



Press Release

100 Nativity Scenes at the Vatican - Edition 2022



Dicastery for Evangelization

Section for Fundamental Questions regarding Evangelization in the World

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December 8, 2022 - January 8, 2023

The International Exhibition of *100 Nativity Scenes at the Vatican* returns for the fifth year. The exhibition brings together works created by artists from around the world who have expressed their creativity in depicting crib scenes.

The exhibition is staged in the impressive space below Bernini's Colonnade in St. Peter's Square. This unique setting places the numerous nativity scenes, true works of art, in a setting that invites visitors to marvel ever more at the traditional scene of the birth of Jesus. This year 120 nativity scenes are on display, coming from various European countries, such as Ukraine, Hungary, Malta, Slovenia,

Slovakia and Croatia, and from other countries, such as Taiwan, Venezuela and Guatemala. Many of these countries are represented by their respective Embassies to the Holy See, which have promoted the event in their own countries.

This year several organizations are participating with original cribs, such as *Atac S.p.A.*, depicting the Nativity inside the typical red bus. Asl Roma 2, with the rehabilitation day care center "La fabbrica dei sogni," (The Dream Factory) has prepared a crib scene made with recycled materials. Several schools in Lazio also enthusiastically joined the initiative, as they do each year, with colorful handiwork made by the children.

The more than 100 nativities capture the inspiration and imagination of the artists who created them from a wide variety of materials, including newspaper, cloth, cork, wood, ceramics, and terracotta. To a great extent, it was the challenges and crises of our present time that provoked the feelings and imagination of the nativity designers. Crib scenes set in war zones are also on display. An example is the one made in Ukraine by Sister Theodosia Polotniuk of the Donetsk Exarchate. At the center of the artwork is the Nativity scene recreated in the basement of a structure reminiscent of the Azovstal' metallurgical plant in Mariupol. Among the cribs are also handiworks that bring to the fore the issue of the climate crisis and the tragedy of migration in the Mediterranean, such as the one made by the Roman Villa Maraini Onlus Foundation, a rehabilitation center for young drug addicts. Some statues of a monumental nativity scene from Viterbo, and nativities produced by several Italian nativity associations are also present.

The Exhibition will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. for 5 weeks, from Thursday, 8 December 2022 to Sunday, 8 January 2023. Admission is free and no reservations are required. On 24 December the Exposition will close at 12:30 p.m. and 31 December, at 5 p.m. Last entry is no later than 15 minutes before closing time. Volunteers from the Dicastery for Evangelization will be present to welcome visitors throughout the entire event.

The Exposition will be inaugurated on Thursday, 8 December 2022, at 4 p.m., by H.E.R. Msgr. Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, of the Section for the Fundamental Questions of Evangelization in the World, along with some members of the Dicastery. A representation from the Ukrainian Embassy to the Holy See will be present, with members of the community who will animate the event with traditional Ukrainian Christmas songs. The band of the Gendarmerie Corps of the Vatican City State will also participate in the inauguration by accompanying the event with some official musical pieces.

The fifth annual International Exhibition *100 Nativity Scenes at the Vatican* was made possible thanks to *UnipolSai Assicurazioni*, which again this year generously supported the event. Gratitude is expressed to *Drivalia*, *Regia Congressi*, *The Media Company* and the *Mariotti Group* who set up the Exposition free of charge.