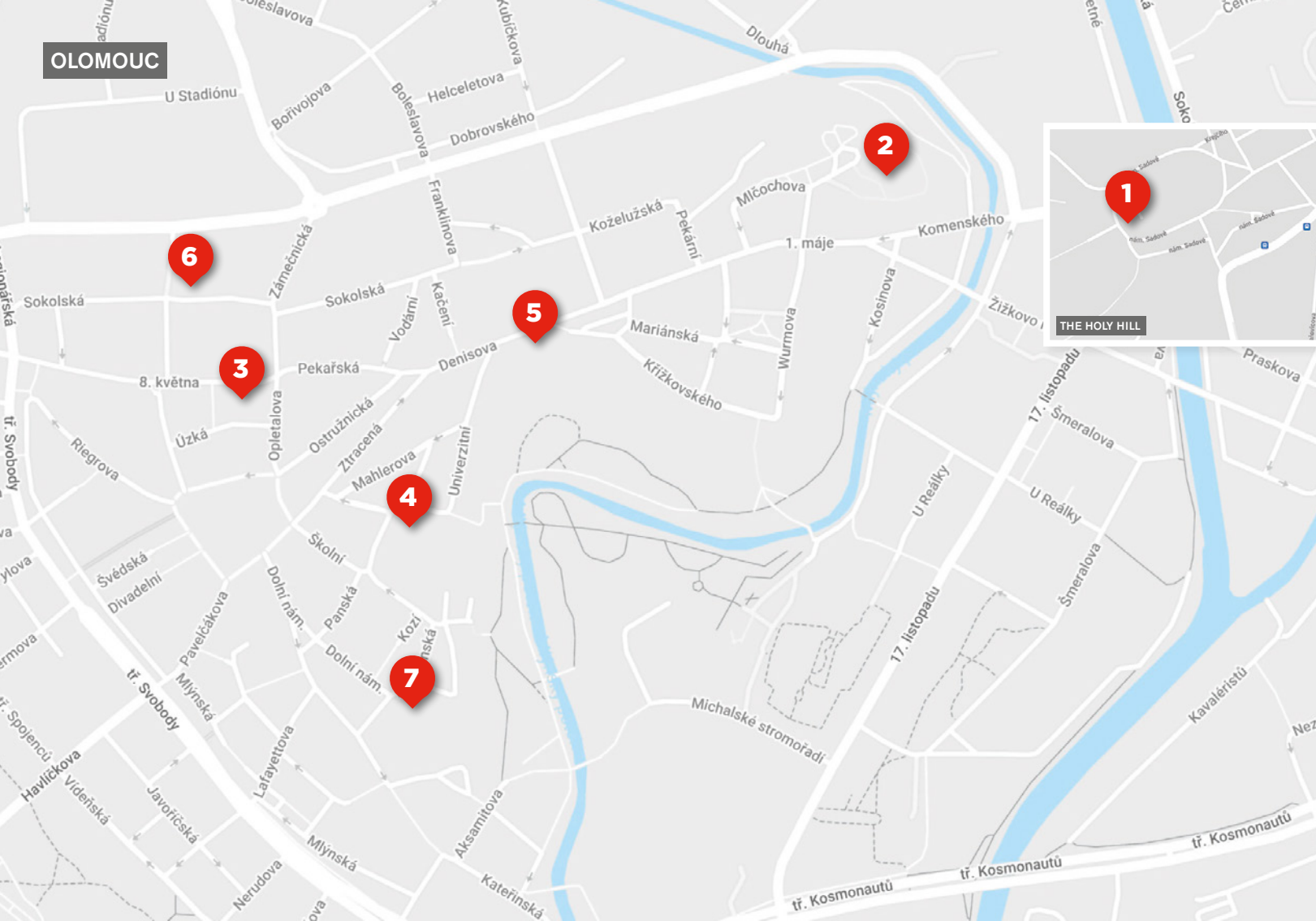


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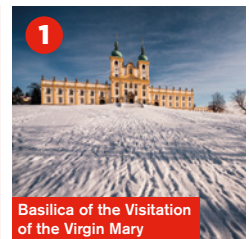


