

Catholic Travel Centre
Worldwide Tours and Pilgrimages
~ presents ~

A Pilgrimage to Italy

Including: Assisi, Loreto, Lenciano,
San Giovanni Rotondo, Rome & Much More!

Under the Spiritual Direction of Fr. Jim Romanello
St. Henry Catholic Church in Dayton, Ohio
Our Lady of Good Hope in Miamisburg, Ohio
Group Coordinator: Ms. Megan Deaton

11-Days: February 27 to March 9, 2019

WED, FEB 27, DAY 1: DEPART THE USA

We depart en route to Rome with complimentary meals and beverages served aloft

THU, FEB 28, DAY 2: ARRIVE ROME / ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS / ASSISI

We arrive in Rome where we are met by tour manager, who will accompany us throughout our journey. We board our motor coach and make our way to Assisi, stopping along the way for a bite to eat on our own.

We arrive at the village of Santa Maria degli Angeli where we visit the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, containing the Porziuncola, built by St. Francis and his followers. The Porziuncola is a tiny church constructed within the Basilica, like a ship in a giant bottle. Nearby is the site of Francis' death. Here we celebrate the opening Mass of our Pilgrimage. We continue to our hotel to rest from our journey. Dinner tonight is served at our hotel. (D)

FRI, MAR 1, DAY 3: ASSISI: VISIT OF THE TOWN

This morning we celebrate Mass in the Basilica of St. Francis, whose life has served as an inspiration for Pope Francis. After a visit to the Basilica, we continue with a walking tour of the city, visiting the major sites associated with St. Francis, including: the Chiesa Nuova, built over the home of Francis' family; and the Basilica of St. Clare,

where St. Clare lies in repose. Here we also see the original 'San Damiano' crucifix that spoke to Francis, urging him to "rebuild My Church." Francis interpreted the dream literally and went to work on repairing the building at San Damiano. Only later did he understand the deeper meaning of the dream.

We also visit St. Mary Major Church. This is the site where some 800 years ago, St. Francis dramatically renounced his father's wealth, disrobing in the presence of his father and the bishop. This afternoon is at leisure to stroll these historic cobbled streets on our own. Dinner is at our hotel this evening. (B, D)

SAT, MAR 2, DAY 4: ASSISI / LORETO / LANCIANO / SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO

This morning we board our motor coach for Loreto, Italy's Marian Shrine, to visit the Holy House of Loreto. Legend tells us that in 1291 the Virgin Mary's House was miraculously transported from Nazareth to Croatia then further transported here to Loreto in 1294. We find the Holy House inside the Basilica.

Next, we make our way to Lanciano, site of the Miracle of the Eucharist that dates back to the eighth century. Here we celebrate Mass. We continue on to San Giovanni Rotondo, home of Padre Pio. We check-in to our hotel for dinner at the evening. (B, D)

SUN, MAR 3, DAY 5: SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO: VISIT, EXCURSION TO MT. ST. ANGELO

This morning, after breakfast, we celebrate Mass at Santa Marie delle Grazie and visit Padre Pio's tomb.

We visit the church where Padre Pio received the stigmata plus Padre's most famous charitable work, the Home for Relief and Suffering. We will see the confessional where Padre Pio spent innumerable hours with the multitude of pilgrims, directing them on their journey toward God. We will have time to partake in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during our time today.

Later, we enjoy a breathtaking view of the Cargano Peninsula en route to the Grotto of Michael the Archangel. Six different popes and St. Francis of Assisi have knelt in prayer at this Grotto, seeking the protection of St. Michael. We return to San Giovanni Rotondo and have dinner at our hotel. (B, D)

**MON, MAR 4, DAY 6: SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO / PIETRALCINA / ROME:
ST. PAUL'S OUTSIDE THE WALLS & PANORAMIC TOUR OF THE CITY**

This morning, after breakfast at our hotel, we depart San Giovanni for Pietralcina, the birthplace of Padre Pio. We visit his birth house and celebrate Mass at the Church of St. Mary of the Angels. After Mass we enjoy some time at leisure for lunch on our own before continuing on to Rome.

Upon arrival in Rome, we visit the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, housing the Tomb of St. Paul the Apostle, affectionately known as the Apostle of the Gentiles. Although heavily restored, the present basilica looks much the same as it did in the 4th century.

Next, we enjoy a panoramic orientation tour of the city, including the Roman Forum and Coliseum (both viewed from outside), the Vittorio Emmanuelle Monument, The Arch of Constantine, the Circus Maximus, and other highlights of the city before check-in at our hotel for dinner and the evening. (B, D)

TUE, MAR 5, DAY 7: ROME: ST. PETER'S MASS, VISIT & HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

This morning we celebrate Mass at the Basilica of St. Peter. After Mass our guide will take us on a tour of the Basilica. We will have time to pray at the tomb of Saint John Paul II and of Saint John XXIII. We have some time for lunch on our own, with plenty of time afterward to visit the religious article shops in the Vatican area. Some might like to climb up to the dome of St. Peter's on their own.

