

The Statues of
St. Columba Parish
Hopewell Junction, New York



Unless otherwise noted, biblical citations are from the *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, posted online at www.usccb.org/bible.

Sources:

Farmer, David Hugh. *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. Third Edition. Oxford University Press, 1992.

The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1908. Posted online at www.newadvent.org.

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Introduction

This short booklet is a guide to the statues in and around St. Columba parish in Hopewell Junction, New York. It gives a brief explanation of the statues since they point to the deeper reality of God.

The first part of the booklet begins in the vestibule of the church and then proceeds inside, where it then moves from the altar, out to the sides, and back to the vestibule.

The second part begins outside the front doors to the church, and then moves to the rectory, the school, and the convent before ending at the Lourdes grotto at the back entrance. In good weather, the outdoor walk should take 20-30 minutes.

Christians have always appreciated artwork as both an expression of their love of God and a reminder of the deeper realities of His love. A statue of Jesus catches our attention and is a silent reminder to pray to God in adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and supplication.

A statue of a saint reminds us of their life of heroic virtue and so we pray to ask them to pray to God on our behalf – just as we might ask one of our friends to pray for us or for our intentions. When we remember the struggles in their lives, it encourages us so that we can deal with the struggles of our own lives.

Together with the companion booklet, *The Windows of St. Columba Parish*, we hope that a better understanding of our artwork brings the reader to an even deeper faith.

Both of these booklets were undertaken with the help and encouragement of Msgr. Gerardo Colacicco, who was the pastor of St. Columba for twelve years (2002-2014).

Statues Inside The Church

In the vestibule

Along the wall (left to right)

Left	St. Anthony of Padua
Middle	St. Therese of the Child Jesus, The Little Flower, of Lisieux
Right	St. Jude

Looking back at the front door

Left side	St. Denis
Right side	St. Vincent de Paul
Between the doors to the confessionals	St. Columba
In the corner display case	The Infant of Prague

In the church itself

Above the altar	Crucifix
To the left of the altar	St. Mary
To the right of the altar	Sacred Heart of Jesus
Far left, under window	St. Joseph
Far right, under window	St. Mary
On the back wall, below the organ pipes	Our Lady of Fatima

Statues Outside The Church

Around the church

Left of front door	St. Mary
Right of front door	Sacred Heart of Jesus
Facing Route 82	St. Mary

At the rectory

Garden of Life	St. Mary with the children
Wall facing parking lot	St. John Vianney, the patron saint of priests

At the school

Outside faculty lounge	St. Dominic with inscription to the Dominican Sisters
Outside room 1	St. Mary in shrine

At the convent

At the entrance	St. Mary
On the outside wall of the Adoration Chapel	The Divine Mercy
At the playground	The Holy Family
Grotto at back exit	Our Lady of Lourdes with St. Bernadette

St. Anthony of Padua



St. Anthony was born in Lisbon, Portugal, around 1193. He originally joined the Order of Augustinian Canons, but was so impressed by a group of Franciscan missionaries that he joined them in 1120.

Like St. Francis, he was a powerful preacher, but sometimes found that the people were not always listening. Once he preached to a school of fish that recognized the truth of his preaching. In another story he showed a consecrated host to a donkey, who immediately knelt down before the presence of God.

He died in Padua, Italy, in 1231. His holiness was so evident to all that he was canonized a saint only a year after his death.

This statue is very typical of the depictions of St. Anthony, who often holds a bible symbolizing his preaching, the Infant Jesus, and a lily symbolizing purity. His feast day is celebrated on June 13.

St. Therese of Lisieux / St. Therese of the Child Jesus



St. Therese was born in 1873 in Alencon, France. She was the youngest of five daughters of a watchmaker, and both her parents, Louis and Zeli Martin, are now Blessed.

While she prayed often as a teenager, she had trouble controlling her emotions. At Christmas when she was 14 she experienced a conversion and was finally able to put others first. Although told she was too young to be a nun, she appealed to the bishop and then to the pope. She was accepted into the Carmelite convent when she was 15 years old.

She became sick with Tuberculosis. She remained in the convent and demonstrated a deep prayer life and calm acceptance of her suffering. She died on September 30, 1897, at the age of 24.

Her spirituality was so deep that the Mother Superior had her write down her experiences. These were published after her death as *The Story of a Soul*. Therese was canonized in 1925.

This statue shows her in a Carmelite habit and holding roses in memory of her promise that prayer would “let fall a shower of roses.” Her feast day is October 1.

