

Preliminary and subject to change

Day 1: Monday, October 14, 2019, USA / ROME

Today we depart the USA for our overnight flight to Rome via jumbo jet, arriving the next day. Meals are served on board.

Day 2: Tuesday 10/15, ROME / ORVIETO / ASSISI

Upon arrival in Rome we travel to **Orvieto**. In 1263 a pious German priest, Peter of Prague, stopped in Bolsena to celebrate Mass on his pilgrimage route to Rome. While a devout practicing-Catholic servant, Peter couldn't erase the skepticism he felt about Christ being present in the consecrated Host. As he uttered the words of Consecration at the altar above St. Christina's tomb, blood began seeping from the consecrated Host. Blood dribbled across his hands onto the altar and corporal leaving Fr. Peter quite stunned and confused. He interrupted Mass requesting to be taken immediately to the tiny neighboring city of Orvieto (just 10 miles away), where the Holy Father, Pope Urban IV, was residing. An investigation was launched and orders were given to retrieve and transport the Host and blood-stained linen to the Orvieto Cathedral where they were, and still are today, reverently enshrined and exhibited. It was this miracle that prompted Pope Urban IV to commission St. Thomas Aquinas to write a special Mass for what was to become our annual Feast of Corpus Christi. We visit the **Cathedral of Orvieto** (location of the shrine) where the **Eucharistic Miracle** is exhibited. Then, we travel to the charming town of Assisi to check-in at our hotel for a welcome dinner and overnight. **[D]**

Day 3: Wednesday 10/16, ASSISI

Francis of Assisi was born into wealth and was naturally a happy person. Others were drawn to him. As he grew up, he became a wild dreamer who sought glory, nobility and the prestige of knighthood. But God's plan for him was different. God visited Francis in a dream and called him to reform. Prayer became important to Francis, and while his conversion wasn't immediate, he was remorseful and amended his ways. Eventually he gave up his worldly goods, began preaching, and taught about being kind and giving to those less fortunate. Soon after, a brotherhood of followers formed and became the Franciscans. At the age of 42, Francis received the stigmata wounds and died with them two years later. We will be escorted by cars to the **Church of St Damiano**. Then, we are driven to the **Basilica of St. Clare**, which houses her incorrupt body in a crystal casket in the crypt. Off the main nave of the Basilica is the crucifix from which Christ spoke to St. Francis in San Damiano. St Francis heard a voice say, "Go Francis, repair my church, which is in ruin." Thinking that God was telling him to rebuild San Damiano, Francis renounced worldly goods and began immediately to repair the building. Only later did the saint realize that God had been speaking of His living Church. Next, we visit one of Christianity's most revered shrines, the **Basilica of St. Francis**, and see the frescoes depicting events in the life of this gentle saint. The **remainder of the day is free**. Suggestions include:

- Revisit the sites to which you feel the most drawn or spend time in prayer.

- Visit Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, the “underground” ruins of Assisi, the fortress of Roco Maggiori, the Cathedral (Duomo) and it’s museum, and/or Carceri (St Francis’ retreat - an arduous hike up a steep hill - taxis available).
- Stroll through the city. Relax and observe the culture and its people or spend time shopping for mementoes.

We gather at the hotel this evening for dinner. Overnight in Assisi. **[B,D]**

Day 4: Thursday 10/17, ASSISI / MONTEFALCO / CASCIA / MANOPPELLO

We depart Assisi and stop in the lower plains to visit the **Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels**, built in 1569 to protect the Portiuncula. The Portiuncula is the church that St Francis and his brothers were given shortly after Pope Innocent III approved of their rule. We also see the statue of St. Francis with the live white doves, the thornless rose bushes and the cave where St. Francis prayed in solitude. Then, we make two stops on our way to Manoppello. First is Montefalco where we learn more about Saint Clare of the Cross. Clare was devout and exceptionally intense about Christ’s passion. Upon her death, the mark of the Cross was found above her heart and removed to a reliquary. We proceed to the **Church of Santa Chiara in Montefalco** to see the incorrupt remains of Saint Clare of the Cross. From there, we make our second stop in Cascia to see the **Eucharistic Miracle** and the **Sanctuary of St. Rita**, the patron saint of the impossible. A married woman, mother, widow, nun, mystic, and stigmatist, St. Rita played many roles in her life. We visit the Basilica where we see her incorrupt body and relics such as the crucifix from which she received the stigmata. We can also see the blood-stained pages of the breviary that cradled a miraculous host, which in 1330 left a perfect outline of Christ’s face. We visit **Roccaporeno**, the birthplace of St. Rita. Our day concludes as we check in at our hotel near Manoppello for dinner and overnight. **[B,D]**