Mid-afternoon we meet a local guide who will lead us on a walking tour of historic central Rome, starting with the beautiful Spanish Steps. We continue with a visit to the Trevi Fountain, where we toss our traditional three coins into the fountain to make our three wishes - one for love - one for money - and one to return to Rome.

Our next stop is the Basilica of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, housing the tomb of the St. Catherine of Siena. Along with St. Francis, St. Catherine is a co-patron of Italy. We also visit the Pantheon, originally built to honor all the gods of Ancient Rome as well as the church of San Luigi dei Francesi with its three stunning paintings by Carravaggio and the Piazza Navona, with its beautiful fountains. You may wish to stop in route for a gelato (an Italian ice cream) at the famous Giolitti's!

Dinner tonight is on our own. (B)

WED, MAR 6, DAY 8: ROME: PAPAL AUDIENCE & LEISURE

This morning, after breakfast, we make our way to Vatican City to attend the General Papal Audience with Pope Francis (subject to the Holy Father's schedule). We will celebrate Mass at a local church and receive our ashes for Ash Wednesday. The balance of the afternoon is at our leisure. We return to our hotel. Tonight we gather for dinner at a local restaurant. (B, D)

THU, MAR 7, DAY 9: ROME: ST. MARY MAJOR, ST. JOHN LATERAN / SCALA SANCTA, MAMERTINE PRISON & ST. PETER IN CHAINS

We begin today with Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the largest church in Rome dedicated to our Blessed Mother. It was here that Pope Francis celebrated his first Mass as Pope.

We visit the Papal Basilica of St. John Lateran, this is actually the cathedral for the diocese of Rome. It is here that St. Francis persuaded Pope Innocent III to give permission to begin the Franciscan Order. Next, we visit the nearby Scala Sancta, purportedly the stairs which Christ climbed prior to his condemnation by Pontius Pilate.

We see Mamertine Prison, the traditional site of the apostles Peter and Paul's imprisonment. Presumably, Paul wrote his Second Letter to Timothy during his second imprisonment, which occurred during Nero's reign. Unlike his first imprisonment, when Paul was permitted to live under house arrest, his second term was served in a dungeon. A small well here was constructed around the spring which was used by Peter to baptize other prisoners and two prison guards, Processus and Martinianus.

"I am imprisoned for His sake. It is on account of this that I have to put up with suffering, even to being chained like a criminal (2 Tim 1:8, 2:9) Paul also spoke openly of his loneliness here: "Make every effort to come and see me as soon as you can. Make every effort to come before the winter. Only Luke is with me." (2 Tim 4: 14-15)

The last stop for today will be the Church of St. Peter in Chains, featuring Michelangelo's famous statue of Moses. Dinner is served at our hotel. (B, D)

FRI, MAR 8, DAY 10: ROME: SCAVI, VATICAN MUSEUMS & LEISURE

This morning, after breakfast, we have the rare privilege of a guided visit and tour of the underground excavations (Scavi) beneath St. Peter's Basilica. *(These tickets and are subject to final confirmation 24 hours before the proposed visit)*

After being crucified, St. Peter was buried in a hillside necropolis, designed to look like a city. In the 4th century, Emperor Constantine ordered the construction of a church over St. Peter's tomb. The church stood until the 16th century when the present basilica was built on the site.

As the centuries passed, so did the memory of the necropolis beneath the basilica. In 1939 workers digging a tomb for Pope Pius XI, broke through a wall beneath the church and rediscovered the necropolis. Pope Pius XII ordered the excavation of the necropolis. Since the necropolis acts as the foundation for St. Peter's Basilica, the entire area could not be uncovered without the possibility of having the Basilica collapse. Work continued for a decade and on December 23, 1950, Pius XII announced the discovery of St. Peter's tomb.

This afternoon we enjoy a tour of the Vatican Museums, whose treasures include the ancient Rome exhibits with the famous Laocoon statue, and the High Renaissance murals of Raphael, which he was painting at the same time Michelangelo completed the Sistine, another marvel. The restoration of its frescoes reveals startling bright colors - a new light on Michelangelo! The Sistine chapel was commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV to mark the Holy Year 1475. The balance of the day is at leisure. Dinner tonight is served at our hotel. (B, D)

SAT, MAR 9, DAY 11: RETURN TO THE USA

We transfer to the Rome airport for our return flight to the United States, our suitcases full of memories of our pilgrimage. (B)

Note: While no changes are anticipated, there may be unforeseen occasions when certain alterations become necessary to this itinerary, either due to changes in airline schedules or for other reasons. All Masses are subject to local church schedules and substitution with alternate Mass sites if churches mentioned are not available.