

PILGRIMAGE TO ASSISI AND ROME

Thursday, November 7 to Saturday, November 16, 2024

N.B. It almost never happens, but the schedule is subject to change.

\$5,398 per person includes:

- Round trip economy class airfare from Charleston to Rome (via Atlanta) on Delta Airlines
- Double occupancy in the four-star [Hotel Fontebella](#) in Assisi and the five-star [Villa Agrippina](#) in Rome
- Transportation in a motor coach for our group alone
- Tour escort the entire trip
- Breakfast daily
- Five dinners
- Portage of one large suitcase per person
- Entry fees to sites
- Public Papal Audience with Pope Francis (subject to his availability)
- Tips for drivers, escorts, city guides, and hotel porters
- Airline and hotel taxes

Not included in the price:

- Daily lunches
- Four dinners
- Entry fees to optional tours of the Vatican [Scavi](#) (Excavations) or the Pantheon
- Single room supplement of \$1,400
- Laundry, room service, other hotel or spa services
- Travel insurance (approx \$394) available from the tour operator
- Health/Medical Insurance
- Excess luggage allowance
- Beer / Wine / Cocktails
- Personal items (toiletries, telephone, etc.)

Qualifications:

- First preference is given to active members of Saint Clare of Assisi Parish.
- Adults age 21 and over only.
- All travelers must be able to walk up to five miles per day, sometimes up steep hills and on rough surfaces, and be able to stand for periods of time. Persons with mobility challenges cannot be accommodated.
- Group maximum size = 35 persons.

Thursday, November 7, 2024 – Depart USA

Our group meets at Charleston International Airport for our **2:59 p.m. Delta** Airlines flight to Atlanta then connecting to our flight to Rome.

Friday, November 8, 2024 (Day 1) - Assisi

Our Delta flight is scheduled to arrive at Fiumicino (Little River) Airport (FCO) in Rome at 11:35 a.m. After passing through EU Immigration and Customs, our group assembles in the Arrivals Hall of airport terminal where we will be met by our Italian tour escort.

After boarding our bus, we make our way north to Assisi stopping just outside Rome for lunch at a self-service restaurant. We then motor for the three-hour ride to Assisi. We check into our hotel where we enjoy supper then gain a good night's sleep.

Saturday, November 9, 2024 (Day 2) - Assisi

Today, we hit the ground running. After breakfast at the hotel, we walk to the **Basilica of Saint Clare** for Mass. We may be given the side chapel where the original San Damiano Cross (ours is an exact replica), the 1,000-year-old crucifix which “spoke” to Saint Francis and helped to begin the Franciscan movement, hangs above the altar. After Mass, we enjoy a quiet tour of the Basilica and kneel at the earthly remains of Saint Clare to pray for her intercession.

We then meet our tour escort for a full day tour of Assisi: the **San Damiano Convent** where Clare and her “Poor Ladies” lived for decades, the site of her famous standing down the invading Saracens and her death; the **Church of Santa Maria Maggiore** (Saint Mary Major), the original 4th century cathedral of Assisi, enlarged in the 9th century, the site of the “Spoilation” where the young Francis stripped himself of his worldly goods and handed his life to Christ and the Church, also the location of the **tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis**; to the **Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli** (Saint Mary of the Angels) in the lower valley, a massive church built over the **Chapel of the Porziuncola** (Little Portion) where Francis and the first friars lived and where he received the vows of Clare and her sister to begin the Poor Clare movement within the Franciscan world; and to the **Basilica of Saint Francis**, the extraordinary church filled with world-famous frescoes by Giotto depicting the life of Francis (including his only known portrait) and, in the lower crypt, the tomb.

As time allows, we will enjoy some free time in the afternoon. Dinner will be provided at the hotel.

Sunday, November 10, 2024 (Day 3) - Assisi

After breakfast at the hotel, we make the short walk up to the **Basilica of Saint Francis** for Mass. Afterward, we have the entire day and evening free so you can explore on your own the sacred sites, do some shopping, visit a vineyard, hike, whatever you wish to plan. Dinner will be on your own in one of the many fantastic restaurants in Assisi.

Monday, November 11, 2024 (Day 4) – Orvieto and Rome

After breakfast and check out, we board our motorcoach and head to **Orvieto**, the site of the extraordinary **Duomo di Orvieto** (the cathedral), a 14th century (construction 1290-1607)

masterpiece which houses the famous “Miracle of Bolsano,” a linen corporal (cloth used atop an altar) onto which blood dropped from a consecrated Host celebrated by a priest in 1263 in Bolsano who doubted the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Because of this miracle, Pope Urban IV is said to have established the annual solemnity of Corpus Christi celebrated throughout the world each year in the late spring.

