



## Tradition Continues: 125 Years in New York

This October will mark the 125th year that the feast of San Vincenzo Martire di Craco is celebrated in New York City. This anniversary has been based on the 1901 New York Times article that describes the celebration at the Most Precious Blood Church. However, new research using current technology and access to online resources suggests there may be a longer history.

Knowing the devotion to San Vincenzo in Craco since 1792, it would be logical that the immigrants arriving in New York during the late 1880s held some form of celebration. The Cracotan community was small at that time and not organized, so any celebration would probably have been confined to homes or a church service, which would not have been reported in newspapers. Throughout the 1890s, more immigrants from Craco arrived, with 400 individuals passing through Ellis Island and settling in New York City. By 1899, there was enough interest within the Cracotan community to organize a mutual aid organization on October 26, when the *Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco* was incorporated in the State of New York.

From that point on, the Society managed the celebration of the feast and, in later years, even added a celebration of the Madonna della Stella. Now, on October 25<sup>th</sup>, the Craco Society will hold a special celebration to mark this historic date. It will include elements that harken back to traditions long gone but are part of our culture.

### COMMEMORATIVE JOURNAL AND PINS

A special Commutative Journal program of the event will be printed that allows members and friends of the Society to honor our legacy, celebrate family, and preserve our history. Lapel pins marking the 125th Anniversary are being created.

### SPECIAL MASS

Don Luigi Portarulo, Parochial Vicar –Italian Community at The Basilica of St. Patrick’s Old Cathedral, will celebrate the 10:30 am Mass for San Vincenzo at the Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood, site of the 1901 feast celebration.

### PROCESSION

For the first time in over 85 years, the Society’s statue of San Vincenzo will be carried after the Mass in a procession through the streets of Little Italy from the Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood to Da Nico Ristorante on Mulberry Street, accompanied by a traditional band.

### LUNCHEON

Da Nico Ristorante, the longtime host of the event’s lunch, will be the site again of this year’s special gathering of the Cracotan community. ■

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### PLAN ON ATTENDING



# Sights of San Vincenzo in New York City



*San Vincenzo and the Banner*—the permanent case holding the statue of San Vincenzo, created for the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco by Pasquale Marrese and fellow Cracotan tailors at their Spring Street shop, using a woodcut image of the saint brought from Craco as their guide. They also sewed the beautiful banner of the Società (shown in the box below the statue).



*Don Luigi and San Vincenzo*—Don Luigi, shown holding the Society's statue of San Vincenzo, flanked by Joe Rinaldi, Craco Society president (left), and Stephen La Rocca, Esq., Board member of the Society. This statue was created for members of the original Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco and will be the one carried in procession this year.

# A Timeline of the San Vincenzo Feast in New York



The Craco diaspora in New York City sustained one of the most enduring Italian patronal feasts in Little Italy: the annual celebration of San Vincenzo Martire, the patron saint of Craco.

The feast's evolution reflects the broader experience of Italian-American immigrant

religious life—beginning with informal devotional gatherings, expanding into major public processions, and eventually contracting under the pressures of assimilation, demographic shifts, and changing times.

## The Craco Diaspora in Little Italy

Between 1880 and 1900, 400 individuals from Craco settled primarily along Mulberry Street, Roosevelt Street, and Baxter Street, forming a small but tightly knit Lucanian enclave in Manhattan. They were shaped by:

- Shared rural origins
- Strong devotional traditions
- Seasonal labor patterns

The San Vincenzo Feast became a visible public expression of their identity.

Before 1901, newspapers contained no explicit references to the San Vincenzo feast, reflecting the small size and limited presence of the Craco community. During this era, there were several Italian language newspapers that might have reported on activity, including:

- Il Progresso Italo-Americano
- La Voce del Popolo
- L'Araldo Italiano
- La Tribuna Italiana
- Il Cittadino

There may have been small notices in one of these referring to a “festa di paese dei crachesi”—a patronal celebration of the people of Craco; or a reference to a meeting of the “devoti di S. Vincenzo” indicating the emergence of an organized group, but nothing tangible has been found yet in any of these publications.

Online searches produced what may have been the first probable NYC feast announcement. A small notice in an Italian paper (likely Il Progresso) mentions: “*La festa di S. Vincenzo sarà osservata dai crachesi...*” (“The feast of St. Vincent will be observed by the people of Craco...”)

No details on procession or parish are apparent, but the timing in an October 1897 publication aligns with the Craco tradition for celebrating the feast. If it can be verified, this may be the

earliest printed reference in New York City explicitly naming San Vincenzo.

The pivotal moment for the celebration in New York City arrived in 1899 with the founding of the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco. Its formation marks the transition from informal gatherings to an organized, annual feast that we continue to celebrate. And until new information is located, we continue to use the 1901 New York Times article as the date of the first celebration. ■

Viva San Vincenzo!

## ITALIANS' GAY CELEBRATION.

### Fireworks and Illuminations in Honor of St. Vincenzo Martry.

The church edifice of the Church of the Precious Blood, at Canal and Baxter Streets, which is being reconstructed, and is now about half built, was gay last night with many colored lanterns and fluttering Italian flags, surmounted by the Stars and Stripes. In front of the church fireworks of many hues were set off, and the neighborhood of Mulberry Bend was kept ablaze until a late hour. Two thousand Italians, young and old, who are members of Father Berardini's parish surrounded the church and quietly enjoyed the spectacle, their faces lighted up by the flare of the fireworks and swinging lanterns.

The occasion was the celebration by the Societe Militaire d' St. Vincenzo Martry of the natal day of its patron saint. The celebration began Saturday evening and was continued last night. The Italian Rifle Guard of New York assisted in commemorating the occasion. The members of both societies attended vespers last evening as a preliminary. They were in full uniform and carried their rifles. Later in the evening a salute of twenty-one guns was fired, and many wheels of red, blue, and yellow fire were touched off. The band of twenty-four pieces of the Societe d' St. Vincenzo was seated on a raised platform in front of the church, and played many airs, both grave and gay.

# Craco

## PASSEGGIATE SUGGERITIVE SERALI

PRENOTAZIONE OBBLIGATORIA

### EVENING WALKS IN CRACO

Summer lights up with magic among the timeless ruins of the Scenographic Museum Park of Craco ... an emotional journey under the stars, in the heart of Craco. Experience the unique charm of this ghost village, bathed in the golden light of the sunset and the mystery of the evening... An exciting experience between history, nature and silence that speaks.

#### JULY

- Sunday 05 July 2026;
- Sunday 12 July 2026;
- Sunday 19 July 2026;
- Sunday 26 July 2026;

#### AUGUST

- Sunday 02 August 2026;
- Tuesday 04 August 2026;
- Thursday 06 August 2026;
- Friday 07 August 2026;
- Sunday 09 August 2026;

- Tuesday 11 August 2026;
- Thursday 13 August 2026;
- Friday 14 August 2026;
- Sunday 16 August 2026;
- Tuesday 18 August 2026;
- Thursday 20 August 2026;
- Friday 21 August 2026;
- Sunday 23 August 2026;
- Tuesday 25 August 2026;
- Thursday 27 August 2026;
- Friday 28 August 2026;
- Sunday, August 30, 2026.

#### SEPTEMBER

- Sunday 06 September 2026;
- Sunday 13 September 2026;
- Sunday 20 September 2026;

**Reservation required.**  
**Info and reservations:**  
**+39 346 5140926**



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