

2023

12
DAYS

Treasures of Italy

Not only is Italy a land of unforgettable charm and beauty, it is also a land made rich in grace by its colourful history of holy men and women. Follow their paths etched into our faith heritage from the great Christian centre of Rome to sacred towns made famous by St Benedict, St Francis, St Catherine and St Clare.

COMMENCES MON 4 SEPTEMBER 2023 • 11 NIGHTS / 12 DAYS

Rome (3 Nights) / Montecassino / Pietrelcina / San Giovanni Rotondo (2)
/ Monte Sant'Angelo / Lanciano / Loreto / Assisi (2) / Siena / Florence (2)
/ Ravenna / Padua (2) / Venice



Accompanied by
**Fr Daniel
Benedetti MGL**



the genuine pilgrim experience

harvest
journeys



pilgrim highlights

- + Begin a 3 night exploration of the Eternal City from St Peter's Square to the Catacombs as we unearth the rich traditions of our Church.
- + Pray before the relics of St Benedict, founder of western monasticism and his sister St Scholastica in Montecassino.
- + Travel back in time to encounter the living presence of St Francis as we dwell for 2 nights in the hillside village of Assisi.
- + Soak in the inspiration of Florence, one of the great art capitals of the world.
- + Enjoy a generous 2 night stay in Padua alongside the great Basilica and tomb of St Anthony.

SYMBOLS

(B) = Breakfast (L) = Lunch (D) = Dinner

DAY 1: MONDAY - ARRIVE ROME

Check into your centrally located hotel. Tonight meet your fellow pilgrims for your first group dinner.

Rome overnight (D)

DAY 2: TUESDAY - ROME

Commence our pilgrimage with a spectacular Mass at St Peter's Basilica before coming to the nearby **Vatican Museums**. Wander the spectacular chambers leading to the **Sistine Chapel** to view Michelangelo's masterpieces, including the magnificent fresco of the Last Judgment. Continue through to the awe inspiring **St. Peter's Basilica**, the largest church in the world for an informative exploration. Our guided tour will feature among other highlights Michelangelo's stunning **Pietà**, the **tomb of Pope St John Paul II**, the great **Confessional** and the **Crypt**

containing the tombs of several Popes.

In the afternoon, visit the impressive **St Mary Major Basilica**. Onwards to the **Basilica of St John in Lateran** (First Papal residence) and the adjacent **Holy Stairs** brought from Jerusalem to Rome in 326AD by St Helena (as a favourite of pilgrims, these steps may only be ascended on the knees).

Visit the **Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme** with its extraordinary collection of relics from the Holy Land.

Rome overnight (BD)

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY - ROME

PAPAL EVENT: We will return to St Peter's Square this morning for a memorable **Papal Audience** with Pope Francis as we join with pilgrims from around the world. (*Subject to the Pope's presence in Rome*)

Journey this afternoon out to the majestic **Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls**. Originally consecrated in 324, the saint's tomb is visible now under the Papal Altar. We will celebrate a wonderful Mass here as a special tribute to the Church's greatest evangelist.

Continue then to the ancient **Catacombs** for a memorable guided tour to marvel at these underground burial tunnels for Christians and Hebrews.

This evening we will celebrate our final night in Rome at **L'Eau Vive French Restaurant** run by missionary nuns who actually sing the Ave Maria to us between courses!

Rome overnight (BD)

DAY 4: THURSDAY - VIA MONTECASSINO & PIETRELCINA TO SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO

Today we farewell the Eternal City as we commence our day's journey towards the great shrine dedicated to Padre Pio.

Heading south we firstly wind our way up to the spectacular mountaintop **Abbey of Montecassino**, founded in 529 by St Benedict, patron saint of Europe and the founder of Western Monasticism. The Abbey

was carefully rebuilt after the epic battle of 1944 and still dominates the surrounding countryside from its mountaintop setting. We will have a guided visit on arrival. The **Basilica** is richly decorated with mosaics. We come as pilgrims to pray before the relics of St Benedict and his sister, St Scholastica. The **museum** displays examples of medieval monastic art and there may be the opportunity to spend some time here (at own expense).

Departing Montecassino we journey east to **Pietrelcina**, where St Padre Pio was born on 25 May, 1887. Visit here the room of his birth, the friary and the **Church of Our Lady of the Angels**.

Continue on to **San Giovanni Rotondo** where **St Padre Pio** spent a lifetime of prayer, penance, self-denial and intense pain caused by the five wounds of Our Lord's passion. His list of supernatural gifts are overwhelming - reading of souls, prophecy, miraculous healings, spiritual direction, etc while spending extraordinarily long hours in the confessional and often sleeping very little. Throughout his life he received visits from Jesus and Mary and had regular communication with his guardian angel.