We will enjoy lunch in Orvieto on our own.

We then motor south to Rome where we stop first at the **Basilica di San Paolo Fuori Le Mura** (Saint Paul Outside the Walls), the 10th largest church in the world built over the tomb of Saint Paul near where he was executed, for the celebration of Mass.

We check in to our Vatican City area hotel where we enjoy supper and rest.

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 (Day 5) - Rome

After breakfast, we again hit the ground for a full day. We visit the **Basilica of Saint Mary Major** (called “major” because it is the largest church in Rome dedicated to the Blessed Mother) where construction began in 432 AD and continued throughout the centuries.

We visit the **Basilica of Saint John Lateran**, the cathedral church of the Diocese of Rome, built on land donated by the Lateran family in the fourth century. Begun in 324 AD under the orders of the emperor Constantine, it is the oldest public church in Rome and was the residence of the pope until the Middle Ages when he relocated to what is now Vatican City. With a length of 1.5 football fields and a width of 80 yards, this extraordinary monument houses many artifacts, including the skulls of Saint Peter and Saint Paul high above the main altar. We celebrate Mass here.

Across the street we visit the **Holy Stairs**, believed to be the stone steps from the court of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem. If so, these are the steps our Lord would have climbed as he began his Passion to the Cross and Crucifixion. They were brought to Rome by Saint Helena, mother of Constantine, in the fourth century.

After lunch on our own, we will continue to the epic **Colosseum** for a tour.

The remainder of the afternoon is free for you to do as you wish. Dinner is on your own.

Wednesday, November 13, 2024 (Day 6) – Vatican City

After an early breakfast, we make our way to **Vatican City** for the weekly **Papal Audience** held in the morning, joining tens of thousands of the faithful from around the world, for a service of Scripture readings and commentaries by the Holy Father.

Following lunch on our own, we visit the extraordinary and extensive **Vatican Museums**, the custodian to some of the world’s masterpieces in sculpture, painting, tapestries, and more. Included is a visit to the **Sistine Chapel** (named for Pope Sixtus IV who ordered it built between 1473-1481), later decorated by Michaelangelo and the site of the election of new popes.

We will return to the hotel for dinner and rest. You will need it for Day 7!

Thursday, November 14, 2024 (Day 7) – Imperial Rome

Be prepared for a great deal of walking today! Following breakfast, we will continue to the **Basilica of Saint Mary Major** for Mass. From there we walk to many famous sites: the **Trevi Fountain**, **Piazza Venezia**, the **Basilica dei Santi XII Apostoli** (Basilica of the Twelve Apostles, a 6th century church where the apostles James and Philip are buried), the **Spanish Steps**, the **Church of San'Agostino** (Saint Augustine), burial site of his famous mother Saint Monica, then the beautiful **Piazza Navona**, the crossroads of central Rome.

We will return to the hotel for dinner and a well-deserved rest.

Friday, November 15 (Day 8) – Vatican City and Rome

Breakfast at the hotel then go to **Saint Peter's Basilica** in the Vatican for Mass and touring, and/or the **Roman Forum** (the governmental center of the Roman Empire) next to the Colosseum. The rest of the day and evening is completely open for your further touring, shopping, dining, and rest. You may wish to tour the spectacular **Pantheon** (advance €5.00 ticket required, available online, waiting time to enter can be an hour)

Saturday, November 16 (Day 9) – USA

Following breakfast, we will board our motorcoach to head to Fiumicino Airport for our return flight home on Delta Airlines, scheduled to depart Rome at 1:50 p.m. to Atlanta then transferring to Charleston with a scheduled arrival of 10:02 p.m.

Optional tour of the Vatican Scavi (Excavations beneath Saint Peter's Basilica)

Our tour operator can arrange for a guided two-hour tour of the **Scavi**, the pre-Christian streets and mausoleums built on the hillside and covered over when the emperor Constantine ordered the building of the first Saint Peter's Basilica in 326 AD. The covered cemetery housed the tomb of Saint Peter but was lost until excavations in the first half of the 20th century revealed the ancient sites and his tomb. Depending on the tour leader, you may have the chance to glimpse his bones encased in a glass box within the original niche where he was buried.

Reservations for the Scavi tour must be made in advance but no more than 60 days prior. ***The reservations are made by our tour company.*** The best day to tour is on Friday, November 15 when the day is largely open. Groups are limited to 12 people plus a guide. Consecutive time slots cannot be guaranteed. Spaces on the tour are sometimes tight and require good footing. People uncomfortable in enclosed spaces should consider whether this tour is for them. There is an extra fee of €15.00 per person.