

Give me your tired your poor ...

When I was six years old I got sick, with a fever and chills, my mother took me to the doctor. He told my mother that I had influenza and I burst into hysterical tears. The doctor was surprised my mother was surprised. When they finally got me calmed down enough I was able to say but that is what Uncle Grady died of! For you see my maternal grandmother's twin brother died in the influenza outbreak in 1917. I had taken that story in my family history and laid a certain understanding over it - the understanding that influenza is always deadly. The doctor thought he was giving me a simple diagnosis My mom just thought I had the flu and needed some aspirin and time in bed. I thought I dying.

It is interesting sometimes to surface our family stories and find out a little bit more about what is and is not part of the reality of the history.

Our Statue of Liberty is a symbol of the sanctuary that the US can be and it has some history that you may not know. Not all of our family story is told all the time.

"Frenchman Edouard de Laboulaye first proposed the idea of a monument for the United States in 1865. Ten years later sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi was commissioned to design a sculpture with 1876 in mind for completion, to commemorate the centennial of the American Declaration of Independence. The Statue was named "Liberty Enlightening the World" and was a joint effort between America and France. ... Bartholdi required the assistance of an engineer to address structural issues associated with designing such a colossal copper sculpture. Alexandre Gustave Eiffel (designer of the Eiffel Tower) was commissioned to design the massive iron pylon and secondary skeletal framework which allows the Statue's copper skin to move independently yet stand upright." [SECOND PICTURE OF INTERNAL STRUCTURE]

It's engineering is stupendous. In essence it was designed and built like a ginormous 3D puzzle that also has to withstand the elements.

Eiffel designed an internal structure around which the pieces of copper that had each been shaped could be attached. That internal structure is a little like the bones and then there is the metal supports that attach the copper pieces to the bones a little like tendons and sinews.

And the size is almost incomprehensible

Statue of Liberty Measurements:

Height from base to torch: 151'1"

Pedestal foundation to tip of torch: 305'1"

Length of hand: 16'5"

Index finger: 8'

Width of head: 10'

Distance across the eyes: 2'6"

Length of nose: 4'6"

Length of right arm: 42'

Length of sandal: 25' (U.S. women's shoe size: 879)

Width of mouth: 3'  
Length of tablet: 23'7"  
Width of tablet: 13'7"  
Thickness of tablet: 2'  
Weight 450,000 pounds

But the origins of the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World is not just about our declared independence from England. Even the full name - The statue of liberty enlightening the world - is about how the liberty found in America speaks to the world.

Laboulaye was an abolitionist and originally he was inspired by the Union defeating the Confederacy.

In an interview with the magazine VICE Ed Berenson director of the French institute at NYU was asked this question

“How did Laboulaye conceive of the Statue of Liberty?”

His answer:

“During his time, Laboulaye was the leading French expert and admirer of the United States. He felt more sympathetic to the American version of liberty than the one that came out of the French Revolution, which he thought was too radical and violent. And he wasn't blind to slavery, because Laboulaye was also the head of France's abolition society. So Laboulaye thought that the victory of the North in the Civil War was a great development because it abolished slavery once and for all.

The tragedy was that the architect of that abolition, Lincoln, had to sacrifice his life. And so when these two things happened—the assassination of Lincoln and the end of the Civil War—Laboulaye came up with the idea of giving the United States a major gift that would commemorate Lincoln and recognize the abolition of slavery.”

He goes on to say in the interview:

Bartholdi who had been commissioned to design the statue used as his starting point an Egyptian statue that he designed that was never created. He made it Greco Roman instead of Egyptian and he added chains.

“Those early statues still had the original idea, because there were broken chains in the hands that symbolized the abolition of slavery. And as those sketches evolved, the chains shrunk until all that's left of them is what we see today, which is a chain under the Statue of Liberty's foot. So you get a morphing of the Statue of Liberty from mainly being about the abolition of slavery to now being more generally about American liberty.”

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/mvkgjb/the-statue-of-liberty-was-originally-intended-to-celebrate-the-end-of-american-slavery](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/mvkgjb/the-statue-of-liberty-was-originally-intended-to-celebrate-the-end-of-american-slavery)

There is a children's book entitled “Her Right Foot”

The point is that even if you have seen a picture of the Statue of Liberty, or many pictures of the Statue of Liberty, or even hundreds of pictures of the Statue of Liberty, you probably have not seen pictures of her feet.

And even if you have seen pictures of her feet, you probably have not seen pictures of the back of her feet. In particular, her right foot.

What do you notice when you see this picture?

That's right! She is going somewhere! She is on the move!

Let's pause here and collect ourselves, and think about this.

Let's discuss this.

Let's think about and discuss the fact that this is the largest sculpture in all the land, and the most iconic symbol of the United States of America. Let's talk about the fact that this statue has welcomed millions of visitors and immigrants to the USA.

People talk about her unusual headwear.

They talk about her gown, which seems a very heavy kind of garment, and would likely result in serious lower back issues.

They talk about her beautiful torch, and the severe look on her face.

But no one talks about the fact that she is walking!

This 150-foot woman is on the go!

Every time we see the Statue of Liberty in pictures, or any time we imagine the Statue of Liberty, we see her standing still. Very still. Like, well, a statue.