Olomouc cribs

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Get to know the beauty of Olomouc' cribs



Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary



Cathedral of St. Wenceslas



Church of St. Maurice



Church of St. Michael




Church of the Virgin Mary of the Snow



Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary



Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary

A detailed nativity scene sculpture. The Virgin Mary, with a halo, stands on the left, looking down at the infant Jesus who lies in a manger filled with straw. Joseph is on the right, looking towards the child. The scene is set in a rustic, wooden stable.

Cribs:

The mystery of the Holy Night

The Franciscans are rightly proud of having given Christians the delightful tradition of nativity scenes 800 years ago. Sculptures depicting the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ are considered their predecessors. The Jesuits subsequently introduced technical elements into nativity scenes and allowed the figures to move. The greatest boom in nativity scenes came in the Baroque period.

In general, a crib is a symbol of God's love for man.

Most cribs are displayed in churches until Candlemas Day on February 2nd.

The first-ever

In 1223, Saint Francis of Assisi was invited to Christmas dinner at nobleman Giovanni di Velito's estate. Here, in a simple stable, Francis staged the birth of Jesus in a hay-lined manger. Later, he placed the scene into a cave near the village of Greccio and adapted it as a chapel. On the night of December 24, he invited villagers from the wider surroundings and celebrated Holy Mass at the nativity scene while reading passages about Christ's birth from Luke's Gospel. This event is supposed to be not only the first representation of the nativity scene, but also the first Midnight Mass.

The tradition of crib making

Nativity scenes have changed over time. Figures began to be made not only from wood, but also from wax or ceramics. Home nativity scenes were made of paper. Today they get even printed as 3D models.

Our country has a long tradition of crib making with variety of figures and concepts. One of the first moveable cribs in the world was built by the Jesuits in Jindřichův Hradec in 1680. Later, secular motifs were added, or specific people were transformed into nativity scene characters. An integral part is always the crib with the Holy Family, a donkey, an ox, and an angel who usually carries the Latin inscription Gloria in excelsis Deo on a ribbon.

The other figures include shepherds with sheep and the three Magi. Everything else depends on the author or authors. Some nativity scenes are built repeatedly over many years and are gradually expanded right up to the present day. Cribs moved into our homes at the end of the 18th century when they were banned from churches by emperor Josef II. for some time.

1

Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary | The Holy Hill

The oldest figures of this crib were carved around 1840 by Vavřinec Axman, the great-grandfather of the painter Karel Svolinský. Among others, he portrayed king Herod who gave the cruel order to murder the boys in Bethlehem. Other characters, the stable and the landscape were created in 1984 by Adolf Procházka, a carver from Droždín. In recent years, the crib received lighting and its mill was made to move.



6

2

Cathedral of St. Wenceslas

The crib dates to the 19th century and is usually placed in the Loreto Chapel on the right side of the nave. The wooden painted figures ranging in size from 30 to 70 centimetres were created by an unknown author. The scene also includes three plaster statuettes that were added additionally, possibly due to damage, theft, or loss of the original ones.



3

Church of St. Maurice

The crib carved from olive wood has been gradually expanded for the last twenty years by priest František Hanáček who buys the figures from the Zacharia Brothers' woodworking workshop located right in the city of Bethlehem in Israel. It has about three dozen characters including little angels. The newest figures were added in 2019. The crib is not displayed in the church until just shortly before the Christmas Eve.



4

Church of St. Michael

The plaster crib from the 19th century has 14 figures and is usually displayed from the First Advent Sunday, however without the Child Jesus who is placed in the manger only on Christmas Eve during the afternoon Holy Mass for children. Another plaster statue of the Child Jesus in the manger, almost one meter long, is displayed near the altar.