San Giovanni Rotondo overnight (BD)

DAY 5: FRIDAY - SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO & MONTE SANT'ANGELO

This morning we take a tour of the shrine including: **Tomb and cell of St Padre Pio; his Confessional**; and the **Crucifix** from which he received the stigmata. We visit the English speaking office for an inspirational talk by one of the friars and to view a special rare film showing highlights of St Padre Pio's daily life in the Monastery.

Travel by coach in the afternoon to **Monte Sant' Angelo** to visit the hilltop **Sanctuary of St Michael the Archangel** and celebrate Mass in the Grotto Cave. The Archangel is said to have made four separate appearances here mostly during the 5th century, making the sanctuary here one of the earliest Christian



St John Paul II



St Benedict



St Padre Pio



St Francis



St Clare



St Anthony



St Mark

sites in Europe and visited by thousands of pilgrims every year. St Francis also visited the sanctuary but feeling unworthy to enter the grotto, stopped in prayer at the entrance, kissed a stone and carved on it the sign of the Tau cross.

San Giovanni Rotondo overnight (BD)

DAY 6: SATURDAY - VIA LANCIANO & LORETO TO ASSISI

After breakfast we depart San Giovanni Rotondo and journey north to **Lanciano**, scene of the **Eucharistic miracle** in the 8th century where, during Mass and moments after consecration, the Basilian monk (who doubted the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist) found himself holding a host that had changed to flesh and the wine to blood. To this day the **sacred relics** have remained incorrupt while recent scientific examinations have confirmed that the “flesh is real flesh, the blood is real blood”. Here we will celebrate a special Mass.

Continue our journey north to the great Marian shrine of **Loreto** to visit the **Holy House of Nazareth** and the beautiful Madonna of Loreto. More than 50 Popes have made a pilgrimage to the house transported by angels to a hill in central Italy in 1294. Tradition has it that this is the house where Mary received the Annunciation, where Jesus grew to manhood and the Holy Family dwelled. A tour of the shrine will be included.

Drive through scenic Umbrian countryside to the pilgrimage centre of **Assisi**, where St Francis tended the poor and sick and founded the Franciscan Order. On arrival in this medieval hillside town we will visit the **Basilica of St Mary of the Angels** down on the plains where St Francis spent most of his life. Here we will see the **Portiuncula** (meaning ‘small

portion of land’) where St. Francis returned for prayer, the thornless rose bush, and the chapel where he died in 1226. On Palm Sunday 1211, Francis received in this church Clare of Assisi and dedicated her to the Lord. Onwards to the Upper Town to check in to our hotel.

Assisi overnight (BD)

*“My spiritual life has been enhanced in a way I could not have foreseen.”
— Marlies Smitfoort*

DAY 7: SUNDAY - ASSISI

This morning we awake to the sound of chapel bells, cobblestone footsteps and the tangible spirit of St Francis preserved in this holy town.

After breakfast we enjoy a guided tour through some of the town’s highlights including: the tranquil **Church of San Damiano** and the actual chapel where it all began when the voice of Christ spoke to Francis in the year 1205. Here too we find the first monastery of the Order of St Clare where Clare built her community in close friendship with Francis.

Culminate up at the **Hermitage** (Eremo delle Carceri), an oasis of peace and tranquillity in the woods built on the site of a simple cave where St Francis often withdrew to spend many hours in prayer. The cave and the Chapel of Our Lady are preserved in the Hermitage.

We end our tour at the **Basilica of St Clare** where we will proceed to the side chapel to pray before the **Holy Crucifix** from which God spoke to Francis “Go and repair my Church

which as you see is in ruins”. Here too we can also take the stairway down to the crypt where the body of Clare, partially restored, is displayed.

Enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at leisure in this oasis of peace.

An opportunity presents itself before dinner to attend Vespers in the Basilica of St Clare and listen to the angelic voices of the Poor Clare nuns.

Assisi overnight (BD)

DAY 8: MONDAY - VIA SIENA TO FLORENCE

We conclude our time in Assisi with Mass and a guided exploration of the buzzing **Basilica of St Francis** which occupies the entire western end of the upper town. Construction began in 1228, just two years after the death of Francis and was finally completed in 1250. The Upper Basilica houses the famous fresco cycle of the life of St Francis, historically attributed to Giotto. Wander through the marvels of the Upper Basilica before our tour descends to the crypt of the Lower Basilica where Francis was laid in 1230 and where we will take some time to seek the intercession of this spiritual legend.