Day 5: Friday 10/18, MANOPPELLO / ORTONA / LANCIANO / MONTE SANT'ANGELO

Our day begins at the **Church of the Volto Santo di Manoppello**, which is believed to house an image of the veil of Veronica upon which Jesus’ face was wiped on his way to Calvary. The image on the veil is an exact match when laid over the image on the Shroud of Turin (the yellowed-linen burial cloth said to bear the crucified image of Christ). We spend time there before we continue to **Ortona**, a coastal town on the Adriatic, where we visit the **cathedral** which houses the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle. Then, we visit **Lanciano**, another coastal town. We stop at the **little Church of Lagontial**, where the 8th-century “Miracle of the Eucharist Living Flesh of Jesus” took place. During Mass, a Basilian monk doubted that Christ was truly present in the consecrated bread and wine. As he looked on, the host and wine visibly changed to flesh and blood. Scientific tests done in the latter half of the 20th century have concluded that the flesh and blood are human in origin, the flesh consisting of muscular tissue of the heart. We visit the **Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Miracle** and spend time in Eucharistic adoration. Then, we proceed southeast to **Monte Sant’Angelo**, where we check in at our hotel for dinner and overnight. **[B,D]**

Day 6: Saturday 10/19, MONTE SANT'ANGELO / SAN GIOVANNI / MONTE SANT'ANGELO

Our first stop today is at the **Grotto of St. Michael the Archangel**. Six different popes, St. Francis, and at least four other saints have knelt in prayer at this grotto where St. Michael appeared in the 4th century. This is the only building of worship in the Roman Catholic Church not consecrated by humans; it was consecrated by St. Michael himself. From there, we board our coach for the brief trek to **San Giovanni Rotondo**, the former home of Padre Pio, a Capuchin monk and stigmatist with a reputation for holiness. We visit the **tomb and sanctuary of Padre Pio** where his partially incorrupt body has been laid to rest in a crystal crypt, **tour the old Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie** (Our Lady of Grace), and see the **crucifix** from which Padre Pio received the **stigmata** in 1918. We are also able to view the confessional where he spent innumerable hours with a multitude of pilgrims, directing them on their journey toward God. There will be **free time** to explore independently. We return to Monte Sant'Angelo. This evening, enjoy **dinner on your own**. Overnight in Monte Sant'Angelo. **[B]**

Day 7: Sunday 10/20, MONTE SANT'ANGELO / MUGNANO DEL CARDINALE / PAGANI / POMPEII

Traveling from Monte Sant'Angelo on Adriatic Sea (Italy's eastern coast) to **Mugnano del Cardinale** near the Tyrrhenian Sea (Italy's western coast) is how our day will begin. Upon our arrival in Mugnano del Cardinale, we visit the **Shrine of St. Philomena**, wonder worker of God. We pray before the tomb where her sacred body rests and see the artifacts brought here from Rome when the shrine was first established. We also view the diorama of her life and learn about the history and devotion to this little saint and the incredible miracles associated with her. Next, we head to **Pagani**, location of the relics of St. Alphonsus Liguori, bishop and doctor of the church. We visit the **Basilica of Saint Alphonsus**, where we will likely be fooled by life-like appearance of a wooden statue of the saint under an altar to the left of the main sanctuary. Many visitors, at first glance, think it's the incorrupt body of the saint. It's true some relics of the saint are present but they are located within the silver section below the statue. Today's journey concludes as we arrive at **Pompeii** to check in at our hotel for dinner and overnight. **[B,D]**

Day 8: Monday 10/21, POMPEII / CASSINO / ROME

After breakfast, we stop for a **brief guided tour of the ruins of Pompei**, located at the foot of Mt Vesuvius. In 79 AD, Mt. Vesuvius erupted and volcanic ash suffocated the town. Thousands of people and animals were killed in a single day. Cavities in the ash left by preserved bodies were filled with liquid plaster to protect them during excavation. What the museum center discovered from that process was an astonishingly detailed look at men, women, children and animals in their last moment of life. The casts are that defining. We stop at the **Basilica of Our Lady of Pompeii** (also known as Our Lady of the Rosary). Then we depart Pompeii and make our way to **Cassino**, to visit the **Abbey of Montecassino**. The Abbey was founded by St. Benedict around 529 AD. The present day Abbey is a replica of the previous 17th century structure; Allied bombs destroyed the complex during WWII attacks on the Germans. Our journey

continues as we proceed to the Eternal City of **Roma**. We catch glimpses of the city as we travel to our hotel to check in for dinner and overnight. **[B,D]**