St. Jude



St. Jude was one of the original apostles. Because his name was close in sound to Judas, he appears to also have been called Thaddeus. In the lists of the apostles, St. Luke lists “Judas the son of James” (Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13) while St. Mark (Mark 3:18) and St. Matthew (Matthew 10:18) list “Thaddeus” in the same place in their lists. St. John mentions an apostle “Judas, not the Iscariot” in his gospel (John 14:22).

In the short New Testament letter attributed to him, he introduces himself as “Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James.” (Jude 1). He calls all of us to a moral life:

... build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. On those who waver, have mercy; save others by snatching them out of the fire ... (Jude 20-23)

Ever humble, in this statue St. Jude points to a picture of Jesus. In his left hand he holds a club, which was the instrument of his martyrdom. His feast day is June 19.

St. Denis



St. Denis was born in Italy and sent to France in the 200's to establish Christianity. He traveled with several other bishops, priests, and deacons and had great success in converting the pagan people to Christianity in the area around Paris.

The pagan priests saw that the Christian preaching was shifting power to Jesus, so around the year 250 they had St. Denis arrested and eventually beheaded on the highest hill in Paris, which is now called Montmartre. "Montmartre" in French means "the mountain of the martyr" and on it today stands the basilica of *Sacre Coeur* (the basilica of the Sacred Heart [of Jesus]).

The Christians retrieved their bodies, buried them, and built the abbey of St. Denis over their graves. Beginning in the 600's almost all of the Catholic kings of France were buried at St. Denis basilica. Our parish of St. Columba began as a mission church of St. Denis here in Hopewell Junction, which is why our parish school is known as St.Denis-St.Columba school.

This statue shows St. Denis in bishop's robes and mitre. As a missionary he carries the bible, and as a martyr he carries palm branches. His feast day is October 9.

St. Vincent de Paul



St. Vincent de Paul was born around 1580 to a peasant family in France. He was educated by the Franciscans and then at Toulouse University and was ordained a priest at the age of 19. One legend claims that he was captured by Moslem pirates and spent two years as a slave in Tunisia before he converted his owner and both escaped to France.

His holiness and preaching made him popular among all, especially the noble families and the royal court. He used his influence to create an apostolate dedicated to the poor and prisoners, especially the galley slaves who rowed the fighting ships of the time.

In 1625 he founded an order of priests called the Vincentian Congregation who devoted themselves to the rural towns and especially the rural poor. In 1633 he added an order of nuns called the Sisters of Charity. Today the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in our parish continues his good work by providing food and counselling for the poor. He died in 1660.

This statue shows him distributing bread to the poor with a kind and loving expression. His feast day is September 27.

St. Columba
(Our Patron Saint)



St. Columba of Iona (521-597) was an Irish monk whose ministry spanned both Ireland and Scotland.

In Ireland, he founded many monasteries, including Derry (546), Durrow (556), and possibly also Kells. His biographer, Adomnan, records that he was a tall and charismatic figure through whom God worked miracles and granted prophecies.

In addition to ministering to the monks under his care, St. Columba saw that the conversion of the Irish kings was a key to winning over the people. He is best known for founding a monastery on the island of Iona.

He sailed to Scotland in 565 and spent most of the rest of his life among the Irish communities and converting the Scots. He was a talented scribe and a book of psalms he copied still exists today. He is also credited with several poems and the lyrics to the hymn "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," which is still in our hymnal today.

Along with St. Patrick and St. Brigit, St. Columba is one of the three patron saints of Ireland. His feast day is June 9.

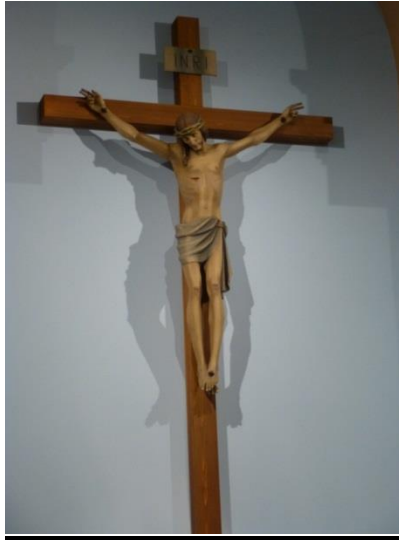
The Infant Jesus of Prague



The original statue of the Infant Jesus may have belonged to St. Theresa of Avila in Spain. The statue was brought to Prague, in what is today the Czech Republic, in 1556. It was passed through several generations of a devout family until 1628, when it was placed in the care of the Discalced Carmelite friars who placed it in the monastery of Our Lady of Victory, Prague.

The original statue is wooden and covered in wax. In this copy, the infant Jesus holds up two fingers of his right hand to indicate the two natures of Christ, both human and divine. The three folded fingers represent the Trinity, one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The globe and cross in his left hand symbolize the power of Christ over the entire world.

