

Cabrini is a 2024 American biographical drama film directed by Alejandro Gómez Monteverde and written by Rod Barr, based on a story by both. The film depicts the life of Catholic missionary Francesca Cabrini, portrayed by Cristiana Dell'Anna, as she encounters resistance to her charity and business efforts in New York City. *Cabrini* explores the sexism and anti-Italian bigotry faced by Cabrini and others in New York City in the late 19th century.^[5]

Cabrini was released in the United States on March 8, 2024, by Angel Studios. The film received positive reviews and grossed \$20 million worldwide.

Plot

In 1889 New York City, an Italian immigrant boy named Paolo pushes around his dying mother in a cart; when he goes into a hospital for help, speaking only Italian, the personnel cruelly dismiss him. An older boy, Enzo, welcomes Paolo into relative shelter in the sewers.

Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, a nun with lung disease, visits the Vatican after multiple attempts to found her own missionary order. As a girl, she made paper boats by a river, imagining them sailing off on missions to other countries; she often has visions of her past riverside experiences. A cardinal rejects her proposal, but she insists on seeing the Pope, Leo XIII. She tells the Pope she wants to help the poor and build an orphanage in China, and that the world is not large enough for what she wants to do. He notes that no woman has been allowed to found such an order, but allows her to do so, albeit recommending she should go to New York instead since she will eventually cover the whole world anyway.

Cabrini migrates from Italy to New York with her fellow Sisters to take care of poor Italian immigrants, aiding an ineffective priest in the Five Points area. On her first night there, she has nowhere to stay but a brothel, let in by a sympathetic prostitute named Vittoria who tells her to bar her room's door. Cabrini and comrades hear pounding on the door, and the voice of a pimp named Geno shouting that he doesn't allow roomers for free and that they must not sleep there again.

<i>Cabrini</i>	
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Theatrical release poster	
Directed by	<u>Alejandro Monteverde</u>
Screenplay by	Rod Barr
Story by	Alejandro Monteverde Rod Barr
Produced by	<u>Jonathan Sanger</u> Leo Severino
Starring	<u>Cristiana Dell'Anna</u> <u>David Morse</u> <u>Romana Maggiora Vergano</u> <u>Federico Ielapi</u> <u>Virginia Bocelli</u> <u>Rolando Villazón</u>

Archbishop Corrigan is not helpful, but when Cabrini shows him her letter from the Pope, he grudgingly allows her work to continue. Her Sisters successfully establish charity and hospital work and take care of many children. Cabrini occasionally ventures underground at night to find missing children, at the expense of her deteriorating health; some good Samaritans convey her to a physician, Dr. Murphy, who tells her she likely has only two years to live. Murphy starts helping her order. Paolo and Enzo, considering a future in the mafia, try to steal bread from Cabrini, but she invites them to dinner with the Sisters instead. When Geno tries to take back Vittoria, who has left the brothel to help the Sisters, Paolo takes out a gun and shoots Geno, crippling him. Later, Cabrini convinces Paolo to take the gun, which his father had used to commit suicide, and destroy it. Geno and a henchman later ambush Vittoria and try to kill her, but she stabs Geno to death in self defense.

Cabrini purchases an Upper West Side property as a children's home. The mayor is hostile to Italians, and attempts to drive her out of the property; a city inspector evicts Cabrini and her group. However, Corrigan finds a formerly Jesuit-owned property and lets the Sisters have it, though they must dig water wells there, which Cabrini does personally. Enzo and Paolo go to work to earn money and help Cabrini, but a pump station accident kills Enzo and others. Murphy tells Cabrini a hospital more equipped than hers would have saved many lives. She determines to establish a first-rate hospital, and buys an old building, with the aid of wealthy men from immigrant communities of Irish, Italian, and Jewish descent.

When she holds an Italian-American festival fundraiser with famous singer Enrico DiSalvo, the police, spewing racial slurs, shut it down, and Cabrini is arrested. Corrigan orders Cabrini back to Italy. Visiting there with Vittoria and another nun, she gets the Pope to overrule Corrigan, although the Pope wonders about the tension between Cabrini's faith and her ambition; she states she wants an "empire of hope". She also gets the Italian Senate to appropriate money to finish building the hospital, but violent ruffians set it on fire. Cabrini confronts the mayor, insinuating that he may be responsible for the arson. With the help of a *New York Times* reporter, who had previously helped her with a sympathetic story about the unlivable conditions in Five Points, she gets the mayor to relent in his opposition to the hospital's construction.

Despite her lung condition, Cabrini endures to the age of 67 and becomes hugely celebrated. Later, she is canonized, making her the first American saint (the patron saint of immigrants), with her order spread over all the world, including China.