Day 9: Tuesday 10/22, ROME

We begin at the **Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel**, where Michelangelo's restored masterpieces adorn the ceilings and walls. From there we enjoy Holy Hour and a **guided tour of St. Peter's Basilica**. The Basilica is very impressive with its imposing architecture, rich ornamentation, and marvelous works of art. We view one of Rome's most recognized works of art, Michelangelo's Pietá. We have a little bit of **free time to explore independently**. Suggestions include:

- Just outside the basilica is the Vatican Post Office. Feel free to stop in and purchase postcards and stamps to send to family and friends (bring the addresses). Send one to yourself as a keepsake! Remember, although Vatican City is located with the city limits of Rome it is, in fact, its own state. With 110 acres and fewer than 900 residents, Vatican City State boasts the title of the smallest, international state that is recognized by the rest of the world. Therefore, the stamps will be quite unique. Interesting gifts can also be purchased inside the post office.
- The 312-step climb to the "cupola" Dome of St. Peter's Basilica is worth the effort and energy as views from the top are magnificent. An elevator/lift to the roof level is available but from the roof to the top is step by step. There is a nominal fee.
- Adjacent to the basilica are gift shops where you can purchase items you wish to have blessed at the Papal Audience.

Later this afternoon, we visit a **catacomb** and **St. Paul Outside the Walls**, a beautiful basilica which houses the remains of St. Paul under the main altar. This evening, join friends or enjoy a private sampling of local cuisine at the trattoria (local diner) or restaurant of your choice as **dinner is on your own**. Overnight in Rome. **[B]**

Day 10: Wednesday 10/23, ROME (PAPAL AUDIENCE) / NETTUNO / ROME

Early today, we proceed to **St. Peter's Square for the Papal Audience** (provided our Holy Father is home). We listen to the words of His Holiness Pope Francis and receive his blessing with pilgrims from all over the world. After the audience, we board the coach for a 40 mile trip south to **Nettuno**, where we learn more about the young Maria Goretti. Her life and death were focused intensely on defending her chastity, protecting her assailant from grave sin, and ultimately learning forgiveness. We visit the **Basilica of Our Lady of Graces and Saint Maria Goretti**, location of the relics of her body encased in wax. We also visit the **farmhouse** where she lived and died. We return to Rome for dinner and overnight. **[B,D]**

Day 11: Thursday 10/24, ROME

After breakfast, we visit the Cathedral church of the pope, **St. John Lateran**. Here we see the altar that holds relics of Sts. Peter and Paul. Across the street we see **la Scala Santa** ("the Holy Stairs") which were transported from Pilate's palace in Jerusalem and on which the Savior climbed before His crucifixion. Those who wish to pray each step on their knees may do so. The option to take the side stairs on foot is also available. Then, we visit the **Basilica of St. Mary Major**, where we view relics of the wooden manger in which the infant Jesus was laid after his birth. Next, we proceed to **Chiesa Nuova** to the **chapel of St. Philip Neri** (1515-1595). Philip Neri, also known as Philip the Good, one of Rome's most popular saints. At an early age, he devoted his life to God. He studied philosophy and theology but spent 13 years as a layperson. His personality won him friends on all levels of society. Eventually, he was ordained a priest. Using humor and charitable manner, Philip became an outstanding confessor. Later, he founded the Congregation of the Oratory. Philip was widely respected and his advice "was sought by many of the prominent figures of his day". We have the opportunity to venerate his incorrupt body which is exposed below the altar in the chapel. Our last stop before dinner is at **Santa Cecilia in Trastevere**, a Basilica church built over the home of St. Cecilia who was martyred in the 3rd century. In 1599 her incorrupt body was discovered complete with the deep axe cuts in her neck. This evening we gather for a **farewell dinner at Ristorante de Benito**. Overnight in Rome. **[B,D]**

Day 12: Friday, October 25, 2019, ROME / USA

Today, we travel to the airport to board our overseas flight back to the United States. Our journey home offers the opportunity to recall the sites and experiences of our pilgrimage. We are blessed with new friends, a deeper appreciation of the grandeur of God's landscape and the inspiration from the saints to emulate their love for God and our faith. **[B]**