

Mid-Hudson News: Cardinal Dolan conducts mass with inmates at Otisville state prison

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OTISVILLE – Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York visited the state’s Otisville Correctional Facility on Monday to conduct a special mass for inmates and prison staff. He made the special visit during what is called Reconciliation Week for Catholics and as part of his trip, made time for faithful inmates to confess their sins to him.

An inmate band played the hymns for mass, other inmates brought dogs they are in the process of training and a few inmates prepared creative gifts they had made for the Cardinal to present to him at the end of mass.

Cardinal Dolan said it is always “an inspiration” to conduct mass at a prison.

“What is the caricature of men in prison; that they are hardened, that they are cynical, that they are sarcastic, that they are unrepentant, are you kidding?” the cardinal asked. “You see what we have here, you’ve got men who are enthusiastic about prayer, who love being at mass, who are not hurried, who pray, who sing, who listen attentively.”

Acting State Corrections Commissioner Anthony Annucci said Cardinal Dolan’s visit to Otisville was motivational.

“For inspiration, we often have a statement you’ll see, that is sometimes on the walls, that says something to the effect of, ‘If you’re going to talk the talk, you’ve got to walk the walk’ and I think no one ‘walks the walk’ better than His Eminence; for being here, not just today but, many other occasions. He really believes what he is doing and he means it sincerely when he says how important all of you are,” Annucci said.

After the mass, inmates who made gifts presented them, along with Superintendent Kathy Gerbing who made the Cardinal a special Easter basket.

The Cardinal took time to meet each person who in the gymnasium where the mass was held, to learn everyone’s first and last names as well blessing those who requested it.