



D E V O T I O

ESPOSIZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DI PRODOTTI
E SERVIZI PER IL MONDO RELIGIOSO
INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES EXHIBITION

Press release no. 2

CHRISTMAS: NATIVITY MARKET REMAINS STRONG, LESS TRADITION IN HOMES DEVOTIO: "STRONG COMPETITION FROM CHRISTMAS TREE AND SANTA CLAUS"

**The international fair for devotional products will take place from January 3 to February 3 in Bologna
Over 200 exhibitors from around the world will participate, with different initiatives, conferences, and exhibitions**

The Nativity market in Italy remains strong despite the fierce competition from other Christmas symbols, such as Santa Claus and the tree adorned with lights and ornaments. The tradition of depicting the Nativity is still widespread, although the custom of creating the Bethlehem scene with colored paper, tin foil, moss, and various figures is increasingly rare in Italian homes. Instead, it is often replaced by smaller nativity scenes consisting almost exclusively of the Holy Family. This is what "Devotio," the largest fair in the world and the only one in Italy for devotional products and services in the religious sector, reports. The event will take place from January 31 to February 3, 2026, at BolognaFiere. Now in its fifth edition, the fair will feature over 200 exhibitors from Italy and 18 other countries, including some of the leading producers and retailers of nativity figurines.

"The symbol of Christmas remains undoubtedly the nativity scene, even though advertising has long promoted the figure of Santa Claus, Christmas trees filled with colorful decorations, and plenty of sweets and gifts," emphasizes Valentina Zattini, CEO of Conference Service, the company organizing the fair. "In churches, large nativity scenes with figures, lights, and mechanical elements are still created. The Nativity scene often finds space in the squares of many towns, but the tree remains the more eye-catching symbol. In Italian homes, the tradition is still strong, although the custom of creating the Christmas scene together—grandparents, parents, and children—has somewhat faded, with many opting for a small, symbolic nativity scene featuring only the figurines of Saint Joseph, the Virgin Mary, and the Baby Jesus."

The production of handmade nativity scenes in Italy is focused in specific areas: Tuscany and Lucca for traditional classic figurines, Val Gardena for wooden nativity scenes, including large ones, Naples and its famous artisans in Via San Gregorio Armeno for the traditional Neapolitan nativity scene, and Lecce and Sicily for papier-mâché figures. In addition to these districts, new productions in ceramics, plastic, paper, and metal are emerging in the country. Italian-made nativity scenes are highly valued worldwide for their tradition, design, and quality. However, there is competition from abroad, particularly from companies in China and South America.

"Devotio 2026" will feature thousands of devotional products, objects for worship, church furnishings, and technologies, including crucifixes, rosaries, sacred images, statues, nativity scenes, bells, incense, candles, stained glass, mosaics, chalices, ciboria, liturgical vestments, sacred art, audio systems, donation collection systems, church furniture, and clergy attire. During the fair, a comprehensive cultural program will be held on the theme "Liturgical Space: Place of Faith, Cultural Asset," curated by the Scientific Committee of the event in collaboration with the Foundation for Sacred Architecture Studies "Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro." A rich calendar of initiatives is planned, including roundtables, conferences, workshops by exhibitors, exhibitions, and even events around the city, addressing topics such as sacred art, architecture, liturgy, restoration, and liturgical music.

"Devotio 2026" has received the patronage of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, the National Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage and Church Building of the Italian Episcopal Conference, the National Liturgical Office of the Italian Episcopal Conference, the Church of Bologna, FACL - Federation of Clergy Associations in Italy, FIUDAC/S - Italian Federation of Diocesan Unions for Worship, and the Association of Ecclesiastical Museums in Italy. The scientific committee is coordinated by Claudia Manenti, director of the Center for Sacred Architecture Studies "Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro." Partners of the event include the San Fedele Cultural Foundation and the Italian Province of the Poor Sisters of the Divine Master. The digital partner is the marketplace Ereligio.com, while media partners include Edizioni San Paolo, Emil Edizioni (D'A), and Chiesa Oggi.

For more information, visit www.devotio.it/en/index.html.

Bologna, 22nd December 2025