The Crucifix



Moving from the vestibule into the church, the crucifix dominates the wall behind the altar. A crucifix includes both a cross and a figure of Christ called the *corpus* (Latin for “body”).

Crucifixes are deeply scriptural. The sign at the top of the cross is INRI which stands for the Latin phrase, *Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*, or “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.” ... it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. (John 19:19-20)

The crucifix has a wound in Jesus’ right chest from the spear that the Roman soldiers used to ensure that He had died.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. (John 19:33-34)

John records that Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ... he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” (John 20:24-25)

St. Mary



St. Mary was the mother of Jesus in his human nature. A teenage girl in the town of Nazareth in Galilee, she was betrothed to St. Joseph, a local carpenter.

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." ... "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. (Luke 1:26-31)

In this posture, often described as Our Lady of Grace, Mary might well be replying to Gabriel with her humble, yet faithful response:

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

Sacred Heart of Jesus

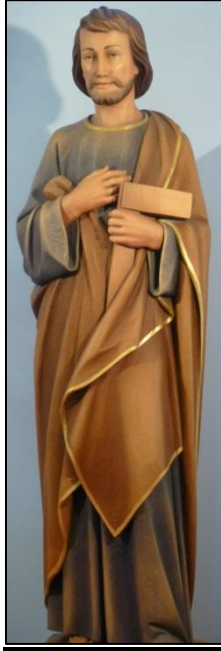


Our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus developed first as a private devotion. It is important to remember that the heart is commonly considered as seat of a person's love, as in "I give you my heart." In this devotion, we are not dedicating ourselves to the physical organ responsible for pumping blood through Jesus' human body, but rather through the real symbol of His love.

In the 1600's, St. Mary Margaret Alacoque (1647-1690) was granted a series of visions including one on the feast of St. John (December 27, 1673) where she was allowed to hear the beating heart of Jesus, just as the Blessed Disciple did at the last supper (John 13:23). In a "great apparition" in 1675, Jesus confirmed to St. Mary Margaret that He wanted frequent communion, especially on the First Friday of the month, and a special commemoration on the Friday after the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi. The devotion spread from France through Europe, and Pope Pius IX established it as a feast of the world-wide church.

On June 11, 1899, Pope Leo XIII consecrated the entire world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This consecration is currently renewed annually on the Feast of Christ the King (the Sunday before Advent).

St. Joseph



The left wall of the church is dominated by a window dedicated to St. Joseph. Under it is a statue of St. Joseph.

In the gospels St. Joseph is called a *tekton*, a “carpenter.” There are other distinct Greek words for masons, who work with stone, and smiths, who work with metal.

In this statue St. Joseph is shown holding a carpenter’s square. This tool helped the carpenter mark straight lines and right angles for cutting.

In the St. Joseph window above this statue there is a depiction of the young Jesus helping Joseph at his workbench. It would have been common for a father to pass on his trade to his son. St. Mark identifies Jesus as a carpenter (Mark 6:3), and St. Matthew identifies Jesus as “the carpenter’s son” (Matthew 13:55).

St. Mary



The right wall of the church is dominated by a window dedicated to St. Mary. Under it is a statue of St. Mary.

In this statue we see Mary protecting the infant Jesus and holding him close to her heart. It reminds us of Roberto Ferruzzi's famous "Madonna of the Streets."

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. (Luke 2:39-40)

Our Lady of Fatima



This statue is located high on the back wall of the church, over the entrance and just below the organ pipes.

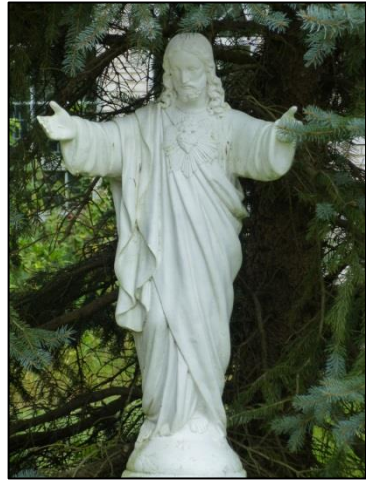
In 1917, Our Lady appeared to three young Portuguese children, Lucia dos Santos, Jacinta Marto, and Francisco Marto. Beginning in May and continuing through October, she appeared monthly to the children on the 13th of the month.

For her last apparition in October, Mary told the children that there would be a great miracle so that all would believe. On October 13, a crowd numbering in the tens of thousands gathered and many claimed to have seen the sun “dance” in the sky and take on many different colors.

