

Celebrate the Dog Days of Summer with the 129th Giglio Italian Feast

B. S. (June 15, 2016)



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The 129th [Giglio Italian Feast](#) [2] returns to Brooklyn next month for 12 days of celebration.



From July 6th to July 17th, Williamsburg's [Our Lady of Mount Carmel](#) [2] will host the festivities, which includes faith, food, music, history, and neighborhood pride.

Beginning in 1903, the Giglio (Italian for "lily") festival was brought over from Italy after Neapolitan immigrants settled in the neighborhood.

The 12-day festival features a five-story, hand-crafted, 80-feet tall, four-ton tower with a statue of Saint Paolino on top. A 12-piece brass band is also carried on the tower and performs as 125 men carry the structure through the neighborhood streets.

The fun begins on Wednesday, July 6th, at 6:00 p.m. with the opening night mass followed by the candlelight procession. Giglio Sunday is on July 10th, with the Capo Parade at 9:00 a.m., Mass in Honor of Saint Paolino at noon, and the Dancing of the Giglio and The Boat at 2:00 p.m. Feast Day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is on Saturday, July 16th, with midnight mass in Honor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The festival comes to an end with Old Timers Giglio on Sunday, July 17th beginning at 1:00 p.m. The closing ceremonies and raffle drawing will be at 10:00 p.m.

The festival will also host Catholic Masses in several different languages. Other popular attractions of the festival include children's rides, artwork, Italian-themed souvenirs, and Italian delicacies, including zeppoles and braciola.

The leader of this year's festival is Capo Paul "Bo" Pennolino. The Capo is an honorary member of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish who leads the tower through the streets, carrying a megaphone and calling out orders - Forward! Up! Down! Dance! Circulate! - to the 125 men carrying the tower, making it "dance," which is why the festival is often referred to as the "Dance of the Giglio".

The festival also includes a re-enactment of the Neapolitan Saint Paolino's release from captivity. The performance includes an ornate, custom-made ship docking with the Giglio tower on the Brooklyn streets.

As many immigrants from Noli, Italy came to Brooklyn at the beginning of the migration wave in the early 1880's, they were eager to pay homage to the Madonna and their patron saint, [Saint Paolino](#) [3]. Southern Italian's devotion to the Madonna is well-known, but their devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel is of the highest order, as many of the first immigrants quickly contributed to the building of the original Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. After the church was established, the residents were quick to honor their revered Saint Paolino with an annual feast.

Saint Paolino began as a Bishop in Nola, Italy in the fifth century. Legend says that in 410 A.D., North African pirates invaded Nola. During the raid, Bishop Paolino fled to the countryside saving some of the town's children. As Bishop Paolino returned to the town, he came across a sobbing widow who told him that many of the young men of the town, including her son, had been taken into slavery. Bishop Paolino decided to offer himself in exchange for the boy, and was taken prisoner, freeing the widow's son.

While in North Africa, word of his courage and self-sacrifice spread and reached a Turkish sultan. Swept away by the tale of altruism, the sultan negotiated the release of Bishop Paolino. Through his help, Bishop Paolino and his paesani were freed.



As Bishop Paolino returned to Nola, the entire town greeted him carrying lilies, a symbol of love and purity. The homecoming extravaganza is considered the first observance of what has become the annual feast and has since been accepted into other Southern Italian's cultural celebrations.

In the 1950s, The Shrine Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel took over the feast. The church combined the Giglio Feast with the feast honoring Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Since 1958, the Giglio Feast has been celebrated in July, with its activities leading up to its culmination on July 16th, the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The festival's hours are Monday-Friday 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., Saturdays 6:00 p.m. to Midnight, and Sundays noon to 11:00 p.m. The address for the event is 275 North 8th Street at Havemeyer Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn 11211.

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Links

[1] <http://108.61.128.93/files/gigliofestivalnewyorknolamadonna1466027049jpg>

[2] <http://www.olmcfeast.com/>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paulinus_of_Nola