5

Church of the Virgin Mary of the Snow

The plaster polychrome nativity scene dates from the first half of the 20th century. Fifteen figures of 25 centimetres in size represent the Holy Family, shepherds, donors and the Magi. The crib is on display from Christmas Eve until Candlemas Day.



6

Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary

Most of the nativity figures were carved from wood by the Dominican friar Emanuel Šnabl (1862–1942) at the beginning of the 20th century. During communism, the crib used to be displayed in the St. Maurice's Church. It was returned in 1998. The crib gets displayed on December 24 and the Baby Jesus is placed in the manger at the end of the children's Holy Mass which starts at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve. The figures of the Magi with gifts and animals are added to the nativity scene only on the Feast of the Epiphany, i.e. January 6th.



7

Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary

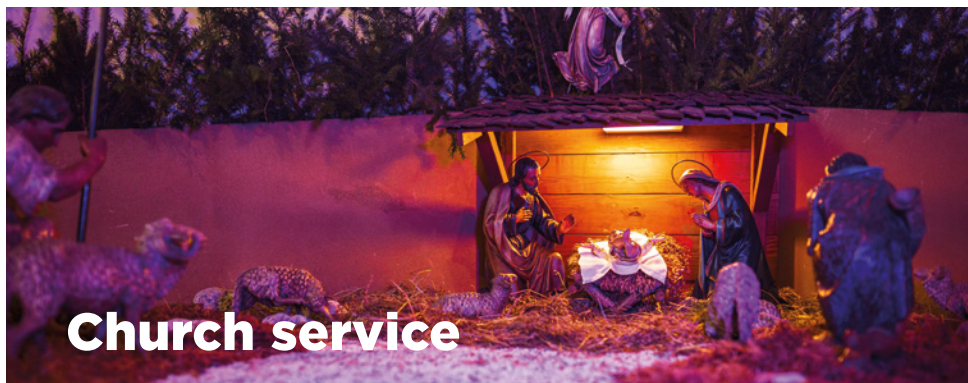
The crib was created in 1887 in the Demetz workshop in Tyrol's Gröden (Val Gardena) and its wooden figures reach a height of one meter. It was commissioned by custos Hubert Ettel and paid with money from public donations. The cost of the nativity scene was 1100 guildens. In 2021, the crib was enriched with a donated collection of stuffed animals.





Lower square (Dolní náměstí)

For more than ten years, the centre of Olomouc has been decorated every year with a large nativity scene by carver Jan Vincker. You can find it during Christmas markets on the Lower square (Dolní náměstí). It was repaired in 2022. "It has the cracks repaired and a new coat of light and dark brown paint," says the crib's author. 15 figures made of black poplar are placed under a shelter. The tallest is one of the three Magi measuring almost two meters. At first, Jan Vincker exhibited fewer figures and gradually added new ones, among the last ones being a dog and an angel. He now considers the nativity scene complete.



	December 24	December 25	December 26	December 31	January 1
Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary	16:00, 24:00	7:30, 10:00 15:00	9:00, 15:00	9:00, 17:00	7:30, 10:00 15:00
Cathedral of St. Wenceslas	15:00, 21:00	8:00, 10:00	8:00, 10:00	15:00	8:00, 10:00
Church of St. Maurice	22:00	7:30, 9:00	7:30, 9:00	7:00, 8:00	7:30, 9:00
Church of St. Michael	15:00 for children, 20:00	9:00	9:00	16:00	9:00
Church of the Virgin Mary of the Snow	20:00	19:00	19:00	19:00	19:00
Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary	15:00 16:00 for children 24:00	8:00, 9:30, 11:00, 18:00	9:30, 18:00	17:00	9:30, 11:00, 16:00, 18:00
Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary	17:00	10:00, 17:00	17:00	17:00	10:00, 17:00

The indicated times are traditional, they may change slightly in the following years. | www.ado.cz



OLOMOUC INFORMATION CENTRE

Upper square (Horní náměstí) in the Town Hall's arcade | infocentrum@olomouc.eu

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Information Centre

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