News
News

A Christopher Columbus statue is pictured in Chicago's Arrigo Park in a 2003 photo. (Wikimedia Commons/David Wilson, CC BY 2.0)

by Dan Stockman

View Author Profile
dstockman@ncronline.org

## Join the Conversation

February 26, 2026

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

A pedestal for a statue of Christopher Columbus that has sat empty for five years will soon be home to a statue of the patron saint of immigrants.

Chicago officials announced Feb. 18 that St. Frances Xavier Cabrini — known as Mother Cabrini — will take Columbus' place in the city's Arrigo Park in the Little Italy neighborhood, the Sun-Times reported. The Columbus statue, along with another, larger statue of Columbus in Chicago's famous Grant Park, was removed in 2020 in the wake of the George Floyd civil rights protests.

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, patron of immigrants, is depicted in a stained-glass window at the saint's shrine chapel in New York City. (OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz)

Cabrini, who was born in Italy, founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and opened dozens of orphanages, schools and hospitals before her death in 1917 — in a Chicago hospital she founded. She was canonized in 1946 — the first U.S. citizen named a saint — and made the patron of immigrants in 1950.

"When Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini came to Chicago in 1899, she didn't just serve immigrant families, she built institutions that transformed lives," said Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson in a statement, the Sun-Times reported. "She founded schools, orphanages, and hospitals that cared for Italian immigrants facing hardship, and she ensured that resources flowed back into the neighborhoods that needed them most. Her work reflects Chicago at its best: a city that rises by lifting others."

Advertisement

Cabrini was chosen in a vote held by the Chicago Park District. According to the Sun-Times, the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, which sued over Columbus' removal from Arrigo Park, has been loaned the Columbus statue, as part of a settlement with the Park District. The Park District whittled down 157 nominations to eight for people to vote on; Cabrini won with about 40 percent of the vote, the newspaper said.

The statue of Columbus loaned to the JCCIA will be used for a planned Italian immigrant museum, the Chicago Tribune reported. The statue of Columbus that stood in Grant Park will be replaced by rotating art installations celebrating Chicago's diverse communities, according to the Sun-Times.

The city will begin the process of finding an artist to create the Cabrini statue on March 1, Aleteia reported.