

Pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Padre Pio and Assisi

DAY 1: ROME / ASSISE

Arrival in Rome and departure for the small Umbrian town of Assisi, which clings next to Mount Subasio. Accommodation in our hotel in Assisi for dinner and evening.

DAY 2: SITTING: CHURCH ST. FRANCIS, NEW CHURCH, SAN RUFINO, CHURCH OF ST. CLARE & SAN DAMIANO

Today we begin with Mass at the Basilica of St. Francis. After mass, we enjoy a guided tour of the Basilica. We continue with a walking tour of the city, visit the main sites associated with St. Francis and St. Clare, including the Church of the New, built on the house of the family of Francis and the church of San Rufino, with the the baptismal font of the Saint. This afternoon, we visit the Church of St. Clare, where St. Clare is at rest. Here we see the original 'San Damiano' This crucifix spoke to Francis, asking him to "rebuild my church." Francis interpreted the dream literally and went to work on the repair of the building in San Damiano. Only later did he understand the deep meaning of the dream. We continue to the church of San Damiano. Here we also see the original 'San Damiano Cross' which 'spoke' to Francis. Dinner is in our rooms tonight.



DAY 3: SITTING / LORETO / LAUNCH / SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO



After breakfast, we go to Loreto to visit the Holy House of Loreto. The legend tells that in 1291 House of the Virgin Mary was miraculously transported by angels from Nazareth to Croatia, then more transferred here to Loreto in 1294. We find the Holy House inside the basilica. Here we celebrated Mass and then made our way to Lancaster, the site of the Miracle of the Eucharist which dates back to the eighth century. We arrive in San Giovanni Rotondo for dinner and evening.

DAY 4: SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO: PADRE PIO and Pietrelcina EXCURSION VISIT

We begin with Mass at the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie and a visit to the tomb of Padre Pio. We visit the church where Padre Pio received the stigmata and the most famous work of charity of the Father; 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 way to God. We then visit the cave of Michel Archangel. Six different popes and St. Francis of Assisi kneeling in prayer at this cave, seeking the protection of St. Michael. This is one of the most famous sanctuaries of the early Cretans.



This afternoon we visit Pietrelcina, the town where Padre Pio was born. We see his native house and the Church of the Holy Family, with an adjacent convent and museum dedicated to Padre Pio. We also visit the pilgrim's house which was built to accommodate pilgrims from all over the world and the parish church, Santa Maria degli Angeli, located in the center of the city. It was the church where Padre Pio celebrated his first Mass. Dinner and overnight are at our accommodation.

DAY 5: SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO / MONTECASSINO / ROME

Our day begins as we head west to the Benedictine Abbey of Montecassino. In the year 529 Benedict came here to begin a monastery that would become the cradle of all Western monasticism. Here Benedict drafted his famous RULE. Benedict died here, forty days after his sister Scholastica. Both are buried here. We arrive in Rome tonight, where we enjoy a festive farewell dinner in a local restaurant.



DAY 6: ROME: MAJOR, CATACOMBS & ST. PAUL

This morning we visit the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the largest church in Rome dedicated to the Virgin. Nearby, we see the Basilica of St. John Lateran. Whether it is here St. Francis persuaded Pope Innocent III to give permission to begin the Franciscan Order. The day before, the Pope had seen a man in a dream and man was supporting the staggering building of St. John Lateran. The next day, when Francis appeared before Pope Innocent, His Holiness recognized the face of the dream and consented to the request of Francis. Nearby is the Scala Santa, allegedly climbed the stairs that Christ before his condemnation by Pontius Pilate. This afternoon we visit the catacombs of St. Calixte, sheltering the graves of several of the first popes. Then we visit the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, sheltering the tomb of the Apostle St. Paul, affectionately known as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Dinner is at our hotel.

DAY 7: ROME: PAPAL HEARING & VATICAN MUSEUM & ST. TO FART

This morning, we transfer to the Paul VI Hall for the papal audience (subject to the Holy Father's schedule). What we enjoy is a guided tour of the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel, with Michelangelo's masterpieces. We visit St. Peter's Basilica with our local guides. Here we see another of the works of Michelangelo, the statue of the Virgin holding her crucified son. We know what the Pietà. Dinner and overnight

DAY 8: day BACK

This morning we transfer to Rome airport for our flight back home

