

# CATHOLIC **NEW YORK**

## Deceased Children's Mass at Cathedral Highlights Eternal Hope



Cardinal Dolan consoles Patricia Adams, whose 47-year-old son Frank Robert Mattoni died in a motorcycle accident seven years ago. Her husband, Gerald Adams, left, accompanied her to the Special Mass for Deceased Children of Parents from the Archdiocese of New York the cardinal celebrated at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

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**BY CHRISTIE L. CHICOINE**

Cardinal Dolan, celebrating a Special Mass for Deceased Children of Parents from the Archdiocese of New York, referenced the significance of the Scripture passage, “we walk by faith, not by sight” proclaimed in the Second Reading (2 Corinthians 5:6-10).

“The real and the durable would be the invisible,” he said.

“If you want further proof, just ask the dozens of brave parents and grandparents who have lost children—they’re here this morning, many of them. They’ll tell you, they get by, they get by, during somber days and months and years. They get by on hope that the child who left them way too early now lives on the lap of our heavenly Father, who first generously gave that son or daughter to us but mysteriously took him or her back into eternity.

“And there they are awaiting us to be reunited with them,” the cardinal said.

“They sure know it to be true,” he said, “as they can sense it in a memory, savor it in a photograph, hint at it in a whisper, recall it with a smile or mourn it in tears in a sob. They know those children await them. And that’s as true as the lump in their throat and the drama that replays over and over again in their memories.”

The 10:15 a.m. liturgy June 13 at St. Patrick’s Cathedral was sponsored by the archdiocesan Family Life Office.

“I walked in the church as I walked down the aisle, I looked up at the stained-glass windows and I felt light,” said Patricia Adams of St. Francis of Assisi parish in Mount Kisco.

“And I left (the cathedral) and I felt light,” she added of the liturgy she attended with her husband, Gerald Adams. “It reached my heart like no tomorrow.”

Mrs. Adams, whose 47-year-old son Frank Robert Mattoni died in a motorcycle accident seven years ago, spoke with CNY on the phone the day after the cathedral Mass.

Mrs. Adams said the liturgy was consoling, particularly with the approach of significant dates—the anniversary of her son’s death on July 12 and his birthday on Aug. 26. “This will give me strength for a while now to get me through the next couple of months.”

The General Intercessions included a petition for “all our beloved dead, that they may enjoy the fullness of eternal life.”

Cardinal Dolan concluded the Prayer of the Faithful, adding a petition “for children and young people who have died way too young, and for the parents and grandparents who mourn them.”

“We ask the intercession of our Sorrowful Mother Mary, of St. Joseph her spouse during this month dedicated to him, and of St. Patrick our patron and St. Anthony on his feast day, through Christ our Lord.”

Also attending the Mass were Charley and Diane Monaghan of Boston, founders of

Emmaus Ministry Retreats for Grieving Parents ([archny.org/ministries-and-offices/family-life/bereavement/emmaus-ministry-retreats-for-grieving-parents/](https://archny.org/ministries-and-offices/family-life/bereavement/emmaus-ministry-retreats-for-grieving-parents/)).

To meet the spiritual needs of Catholic parents whose children of any age have died by any cause—no matter how long ago—the Family Life Office offers the Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents. While the full-day retreats are usually in-person, virtual retreats have been offered during the coronavirus pandemic.

Mrs. Adams was grateful to see some familiar faces at the cathedral Mass, namely, those she has met on Emmaus retreats in the archdiocese.

“I needed to be with people who felt like I did, who shared the same thing,” she said. “When you’re with a group of people that have all suffered the same loss you have, it just emboldens you.”