



**Diocese of Fort Worth  
June 20-28, 2025**

**Day 1 | Friday, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2025: Departure**

Direct flight from DFW to Rome.

**Day 2 | Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2025: Arrival in Italy - Departure to Assisi**

Arrival at the airport Roma FCO and meeting with the English-speaking tour leader who will stay with the group till the end of the tour.

Departure to **Assisi**, located on a mountaintop, with the narrow lanes, Shrines of Saint Francis and overwhelming art dedicated to its young friar - a rich young man who turned to God after an illness and established an order that has grown stronger over the centuries.

Independent lunch on the road.

Visit the **Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli**, built in 1569 and crowned by the magnificent dome designed by Alessi. It encloses the shrine of the "Porziuncula," or the Little Portion Chapel, around which the first Franciscan community was centered, the place where Clare received the habit from Francis, and the Capella Del Transito, which marks the spot where the Saint died. You will see the statue of Saint Francis in the courtyard where thornless roses bloom.

**6:00 p.m.**

Celebration of the Holy Mass at the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

Check-in at the **Hotel Fontebella** – Via Fontebella, 25

and at the **Hotel Giotto** – Via Fontebella, 41

Dinner and overnight at the Hotels.



### Day 3 | Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025: Assisi - Sites of St. Francis and St. Clare in Assisi

Breakfast at the hotels.

#### **Celebration of the Holy Mass** at Lower Basilica of San Francesco

After Mass, our local guide will take us to explore the Basilica complex, which is composed of two churches built one atop the other. Beneath both churches is the crypt that houses the tomb of St. Francis. The lower Basilica dates from 1228 to 1230, and is richly decorated with beautiful stained-glass windows, and paintings done by some of the most important artists of the 13th and 14th centuries. In the upper Basilica, built from 1230 - 1253, you will marvel at the monumental frescoes painted by Giotto, which depict scenes from the life of the saint.

The guided tour also includes the Basilica of St. Clare, the first and most important heroine of the Franciscan movement, view her remains and see the miraculous Crucifix.

Independent Lunch.

Balance of the day at leisure for personal activities - visits.

Dinner and overnight at the Hotels.

### Day 4 | Monday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025: Assisi - Rome

After breakfast, check out and departure to **Rome**. On the way to Rome stop in **Orvieto**.

#### **Celebration of the Holy Mass** at the Cathedral of Orvieto

After the mass, departure to **Rome**, the "Eternal City." History, evolving over 2,500 years, will be made visible for us by the Roman ruins, 15<sup>th</sup> century churches, 17<sup>th</sup> century palaces and 20<sup>th</sup> century monuments.

Check in at the chosen hotel.

Independent lunch. Balance of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Rome.



**Day 5 | Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2025: Vatican Museums - Sistine Chapel - St. Peter's Basilica & Catacombs**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Begin your morning of sightseeing with the English-speaking guides to visit one of the great art collections in the world, the **Vatican Museums** and **St. Peter's Basilica**. Walk in the footsteps of the Princes of the Church through the richly decorated galleries. Continue on to the Sistine Chapel, the private chapel of the Popes, where Michelangelo best expressed his genius in monumental frescoes. End your morning tour in St. Peter's Basilica. Take in the awesome architecture and the statuary adorning this largest of all Christian churches, including Michelangelo's magnificent "Pieta." Pray at the new tomb of St. John Paul II, in St. Sebastian's Chapel. On your own, with time permitting, you may wish to go to the Vatican Crypt to see and pray near the tomb of St. Peter and where numerous pontiffs are buried, among incredible works of art.



Some free time for lunch on your own.

In the afternoon we drive along a section of the **Old Appian Way**, one of the first ancient Roman military roads, which connected Rome to Naples and Brindisi on the Adriatic coast. You can see the huge slabs that originally paved its length and several surviving Patrician tombs that once lined its way, including the massive tomb of Cecilia Metella.

Stop at the Catacombs San Sebastiano.

Guided visit of the **Catacombs**, the maze of tunnels hollowed out of volcanic rock, where early Christians—persecuted by the Romans—secretly practiced their religious rites and buried their

dead.