Cast

- Cristiana Dell'Anna as Francesca Cabrini
- David Morse as Archbishop Corrigan
- Romana Maggiora Vergano as Vittoria

	<u>Giancarlo</u> <u>Giannini</u> <u>John Lithgow</u>
Cinematography	Gorka Gómez Andreu
Edited by	F. Brian Scofield
Music by	Gene Back
Production companies	Francesca Film Production NY Lupin Film Lodigiano Film Development Inc.
Distributed by	<u>Angel Studios</u>
Release date	March 8, 2024
Running time	142 minutes ^[1]
Country	United States
Languages	English Italian
Budget	\$50 million ^[2]
Box office	\$20.3 million ^{[3][4]}

- [Federico Ielapi](#) as Paolo
- [Virginia Bocelli](#) as Aria
- [Rolando Villazón](#) as DiSalvo
- [Giancarlo Giannini](#) as [Pope Leo XIII](#)
- [John Lithgow](#) as Mayor Gould
- [Federico Castelluccio](#) as Senator Bodio^[6]
- [Patch Darragh](#)^[7] as Dr. Murphy
- [Jeremy Bobb](#) as *New York Times* reporter Theodore Calloway
- [Eugenia Forteza](#) as Sister Umilia

Production

The film was executive produced by J. Eustace Wolfington, a [Philadelphia Main Line](#) businessman, entrepreneur and Catholic philanthropist. He also produced the film *Bella* in 2006.^[8] [Principal photography](#) began in western New York in mid-2021 with locations in [Buffalo](#) and [Niagara Falls](#). Production moved to Rome later that year.^[9]

Release

Cabrini was released in the United States by [Angel Studios](#) on March 8, 2024.^[10] The film was screened privately for the community of [Cabrini University](#) at its Alumni Weekend on September 24, 2023.^[11] It was released in the United Kingdom on March 15, 2024.^[1]

Reception

Box office

As of May 20, 2024, *Cabrini* has grossed \$19.5 million in United States and Canada and \$846,362 in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$20.3 million.

In the United States and Canada, *Cabrini* was released alongside *Kung Fu Panda 4* and *Imaginary*, set for a projected gross of about \$8.5 million from 2,840 theaters in its opening weekend.^[12] The film made \$3.1 million on its first day, including \$500,000 from Thursday night preview, ultimately reaching \$7.2 million in its first weekend.^{[13][14]}

Critical response

On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), 91% of 90 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.2/10. The website's consensus reads: "Aided by Cristiana Dell'anna's performance in the title role, *Cabrini* is an uplifting biopic with a timeless message."^[15] [Metacritic](#), which uses a [weighted average](#), assigned the film a score of 51 out of 100, based on 14 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[16] Audiences polled by [CinemaScore](#) gave the film an average grade of "A" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled by [PostTrak](#) gave it an 94% overall positive score.^[13]

RogerEbert.com's Tomris Laffly, rating the film 3 out of 4 stars, praised it as "the kind of middlebrow, big-screen period piece that used to occupy our theater screens regularly just a few decades ago". She concluded "If the name Alejandro Monteverde is familiar to your ears, it's likely because of last year's absurd and highly controversial box office hit Sound of Freedom. Thankfully, *Cabrini* doesn't arrive with a controversy to its name... [It] is in no way a perfect movie, but a damn dignified one that honors the little-known efforts of these fearless women."^[17] Richard Roeper, writing from the Chicago Sun-Times, similarly stated "The biopic *Cabrini* is a beautiful reminder of the human being behind the name... The Italian actress Cristiana Dell'Anna turns in a stunningly effective, movie-star performance in a film that is reminiscent of old-fashioned religious biopics such as The Song of Bernadette and Joan of Arc."^[18]

Conversely, IndieWire's David Ehrlich rated *Cabrini* a C-, criticizing it as "A stodgy, histrionic, and impossibly dull biopic that drags on for more than 140 minutes despite being thinner than a stained glass window." He went on to say "Its dialogue is a stale mess of empty slogans in search of a character to support them, its cinematography smothers turn of the century New York under a mustard cloud of digital sepia, and its structure — credited to both Monteverde and screenwriter Rod Barr — is so absent a convincing shape that it might as well be a person with three arms or a t-shirt that only has sleeves."^[19] Variety's Carlos Aguilar was also negative, writing "[For] all that can be questioned about the makers' intentions, the movie's greatest sin is how lifelessly solemn and aesthetically dull it is. Equidistant from the shock-value slop of the God's Not Dead franchise and from anything remotely considered interesting filmmaking, *Cabrini* lies in a middle ground of mediocrity."^[7]

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External links

- *Cabrini* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14351082/>) at IMDb
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