Vietnamese American, dedicated a statue of him. Msgr. Pham brought the statue, which depicts Blessed Father Diep holding a cross in one hand and a Bible in the other, from Vietnam after attending the beatification Mass. Blessed Father Diep, who was ordained in 1924, was known as an evangelizer who made a special effort to collect food and clothing to distribute to non-Catholics in need.

8 CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS SQUARE
Rockaway Boulevard, 122nd Street, 116th Avenue, Ozone Park
A large granite cross marks the spot where the New York City Council dedicated a plaza to Catholic war veterans in 1938. The plaza is both a nod to the many Catholics who had served in America’s wars and a salute to the part that Queens played in the founding of the organization Catholic War Veterans of the United States of America. The organization was founded in 1935 by Msgr. Edward Higgins, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Astoria and a World War I veteran. Pope Pius XI gave his blessing for the new group in a meeting with Msgr. Higgins, also blessing American and papal flags that Msgr. Higgins brought with him to the Vatican.

9 ST. MATTHIAS CHURCH (SCENE FROM ‘THE IRISHMAN’ WAS FILMED)
58-15 Catalpa Avenue, Ridgewood
Martin Scorsese filmed a scene for “The Irishman” inside St. Matthias Church. Starring Al Pacino, Joe Pesci, and Robert De Niro, “The Irishman” tells the story of a truck driver who becomes a hitman for an organized crime family. The scene shot inside St. Matthias Church is the baptism of Peggy, the daughter of Frank Sheeran, who is played by De Niro. St. Matthias Church was established by Bishop Charles McDonnell in 1908. After sustained growth, a new church was built in 1924.

10 ST. PATRICK CHURCH (SCENES FROM ‘BLUE BLOODS’ WERE FILMED)
9511 Fourth Avenue, Bay Ridge
The Reagans, the fictional family of police officers depicted in the CBS television show “Blue Bloods,” were Irish Catholics who lived in Bay Ridge, so it is fitting that some of the show’s scenes were filmed in a church. Across the show’s 14 seasons (2010-2024), the producers filmed many scenes at St. Patrick’s Church. The show’s main stars, Tom Selleck, Donnie Wahlberg, and Bridget Moynahan, are Catholic in real life. Established in 1849 for soldiers serving at the nearby Fort Hamilton Army Base, St. Patrick Church is one of the oldest churches in the diocese. The current church building was dedicated in 1926.