But she is moving. She weighs 450,000 pounds and wears a size 879 shoe, and she is moving.

How can we all have missed this?

Or even if we saw this, and noticed this, how is it that we have seen and noticed a 450,000-pound human on her way somewhere and said, Eh. Just another 150-foot woman walking off a 150 foot pedestal?

And most important, where is she going?

Is she going to SoHo to get a panini?

Is she going to the West Village to look for Vintage Nico records?

No, no. She is facing southwest, so she is facing New Jersey. Could she be going to Trenton?

Wait. No. She is facing southeast. So she is not going to New Jersey. But she is going somewhere. But where? Why is she moving?

There are certain things we know. We know that around her feet are chains. They are broken chains, implying that she has freed herself from bondage. We know that Bartholdi wanted us to know this. He wanted us to see the chains. People have talked about the chains.

But few talk about the foot that is so obviously in mid-stride. About the fact that her entire right leg is in mid-stride.

What does this mean? What does this mean that we often forget about this right foot, this right leg?

Here is an idea. Here is a theory.

Here is a reminder.

If the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of freedom,

if the Statue of Liberty has welcomed millions of immigrants to the United States, then how can she stand still?

Liberty and freedom from oppression are not things you get or grant by standing around like some kind of statue.

NO! These are things that require action. Courage. An unwillingness to rest.

The Statue of Liberty was not built to welcome just 1,886 immigrants from Italy, on one certain Sunday in, say, 1886.

No! She was built to welcome 3,000 immigrants from Poland the next day.

The next day, 5,000 Norwegians.-

After that, 10,000 Glaswegians.

Then Cambodians. Then Estonians,

Somalis. Nepalis.

Syrians. Liberians.

It never ends. It cannot end.

After all, the Statue of Liberty is an immigrant, too.

And this is why she's moving. This is why she's striding.

In welcoming the poor, the tired, the struggling to breathe free.

She is not content to wait.

She must meet them in the sea."

What does the Statue of Liberty have to teach us about sanctuary?

Liberty and Sanctuary are tied together in a complicated way in this country. Unless you're part of an indigenous people your people immigrated here either by the slave trade or by choice. Our country owes its origins to immigration and the idea that we could be a place for folks to escape tyranny. And in fact in our early years folks immigrating was important because we needed those Europeans to steal the land from the people already here. This is part of Manifest Destiny Right? The paradox is that the idea of liberty was used to attract people to this country in order that they could take the liberty and freedom away from the indigenous people already here.

But still in our heart beats this metaphor of freedom and liberty something we don't do well but that we aspire to. And we fail at too.

We have entered a time where this idea of giving sanctuary to those escaping tyranny is dying or dead. Our former mayor Stephanie Miner declared Syracuse a Sanctuary city. And Ben Walsh has upheld that Syracuse Police will not arrest someone simply on immigrations status alone.

But it is more complicated than simply declaring oneself a sanctuary city.

### **Who determines sanctuary status?**

“Sanctuary policy is determined at the county level by the sheriff. It has to do with whether the sheriff enforces detainer requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement. When an immigrant is arrested for a crime, he or she is booked and fingerprinted at the county jail. Those fingerprints go to the Federal Bureau of Investigations and, in turn, ICE.

If ICE finds the person is here illegally, it sends the jail a detainer request. ICE asks the jail to hold the person while a warrant is prepared for deportation -- usually 48 hours. What the jail does next determines sanctuary status, since compliance is voluntary. The jail may disregard the detainer request and release the prisoner once charges are dropped or bail is posted -- like it would with anyone else. Or the jail can hold the person until ICE arrives with a warrant and takes custody.

Onondaga County [sheriff has said] he would honor detainer requests, even though he'd never gotten one. Technically, that means Syracuse is not a sanctuary, based on that commonly used criteria. The mayor has no say in the matter.”

[https://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/ben\\_walsh\\_sanctuary\\_city\\_enforce\\_detainer\\_laws.html](https://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/ben_walsh_sanctuary_city_enforce_detainer_laws.html)

So even though Mayor Walsh has said that Syracuse police will not arrest someone based on immigrations status Syracuse is not technically a sanctuary city.

Some folks in this congregation have said to me that they think it would be good for us to be involved in the present day sanctuary movement. Whereby churches give sanctuary to people who are trying to not be deported. It is complicated. Providing Sanctuary is in its ideal a good thing and those who provide sanctuary are breaking the law. There is no law in America that says churches or houses of worship are allowed to provide sanctuary. But churches are considered “sensitive sites” and ICE has a general policy to not arrest in sensitive sites.

There is emergency sanctuary which is short term and there is long term sanctuary. There is making ones church a sanctuary church and then there is supporting a church that is being a sanctuary church. It might make sense for this congregation to take some time and seriously consider do we want to be involved in the sanctuary movement in some way. There may come a time when sanctuary is not simply an immigration issue but a LGBTQI issue.

This isn't my call to make it is something that belongs to the congregation not to the minister. But I do think the question of sanctuary come directly out of our work of welcoming. As we deepen our welcome the question of sanctuary will arise again and again let me cite the closing words of "Her Right Foot" -

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