

## Save The Beauty Save the Saint

I. I. (March 27, 2015)



The Duomo of Milan has been a mecca for centuries and continues to draw around 6 million visitors annually. But maintaining this timeless Cathedral's original beauty requires many intense, costly restoration jobs. The goal of the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, also thanks to the help of International Patrons of Duomo di Milano, is to collect 13,5 million Euros, so as to end the more urgent restoration activities. Today significant results have been reached and about 5 million Euros have been collected, over 500,000 Euros coming from small donations. In 2015 it will be revamped again, and, thanks to the construction efforts of the Veneranda Fabbrica, the Cathedral will be looking its best for the Universal Exposition opening in Milan this spring. This will be a unique occasion to participate in a great restoration project and to leave a mark in the history of the Cathedral. By adopting a spire, you will allow future generations to keep enjoying the Italian artistic and cultural heritage. That's why we're bringing you this story, in the hope that you too will want to participate in safeguarding the Duomo and its treasures, starting with the restoration of the statue dedicated to Mother Cabrini, the Milan-born saint, popular New York missionary and patron saint of emigrants around the world.



The fifth largest church in the world and the largest in Italy, Milan's Duomo is a special, magisterial site. Built in several phases over six centuries, beginning at the end of the 1300s, the church has long fascinated believers and non-believers of all denominations. Its 3,400 statues and 135 spires make it the largest outdoor sculpture gallery in the world. No visitor could ever forget the profile of the Duomo in the distance, soaring over Milan, thanks in large part to its original spires. No other church has so many. But the spires, typical components of Gothic architecture, are also very fragile. They require constant care and complex maintenance work to ensure their safety. The mobilization to find sufficient funds for the job has led to a new crowdfunding initiative in New York by International Patrons of Duomo di Milano ([www.duomopatrons.org](http://www.duomopatrons.org) [2]) on the crowdfunding platform For Italy ([www.foritaly.org](http://www.foritaly.org) [2]).

### Save the Saint

People have always helped financing the construction and maintenance of the Duomo with donations of goods and money over the centuries, thus participating to a great challenge towards the future that now has evolved internationally. A call to responsibility expanding rapidly all around the world and which has recorded significant adhesion not only by Milan citizens, but also by entrepreneurs and patrons from United States of America and China. Thanks to International Patrons of Duomo di Milano and the crowdfunding platform "For Italy," which is dedicated to preserving Italian heritage, it's possible to contribute to the maintenance of the spires and statues by donating just \$50. And even small donors can have their names inscribed on a plaque nearby the spire. You don't even have to be from Milan or Italy. As highlighted by Federica Olivares, Italian art publisher: "the challenge of this platform answers a real need: it creates a virtual place where all the lovers of Italy and its excellences, wherever in the world, can take part in tangible projects to bring into the future of mankind the Italian artistic and cultural heritage". The Duomo is not only part of our religious heritage, it's an architectural asset for all mankind. But why would you have to make a contribution from the United States, in particular from New York? What makes i-ItalyNY so interested? Here's something that only a select few know.

### Mother Cabrini

The campaign Save the Saint has special resonance in New York, given the city's history of Italian immigration and the fact that one of the statues towering over the spires of Milan's Duomo depicts Francesca Xavier Cabrini, known in the United States as Mother Cabrini. Born in 1850 in a small town near Milan, at 27 years old Mother Cabrini, founder of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, sought to obtain the approval of the papacy to establish a mission in China. The Pope suggested she go "not east but west," to the United States, to help Italian immigrants then arriving in the US in droves and facing extreme poverty. Cabrini listened, and 126 years ago, in 1889, she herself landed in New York. For almost 30 years, she and her Missionary Sisters tirelessly supported immigrants and the poor, establishing dozens of orphanages, hospitals and schools, from New York to Philadelphia, Chicago to Los Angeles, Denver to New Orleans, and eventually in South America. New York's Cabrini Boulevard is named in her honor, as is Cabrini Street in Chicago, where Mother Cabrini died in 1917. Cabrini was beatified in 1938, and in 1946 she became the first naturalized citizen of the United States to be made a saint. Her popularity extends beyond the Italian-American community, and her method is recognized as being extraordinarily prescient in today's world; her initiatives are still a point of reference for social service workers. But how did Mother Cabrini wind up on the Duomo? During World War II, one of the cathedral's statues was irrecoverably damaged. Its subject's identity was unknown. In the ensuing years, while people were trying to figure out how to replace it, Cabrini was made a saint. Shortly thereafter, the decision was made to dedicate the statue to her—and by association to all the world's emigrants. Its realization was entrusted to sculptor Michele Boninsegna and the new statue was installed in 1956. Since then, Cabrini has looked down upon the city of Milan from up high, bridging the gap between past and future, Italy and America, and Milan and New York.

### Save the Cabrini Spire



Cabrini seems to be saying from on high: “Miracles do happen, but we need your help.” Today the spire and the statue need continuous restorations to shine for the future generations—and that means funding. The nonprofit organization International Patrons of the Duomo di Milano, established on October 2014 has begun collecting funds in New York to restore the statue. “This crowdfunding campaign,” says Chief Development Officer of International Patrons Alessandra Pellegrini, “was started to promote and develop fund-collecting operations for the Duomo di Milano in the U.S.: Those who make donations will receive a little something in return. In the case of Mother Cabrini, perhaps the most exciting deal is that with 50 dollars people can have their name inscribed on a large plaque right underneath the spire.” The sum for restoring the spire has been set at \$150,000, and contributors can make donations on the “For Italy” website. We at i-ItalyNY have joined the call. “Miracles do happen, but we need your help.”.

#### How To donate

If you love Italian art, culture and lifestyle, now you can be part of it all: “For Italy” is the community where people from all over the world can show their love towards Italy, interact with each other and – mainly – contribute to the protection of Italian art and culture, heritage of the whole world. Take an active part in crowdfunding campaigns, do not miss the chance to carve your name into the history of Italian art. Help the Duomo di Milano shine for generations to come! Your generosity will be compensated! Make a gift to International Patrons of Duomo di Milano Inc., and ensure that the spire dedicated to St. Francesca Xavier Cabrini (Mother Cabrini) is safeguarded and restored. All donations to International patrons of Duomo di Milano are tax deductible. For Italy is comprised of two passionate Italian entities dedicated to preserving culture: ARPANet and Arts Council. ARPANet studies and promotes the adoption of technological and communicative instruments. Arts Council is a leader in relations between cultural institutions and enterprises, working to enhance synergies and give economic support to the immeasurable artistic and monumental landscape of Italian heritage.

<http://foritaly.org/donate.asp> [3]

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