We then rejoin our coach and travel west to Italy’s loveliest medieval city, **Sienna**, birthplace of Saints Catherine and Bernadine. Upon arrival we will visit **St Dominic’s Basilica** and view the incorrupt head of St Catherine, the mystical bride of Christ. From here we walk through the narrow lanes to the **Basilica of St Francis** where we will view the **Eucharistic miracle of the incorrupt hosts** that occurred in 1730, defying all scientific testing. Continue on and stroll the **Piazza del Campo**, one of Italy’s finest Squares.

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After visiting the medieval **Cathedral of Siena** (1263), dedicated to Holy Mary of the Assumption, we depart Siena and journey north to **Florence**, the art capital of the world and home to superb churches, galleries and museums.

Florence overnight (BD)

DAY 9: TUESDAY - FLORENCE

Our tour of Florence begins today with Mass at the Church of Santa Croce before continuing to the **Academy of Fine Arts** containing many treasures, including Michelangelo's statue of **David**. We will visit the **Ponte Vecchio** and the **Duomo**, whose magnificent dome was created by Brunelleschi. Across the way are Ghiberti's celebrated bronze doors to the **Baptistry**, so lovely that they are commonly known as 'The Gates of Paradise'.

Some free time in the late afternoon will allow the opportunity for rest or bargain shopping in the streetside bazaars.

Florence overnight (BD)

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY - VIA RAVENNA TO PADUA

Before departing Florence we will ascend the hill of **Piazzale Michelangelo** to admire the most beautiful view over the whole city.

We then journey north to **Ravenna**, once the capital of the Western Roman Empire some 1,500 years ago. The city's rare mosaics are thought to be the best preserved in Europe and our visit to the **Basilica of San Vitale** will give evidence to this reality. Our walking tour also includes highlights such as the **Piazza del Popolo**, the **Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo** including **Arian Baptistery** and the **tomb of Dante**.

Travel on to **Padua**, home to St Anthony,

the renowned patron saint of lost articles. Originally from Lisbon, Anthony came to Italy where his gift of preaching brought many to conversion. On arrival we enjoy a guided tour and Mass in the **Basilica of St Anthony** including the Chapel of the Reliquaries and **St Anthony's tomb**.

Padua overnight (BD)

DAY 11: THURSDAY- VENICE & PADUA

Venice comprises a dense network of waterways with 117 islands and more than 400 bridges over its 150 canals. Instead of main streets, you'll find main canals, instead of cars, you'll find Gondolas!

Today we travel out to **Venice**, known as Europe's most romantic destination. As we board our boat transfer we enjoy our first glimpses of this unique city. Our time here begins with Mass in **St Mark's Basilica**, built to house the saint's remains. Our guided walking tour includes **St Mark's Square** and its famous monuments. See open squares with enchanting palaces, cross over stunning bridges, and walk down narrow passageways.

Mid afternoon we return to Padua. On arrival view the impressive park of **'Prato della Valle'** and the nearby **Basilica of Santa Giustina** with its claimed relics of St Luke the Evangelist. Onwards to the **Scrovegni Chapel**. The Chapel is a masterpiece in the history of painting in Italy and Europe in the 14th century, considered to be the most complete series of frescoes executed by Giotto in his mature age.

For our final night of pilgrimage, we will enjoy a special celebration dinner.

Padua overnight (BD)

DAY 12: FRIDAY- DEPART ITALY (B)

Today we will be transferred to the airport for our homebound flight connections.

PILGRIMAGE DETAILS

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|--------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| TOUR CODE | TI2302 | |
| STARTS | Mon 4 Sept 2023 | Rome |
| FINISHES | Fri 15 Sept 2023 | Venice |
| LAND COST | AUD \$5990 (twin share) * | |
| SINGLE ROOM | AUD \$1990 Supplement | |
| PREPAID TIPS | AUD \$14 per person per day | |

** Costs have been based on prices as at November 2022 and must remain subject to possible change in the event of significant exchange rate variations, tax increases or minimum group size factors beyond Harvest's control. Refer to Harvest Booking Terms & Conditions for more details.*

INCLUSIONS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS: Based on Superior Standard / 4-Star accommodation • 11 Dinners / 11 Full Breakfasts

TOURING & TRANSPORTATION: Deluxe Air Conditioned Coach touring • Professional Local Guides • Sightseeing and Entrance Fees.

OTHER: Fully Escorted by Priest Chaplain • Porterage at hotels • Harvest Backpack, Pilgrim Journal and Tour Wallet.



BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

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