

St. Casimir and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church Tours and Nativity Scenes

During this Christmas season, [St. Casimir at Canton and Patterson Park](#) will be offering free tours of the beautiful St. Casimir Catholic Church at Canton and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church at Patterson Park. The tours of St. Casimir will be held on Wednesday, December 20th at 6:00 PM, with Eucharist Adoration and the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) following from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. A tour of St. Elizabeth of Hungary will be offered on Sunday, December 24th, at 10:00 am, with the celebration of Mass following at 11:30 AM.

This year is the 800th anniversary of the first-ever Nativity scene created by St. Francis of Assisi in Greccio, Italy, in 1223. For Catholics, Pope Francis has approved a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions for all who visit a church entrusted to the pastoral care of the Franciscans and pray in front of the Nativity scene there beginning December 8, 2023 and throughout the Christmas season. Both St. Casimir Catholic Church in Canton and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church across from Patterson Park are under the pastoral care of the Franciscan O.F.M. Conventual Our Lady of the Angels Province.

On December 10, 2023, the children of St. Casimir Catholic Church in Canton will be presenting a short re-creation of the living Nativity at Greccio immediately following the 10:00 AM Mass. All are welcome to attend.

In addition, all are invited to come visit and pray before these Nativity scenes on the following days and times:

- A beautiful miniature Nativity scene will be available for prayer in the St. Stanislaus Kostka Chapel on the corner of O'Donnell Street and S. Kenwood Avenue from December 8th through December 24th, from 30 minutes before the 8:00 AM daily Mass until 4:00 PM on Mondays-Thursdays and 2:00 PM on Fridays.
- The Nativity scene at St. Casimir Catholic Church, 1036 Kenwood Avenue, will be blessed at the Christmas Vigil Mass on December 24th and will be available for prayer 30 minutes before and after all Masses throughout the Christmas season. Additional hours may be announced.



Pastorate of St. Casimir
AT CANTON & PATTERSON PARK



- The Nativity scene at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, 2700 E. Baltimore Street Baltimore, will be available for prayer 30 minutes before all Masses beginning on Sunday, December 17th.
- For Mass times, please consult the Calendar of Events (<https://stcasimir.org/calendar/>) and Bulletin (<https://www.fataonline.com/bulletins/stcasimir>) for the latest information.

In addition, the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America, 1400 Quincy Street N.E., Washington, DC 20017, plans to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the first Nativity scene with a series of events throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. On the first Sunday of Advent, the Monastery blessed its Nativity scenes and marked the opening of the special Exhibition of Nativity scenes hosted at the Franciscan Monastery's visitor center. The exhibition will bring together hundreds of different Nativity scenes representing a diversity of cultures from around the world. Most of the cribs on display are part of the Marguerite and Roger Sullivan Collection, which numbers more than 500 creches from over 100 different countries. For more information visit <https://myfranciscan.org/2023-marks-the-800th-anniversary-of-the-first-nativity-scene/>.

Useful Resources

Scan the QR codes with your smart phone camera.



How St. Francis invented the Nativity Scene in Greccio | EWTN Vaticano Special – <https://youtu.be/JeQ1ib0-7qE>



Plenary Indulgence on the Eighth Centenary of the Christmas at Greccio – <https://www.ofmconv.net/en/indulgenza-plenaria-nellottavo-centenario-del-natale-di-greccio/>

St. Francis and the first Nativity Scene in Greccio

This year is the 800th anniversary of the first Nativity scene. St. Francis of Assisi's reflections on Christ's life led him to create the first-ever Nativity scene in Greccio, Italy, in 1223. St. Francis' inspiration for doing so is believed to have been his trips to the Holy Land in the years 1219 and 1220 where the feelings evoked by being able to visualize the holy sites of Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection made him want to recreate that experience for the people to whom he ministered.

