

METRO

# St. Patrick's unveils its immaculate facelift

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Decades of dirt (left) were washed away after St. Patrick's revealed its cleaned exterior Friday.

Photo: Reuters/Chad Rachman

If cleanliness is next to godliness, Saint Patrick's Cathedral just scored some points with the big man upstairs.

The venerable house of worship unveiled a brighter new pressure-washed Fifth Avenue facade on Friday — tearing down the scaffolding that masked it for more than two years.

It's the first time the 135-year-old cathedral has undergone this type of restoration — which called for workers to spray its marble exterior with a mixture of water and glass beads to remove decades' worth of dirt and gunk, according to St. Pat's reps.

“It's a striking transformation...We're really excited. It's a beautiful testimony to a place that's near and dear to New Yorkers,” said Kate Monaghan, a spokeswoman for St. Pat's.

And it's not just for looks.

Church leaders ordered the \$25 million top-to-bottom scrub-down, which began in May 2012, after golf-ball-sized chunks of stone began to fall off the Gothic cathedral, Monaghan said.

The restoration helped solve that problem by removing toxins from the marble that had caused it to crack and crumble.

The exterior was last cleaned in 1978 with a water solution — but the results were “not as dramatic” because it wasn't pressure-washed, Monaghan said.

“[This time] it was gentle enough so that it didn't hurt the stone but strong enough to get dirt out and give it a nice, white bright, look,” Monaghan said.

It's part of [a larger \\$180 million restoration](#) that is roughly two-thirds done.

The full restoration, which is expected to be complete by late 2015, includes cleaning and -restoring the stain-glass windows.

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