

Man arrested entering St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York with gasoline

A man is in custody after he attempted to bring containers of gasoline into St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

The man was identified by NYPD as Marc Lamparello, a PhD student at City University of New York. He has been arrested previously for criminal trespass and public drunkenness.

Lamparello was apprehended by cathedral security around 8 p.m. local time on April 17 and taken into police custody by officers with the NYPD Critical Response Command. He attempted to start a fire using a lighter, and police said he had a car nearby to escape the scene.

According to the NYPD, Lamparello had four gallons of gasoline, two cans of lighter fluid, and two lighters with him when he attempted to enter the cathedral. He was prevented from entering by cathedral security, but was able to spill some of the gasoline on the floor as he was leaving.

About 90 minutes before he attempted to enter the cathedral, Lamparello pulled up to the church in a minivan. He then wandered around for about an hour, before taking the gasoline, lighter fluid, and lighters out of his car. He tried to go into St. Patrick's around 8 p.m. and was apprehended shortly thereafter.

The NYPD said that Lamparello's story was "not consistent" and suspicious, though they have not yet determined any sort of motive.

He claimed he cut through the cathedral as a shortcut, as his van had run out of gas. The minivan had in fact not run out of gas, which led to police taking him into custody. Lamparello was reportedly cooperative and conversational with police.

The NYPD have confirmed that Lamparello had recently purchased a one-way airplane ticket to Rome, scheduled to depart April 18.

Police do not suspect terrorism, and have described Laparello as "emotionally disturbed."

Lamparello was recently arrested for refusing to leave a church in Newark as it was closing. He was charged with criminal trespassing and resisting arrest in that incident.

Lamparello graduated from Boston College, a Jesuit school, in 2004. Since then, he has been a philosophy instructor at several universities, including Seton

Hall, a Catholic university in New Jersey.

Seton Hall is a diocesan Catholic school administered by the Archdiocese of Newark. He previously worked as a music director for a Catholic parish in New Jersey.

His brother, Adam Lamparello, told the Daily Beast news website that he was “shocked” to hear of his arrest, and said that “this is something that is so not him.”

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio praised NYPD for their quick action in apprehending the suspect.

“We are all focused on keeping our congregations and houses of worship safe as they celebrate this Holy Week,” tweeted de Blasio.