While in Rome seeking the pope's approval for the final rule for his new order, Francis requested and received papal permission to stage the reenactment of Jesus'

birth in Bethlehem in the town of Greccio. A hermitage had been built for St. Francis there, about 50 miles north of Rome. Francis had first journeyed there ten year's earlier and would frequently return to preach in the nearby churches.

Shortly before Christmas, Francis asked the Lord of Greccio, Giovanni Velita, to prepare a cave with live animals and a hay-filled manger. According to the first biographer of St. Francis, Brother Thomas of Celano, Francis sought to "represent the birth of that Child in Bethlehem in such a way that with our bodily eyes we may see what he suffered for lack of the necessities of a newborn babe and how he lay in manger between the ox and ass."

Thus, on Christmas Eve 1223, in the cave outside Greccio, people flocked to see the simple Nativity scene where Francis held Christmas Mass. St. Francis, who was a deacon, proclaimed the Gospel and preached the homily. Fires lit the dark scene while crowds arrived at the spot carrying candles and torches, according to reports.

Giovanni Veleti claimed that he saw a real infant appear in the empty manger and that St. Francis took the beautiful child into his arms, holding him to his chest in an embrace. Miraculous healings were later reported as the result of touching the straw in the manger where the Child Jesus had appeared.

Source: Hannah Brockhaus, *St. Francis and the story of the first Nativity scene*, Catholic News Agency (Dec. 23, 2022) (<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news>)



St. Casimir at Canton & Patterson Park Website
<https://stcasimir.org/>



St. Casimir at Canton & Patterson Park Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/stcasimircantonMD/>



St. Elizabeth of Hungary at Patterson Park Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/StLizBmore/>

</253123/st-francis-and-the-story-of-the-first-nativity-scene>)

Plenary Indulgence for Praying before a Nativity Scene at a Franciscan Church

On this occasion of the 8th centenary of St. Francis' Christmas at Greccio, Pope Francis has approved a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions for all faithful Catholics who visit a church entrusted to the pastoral care of the Franciscans and pray in front of the Nativity scene there between December 8, 2023 and February 2, 2024.

Both St. Casimir Catholic Church in Canton and St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church across from Patterson Park are under the pastoral care of the Franciscan O.F.M. Conventual and will have Nativity scenes.

On December 10, 2023, St. Casimir at Canton and Patterson Park will be presenting a short recreation of the living Nativity at Greccio at St. Casimir Catholic Church immediately following the 10:00 am Mass. All are welcome to come and witness this event and to pray before the Nativity scene.



*St. Casimir at Canton and Patterson Park
"Greccio" Living Nativity Scene (2022)*

A plenary indulgence removes all of the temporal punishment due for sin. The faithful can obtain the plenary indulgence for themselves or apply it to the dead by way of suffrage. Those who are sick or otherwise

unable to participate physically can equally benefit from the gift of the plenary indulgence, offering their sufferings to the Lord or carrying out acts of piety.

According to the Manual for Indulgences by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in order to obtain a plenary indulgence, one must be baptized, not excommunicated, in a state of grace at the completion of the prescribed works and have at least the general intention of obtaining the indulgence (N17). The work prescribed for acquiring a plenary indulgence connected with a church or oratory consists of a devout visit during which an Our Father and the Nicene Creed are recited, unless other directives have been laid down (N19). In addition, it is necessary to fulfill the following three conditions: (1) sacramental confession, (2) Eucharistic Communion, and (3) prayer for the intention of the Pope, several days before or after completing the prescribed works (N20).

Saints of the Week



Scan the QR code to the left with your phone to read and listen about the lives of the Saints.

December 3 – [St. Francis Xavier](#) (April 7, 1506 – December 3, 1552)

December 4 – [St. John Damascene](#) (c. 676 - 749)

December 5 – [St. Sabas](#) (439 – December 5, 532)

December 6 – [St. Nicholas](#) (March 15, 270 – December 6, 343)

December 7 – [St. Ambrose](#) (337 – April 4, 397)

December 8 – [Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#)

December 9 – [St. Juan Diego](#) (1474 – May 30, 1548)