## Celebration of the Holy Mass at the Basilica San Sebastiano fuori le mura.

**6:00 p.m.**

Dinner at the **Restaurant Cecilia Metella**

After dinner transfer back to the hotel and overnight.

## Day 6 | Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2025: Papal Audience & Christian Rome

Early breakfast at the hotel.

Transfer to the Vatican and participation at the **Audience with our Holy Father. Pope Francis** will greet all the pilgrims present, deliver his message to the faithful, pray the Pater Noster and bless religious articles.



Free time for lunch on own.

Right after lunch break, we will have an unusual tour of Rome and her outskirts as you will pass the Tiberina Island, the Aventine Hill, the pyramid of Caius Cestius, and St. Paul's Gate, part of the Aurelian Wall, the ancient city wall. Stop to visit the magnificent **Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls**. The basilica was built by Constantine in the 4th century on the site of St. Paul's tomb. After having been destroyed by fire in 1823, it was rebuilt on the original Basilica plan of early Christian churches. Surrounding the nave are the medallions of each Pope throughout history.

We continue to the magnificent **Cathedral of St. John Lateran**, the first Christian church to be consecrated. It was founded by the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century and was home to the Popes for many years prior to the present Vatican residence.

End our day tour with a visit the **Basilica of St. Mary Major**, one of the four major Basilicas built by Pope Sixtus III (AD 432-440). View the impressive interior with its remarkable mosaics in the nave depicting scenes from the Old Testament. View relics of Jesus' manger from Bethlehem and the high altar, which contains the remains of St Matthew the Evangelist. The mosaics above the entablature are among the most ancient Christian mosaics in Rome.



## **Celebration of the Holy Mass** at the Basilica of St. Mary Major

Transfer back to the hotel. The evening is at leisure.  
Overnight at the hotel.

## **Day 7 | Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> 2025: Tour of Imperial Rome**

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfer to the city center. Begin your day with a visit to the **Church of St. Peter in Chains** to see the original chains in which St. Peter was brought captive to Rome and the statue of Moses, one of Michelangelo's greatest masterpieces. Then, we will continue to the ancient **Roman Forum**. See the Arch of Titus and the Arch of Constantine and proceed to the outside of the **Coliseum** for a fascinating explanation of its history. Continue on to the grandiose white marble monument of King Victor Emmanuel II, often called the "Wedding Cake." See the Trajan Column and the Market (the ancient Roman equivalent of a department store).



The rest of the day is spent at leisure browsing, shopping or exploring the sights of Rome.

Hearty pilgrims may want to attempt to climb the 330 stairs (or take the elevator) to the top of St. Peter's for an unparalleled view of Vatican City and Rome.

Return to the hotel on your own for overnight.

## **Day 8 | Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup> 2025: Tour of the Scavi**

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfer to the Vatican.

In the morning **celebration of the Holy Mass** in a chapel of St. Peter's Basilica.

After the mass **Tour of the Scavi**.

The Scavi, or Vatican Necropolis, is the underground excavation under St. Peter's Basilica. In 1939, Pope Pius XII ordered an excavation beneath the grotto of St. Peter's Basilica, where many popes are buried. Among the tombs of pagans and early Christians, far beneath the high altar of St. Peter's, excavators found a shrine amid the rubble. Most scholars concur that the small column is part of a second-century A.D. shrine built by Rome's small Christian community on the site where St. Peter was buried. Enjoy your afternoon at leisure. Perhaps you will want to explore the sights, sounds and tastes of Rome all on your own! Perhaps you will want to buy religious articles, or you may want to treat yourself to a leisurely multi-course lunch in a quaint trattoria. There are always plenty of churches, museums, piazzas and ancient ruins to explore or perhaps you will visit the Coliseum from inside or the beautiful and lively Piazza Navona, with time to browse through the artists' stalls to buy a painting or just look around, and have a chance to buy one of Rome's most famous products, a "tartufo" (ice cream) at the Gelateria "Tre Scalini." This is the time to visit the local shops and Street vendors. Rome is yours!

**Farewell dinner** at a nice restaurant in Rome.  
Transfer back to the hotel and overnight.

### **Day 9 | Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup> 2025: Departure**

Breakfast at the hotel and check out.  
Transfer to the airport Roma FCO and flight back home.

***PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE***