

Gothic Pride: The Story of Building a Great Cathedral in Newark**Brian Regan****Rivergate Books, New Brunswick, NJ, 2012. 312 pp., 28 photographs. \$39.95 hardcover. ISBN: 9780813552880.****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v2i1.34>**

In his study of the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, NJ, Mr. Regan has created a work that traces the origins of an often overlooked, but prime example of gothic revival architecture and a symbol of religious adherence to generations of Catholics through the course of state history. The inspiration for this project came from a personal desire to investigate the story behind this unique edifice he often viewed and pondered about from a train window seat. As Mr. Regan noted in his preface, this is a typical sentiment as many have also asked: “What is *that* building doing *there*?” He successfully provides the reader with an answer to this question in a very thorough and explicable manner.

In conducting his research, Mr. Regan investigated a number of relevant sources that led to this carefully written volume. He has provided extensive perspective on the story behind the planning, construction, and long term execution of this structure from initial vision and groundbreaking in 1898 through its ultimate completion in 1954. A chronological approach using textual and photographic resources alike have been employed to provide the reader with a full picture although, as he stated, there is quite a bit of drama in his findings that compliments this story. “The construction of a cathedral in Newark took a crooked path. As it ran along for nearly a century and added new protagonists, it became, but runs, a story of great expectations; a morality play, a classical tragedy; a layered, multigenerational saga; and finally, a tale of grand hope fulfilled but with quixotic aspects that persist (p. 4).” Despite the long road to completion, Mr. Regan ties together both the positive and negative aspects on how and why this structure came to be.

Mr. Regan has not only endeavored to tell a straight narrative on comparable gothic cathedrals from around the globe from an external vantage point, but also on the interior sanctuary, stained glass, altars, narthex, and other features that enlivened the site. He has also provided context from a number of different angles including the lasting location choice, transportation links, ethnic groups represented, and worship practices among other inter-related elements. Further symbolism comes through the story of Catholic immigration and various perils they faced in finding acceptance within the greater society while expressing their faith and identity in such monuments as the Cathedral Basilica during the 19th century. Additionally, individuals including architects Patrick Keely, Jeremiah O'Rourke, Paul C. Reilly, and Gonippo Raggi along with Vicar General, Monsignor George H. Doane, and Archbishop Thomas Walsh are among those discussed in further depth.

In his coverage of the last century, Regan noted the resumption of construction after a protracted hiatus. Problems arose due to creative differences and logistics that came through residual complications that arose due to the Great War, Depression era, and World War II until the Cathedral Basilica was christened and enjoyed in its fulfilled state. He also shows how the structure attained more renown over time through consistent discovery and the pivotal visit of Pope John Paul II to Newark in 1995 that provided a source of pride for the city and the state at large, which leads into a well-developed epilogue and summation.

From overview to specifics, this is a highly detailed volume providing the reader with a vivid overview of the Basilica and its value in the ultimate why the building belongs, where it is, and its appeal to the public. Mr. Regan also more than provides a rejoinder to his initial question, it turns out *that* the Cathedral Basilica has a long and dramatic history and its place in Newark remains *there* as a monument to persistence and discovery as the words of Mr. Regan illustrate.

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