

Mother Frances Cabrini

America's first saint was an immigrant – who didn't want to go to the United States.

Dec. 22, 2017, marked the 100th anniversary of the death of Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917), the Italian-born nun who longed to be a missionary to China. Instead, she crossed the Atlantic to minister to Italian immigrants in America.

No doubt she arrived with the same determination that gave her the courage – the faith – to found her own congregation in 1880: the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This after being turned away by two other congregations because of her frail health.

Why New York City and not Peking? Because when she shared her plans with Pope Leo XIII, he told her to head West, not East. To America, not China. And so Mother Cabrini arrived in 1889, to a land where native-born citizens, political leaders and bishops were concerned with the number of immigrants who had come during the previous decade. A number, a torrent, that showed every sign of growing.

Read more about the life of Mother Francis [here](#).

Did you know?

The bodily remains of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini rest in a New York City chapel, while a national shrine is dedicated to her in Chicago.