Although this was a private revelation, it was declared “worthy of belief” by the local bishop in 1930, and several popes have carried out the consecrations requested by Our Lady.

While Jacinta and Francisco died during the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918-20, Lucia became a sister and lived to age of 97, dying in 2005. All three of the children are now Blessed.

Statues Outside The Church



To the left and the right of the church entrance there are statues of St. Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They match the statues inside the church to the left and right of the altar.



Behind the church, facing the town of Hopewell Junction is another statue of St. Mary holding the infant Jesus. As in the statue of the Infant of Prague in the vestibule, the infant Jesus holds two fingers of His right hand to symbolize His two natures, human and divine, and holds a globe with a cross over it in his left hand to indicate his authority over the world.

Statues Around The Rectory



In the Respect Life Garden, to the left of the entrance to the Rectory, is a statue of St. Mary with the Little Children. It reminds us that Mary, as the Mother of the Church, is really the mother of us all, no matter who we are and despite any physical infirmities we may have.

On the wall of the Rectory, to the right of the entrance, is a statue of St. John Vianney, cure d'Ars. Born in 1786 to a farming family, he was extremely devout. Although he struggled with Latin in the seminary, he was ordained because his superiors recognized that the church needed holy priests as well as learned priests.

As a parish priest he was renowned for his preaching and his ability to counsel people as if he had been given the gift of seeing into their hearts. He was in such great demand as a confessor that thousands of people travelled to his little village and it is said that he spent over 12 hours a day hearing confessions.

He died in 1859 and was canonized in 1925. He is the patron saint of parish priests. His feast day is August 4.

Statues Around The School



To the left of the St. Denis-St. Columba School entrance is a statue of St. Dominic (1170-1221). He founded a group of preachers who fought false teachings of his time. The Dominicans are an order of Priests, Brothers, and Sisters dedicated to preaching and teaching.

The school was established with teachers from the Dominican Sisters of Blauvelt, and the base of the statue lists the names of the sisters who served here over the years.

To the left of the entrance to the School of Religion is another statue of Mary. Its posture matches the statues both inside and outside of the church.

Statues In Front Of The Convent



To the left of the Convent entrance, under an arbor of flowers, is a statue of St. Mary at prayer. To the right, on the wall of the Adoration Chapel is a plaque of the Divine Mercy as revealed to St. Faustina Kowalska.

The Holy Family Statue Behind The Playground



This is the only statue of the Holy Family on the property. It is in the woods behind the playground and the school and provides a model of Christian families for the children and parents on the playground.

Our Lady Of Lourdes Grotto



In 1858, Bernadette Soubirous, a 14 year-old peasant girl, had a vision of St. Mary at Lourdes, France. During that year Our Lady appeared to her 17 times.

During one of her visions the Lady asked Bernadette to dig in the earth to expose a spring of water. She also asked her to have a chapel built on this site, which today is the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes.

When her local priest asked that she identify the person she was seeing, she returned and several times asked for her name. Finally the person said "I am the Immaculate Conception," a dogma defined only recently by Pope Pius IX. Her parents, teachers, and priests all testified that they had not instructed the illiterate girl in this dogma.

In 1863, Joseph-Hugues Fabisch was hired to create a statue based on Bernadette's description, and our statue is a copy of that one. Kneeling to the left is a statue of Bernadette (1844-1879), who herself was canonized on December 8, 1933 – the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Vatican II, Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy

122. Very rightly the fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest activities of man's genius, and this applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. These arts, by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands; they achieve their purpose of redounding to God's praise and glory in proportion as they are directed the more exclusively to the single aim of turning men's minds devoutly toward God. ...

125. The practice of placing sacred images in churches so that they may be venerated by the faithful is to be maintained. Nevertheless their number should be moderate and their relative positions should reflect right order. For otherwise they may create confusion among the Christian people and foster devotion of doubtful orthodoxy.

St. Pope John Paul The Great, Letter To Artists (1999)

7. Precisely on the issue of depicting the Christian mystery, there arose in the early centuries a bitter controversy known to history as “the iconoclast crisis”. Sacred images, which were already widely used in Christian devotion, became the object of violent contention. The Council held at Nicaea in 787, which decreed the legitimacy of images and their veneration, was a historic event not just for the faith but for culture itself. The decisive argument to which the Bishops appealed in order to settle the controversy was the mystery of the Incarnation: if the Son of God had come into the world of visible realities—his humanity building a bridge between the visible and the invisible— then, by analogy, a representation of the mystery could be used, within the logic of signs, as a sensory evocation of the mystery. The icon is venerated not for its own sake, but points beyond to the subject which it represents.