



101 Places to Pray Before You Die: A Roamin' Catholic's Guide

Thomas J. Craughwell

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101 Places to Pray Before You Die will guide you to places that can revitalize your spiritual life and nourish your soul with beauty.

Calling the book his “Catholic bucket list,” Thomas J. Craughwell, in *101 Places to Pray Before You Die: A Roamin’ Catholic’s Guide*, shares his joy in the discovery of hallowed sites across all fifty states. In telling their stories and legends, he honors the people and cultures that made them both beautiful and holy.

Craughwell’s interest in these sacred places was inspired by his treks around New York City, his hometown, with the *American Institute of Architects Guide to New York City* tucked under his arm. He encourages travelers to visit not just great and mighty architectural gems, but the little-known places that hold delights for the soul, beginning with St. Bernard’s Abbey, in Alabama, and ending with Our Lady of Peace Shrine, in Wyoming.

Those who follow the path he charts will discover art that ranges from the sublime to the “borderline creepy,” architecture that spans styles from the Gothic to the starkly modern, places that hold the relics of martyrs and saints, and much more. All these treasures tell stories of the inspirational, conflicted, and sometimes bloody history of the Catholic Church in America; of brave nuns who tended the wounded and dying on Civil War battlefields; of immigrants fleeing persecution, bringing their faith to a new land; and of the perennial need of humans to give honor and glory to something greater than themselves.

There are monuments and battlegrounds to see, mission buildings built by the Indians they served and colorfully decorated by Mexican artists, exuberantly ornamented churches built by European immigrants wanting to feel a touch of home, quiet cloister gardens that invite contemplation, and places where nuns still wear the traditional habit of their order and chant the Divine Office in heavenly Gregorian plainsong.

Craughwell provides the address, hours of operation, and contact information for each site, as well as suggestions for prayer based on its history. Catholic or not, *101 Places to Pray Before You Die* will guide you to places that can revitalize your spiritual life and nourish your soul with beauty.

KRISTINE MORRIS (Religion 2017)

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