

CHURCH: POPE LEO XIV AND CARLO ACUTIS ARE THE STARS OF DEVOTIONAL PRODUCTS. DEVOTIO, THE LARGEST FAIR FOR RELIGIOUS ARTICLES, OPENS IN BOLOGNA

Thousands of visitors from 50 countries are expected at the exhibition, which will close on Tuesday, February 3. An extensive program of conferences and workshops is also scheduled, along with exhibitions and events in the city.

Pope Leo XIV and Saint Carlo Acutis are the new stars of devotional items. This is what emerges at Devotio 2026, the only trade fair in Italy and the largest in the world dedicated to products and services for the religious sector, which opened this morning at BolognaFiere and will conclude on Tuesday, February 3. At the stands of the 229 exhibitors, coming from Italy and 17 other countries around the world, visitors can find countless holy cards, statues, rosaries, small framed pictures, and even gadgets dedicated to the American Pope and the young fifteen-year-old proclaimed a saint last September by Prevoost himself. "The Jubilee Year, which also saw the canonization of Carlo Acutis, and the election of Leo XIV have certainly encouraged further growth in the religious products market, where Made in Italy continues to be highly appreciated throughout the world," confirmed Valentina Zattini, Chief Executive Officer of Conference Service, the company that organizes Devotio. "This year's edition of our fair has recorded an increase in exhibitors as well as in professionals from the religious sector who, over these four days, will arrive in Bologna to discover all the latest innovations, find new clients or suppliers, and establish collaborations at an international level as well."

Devotio 2026 was inaugurated this morning in the presence, among others, of Mons. Roberto Parisini, Vicar General of the Church of Bologna, and Franco Baraldi, member of the Board of BolognaFiere and executive of the Bologna Chamber of Commerce. "This fair is biennial and is becoming firmly established in Bologna, following the success of the previous 2024 edition," said Baraldi. "There are 229 exhibitors across a surface area of 15,000 square meters. BolognaFiere is very pleased to host this event, both for its spiritual significance and for supporting the creation of value for companies coming from all over Italy and the world." In Hall 18 of the exhibition center, thousands of religious articles and items for worship are on display, such as crucifixes, rosaries, sacred images, statues and nativity scenes, bells, incense, candles, stained glass and mosaics, chalices and ciboria, liturgical vestments and sacred art, as well as sound systems, donation collection systems, furnishings and technologies for churches, and clothing for the clergy.

The cultural program of "Devotio 2026" includes around ten conferences, workshops, and round tables addressing topics such as the church as the space of the ecclesia, art and literature in dialogue with the sacred, chant and music in the liturgy, the restoration of churches and bells, and Italian ecclesiastical law. Three exhibitions will also be held: "Beyond the Paths," featuring works created by eleven young artists who participated, between 2017 and 2024, in the initiative "Paths of Reconnection: Contemporary Artists in Dialogue with the Christian Mystery," curated by the Scientific Committee of Devotio and the Study Center for Sacred Architecture "Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro"; "Artists' Chasubles," displaying ten liturgical vestments designed by as many artists as part of an initiative by Atelier Sirio; and "Via Crucis" by Filip Moroder Doss, with scenes taken from the meditations of Pope John Paul II for the biblical Way of the Cross celebrated at the Colosseum in 2002. Two events are also scheduled in the city of Bologna: the guided visit "Perspectives on Art and Architecture" at the Lercaro Art Museum and the concert "Sacred Music: Between Renaissance and Contemporary" by the Sibi Consoni Choir-Accademia Vocale di Genova at the Basilica of San Petronio.

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