

Day 1 | Friday, March 8th 2024 – Departure: Flight from DFW to Rome Fiumicino Airport (FCO)

Day 2 | Saturday, March 10th - Assisi: Sites of St. Francis and St. Clare in Assisi | Rome

Arrival at the airport in Rome 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.

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.

Arrival at the **Hotel Windsor Savoia ***** in Assisi
Check – in and balance of the day at leisure.
Dinner and overnight at the Hotel.

Day 3 | Saturday, March 11th Assisi – Rome

After breakfast, celebrate **Mass at the Tomb of St. Francis**.

After Mass, our local guide will take us to explore the Basilica complex, which is actually 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 Hotel.

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Day 4 | Sunday, March 12th : Tour of Imperial Rome – At Leisure

After breakfast, departure to **Rome**, the “Eternal City.” History, evolving over 2,500 years, will be made visible for us by the Roman ruins, 15th century churches, 17th century palaces and 20th century monuments.

Hotel check-in at **Casa Bonus Pastor**

Casa Bonus Pastor, opened in February 2000, is located in the heart of Rome in a beautiful turn-of-the-century building close to the Vatican Walls. It is the ideal place to spend a pleasant stay in a quiet, comfortable environment with high quality standards. The House is immersed in a quiet green park and has its own large parking lot for coaches and cars. The in-house Restaurant offers specialties of Italian and Roman gastronomy, and several Conference Rooms (130 to 40 seats) are available for meetings.

Independent lunch. Balance of the day at leisure.
Overnight.

Day 5 | Monday, March 13th : Papal Audience – Tour of the Basilica of St. Paul and the Catacombs

Buffet breakfast at hotel.

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 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).

Independent lunch.

Free time for independent lunch with the afternoon at leisure for 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.

Overnight.

Day 6 | Tuesday, March 14th : Tour of Vatican Museums: Sistine Chapel: St. Peter's Basilica – Tour of Christian Rome

After early breakfast, enter the heart of Christendom for an **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.

Independent lunch.

This afternoon, we will have an unusual tour of Rome and her outskirts as you motor past 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 basilican plan of early Christian churches. Surrounding the nave are the medallions of each Pope throughout history. Then, 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. Visit 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. Possibility to celebrate mass at the Catacombs.

Dinner at the Restaurant “Cecilia Metella”

Return to the Hotel and Overnight

Day 7 | Wednesday, March 15th : Tour of the Scavi (subject to confirmation) – afternoon at leisure

Buffet breakfast at hotel.

Begin your morning of sightseeing with a visit to one of the great art collections in the world, the **Vatican Museums**. 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.”



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of FORT WORTH

Independent lunch.

Afternoon, we continue our day with a visit 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.

. Return to the hotel and overnight.

Day 8 | Thursday, March 16th: Return from Rome

Celebrate 8:00am Private Mass at the Grottoes St. Peter.

Tour of the Scavi*(Subject to confirmation): 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.

*All tours of the Scavi are subject to confirmation by the Vatican Office two weeks prior to departure.

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 or 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!

In the evening Farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight at Hotel

Day 9 | Friday, March 16th: Return from Rome

After breakfast at hotel, you will be transferred to Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport for your return flight to the US. Arrive on the same day

The program may be subject to changes

RATES

\$3,400 per person sharing a double room

Single room- call for pricing

INCLUSIONS:

- **Roundtrip Airfare**
- **Accommodation: Two** nights' accommodations at the **Hotel Windsor Savoia *** in Assisi**
- **Five** nights' accommodations at the **religious Guesthouse Casa Bonus Pastor in Rome**
- Buffet breakfast daily
- **Other meals:** 2 dinners at the hotel in Assisi, 1 dinner at the Ristorante Cecilia Metella and 1 Farewell dinner in Rome
- **Coach Transportation:** Local modern deluxe motorcoach transportation, upon arrival and available for the entire tour.
- **Tour Management:** One full-time, multi-lingual Tour Manager will be on each motorcoach throughout the entire tour, including arrival and departure transfers. Courtial International staff as well as our tour Manager are easily available 24 hours daily to render assistance whenever needed.
- **Visits:** All sightseeing, conducted by licensed, professional, English-speaking guides (1 in Assisi, 4 guided tours in Rome) as outlined in the itinerary.
- **Entrance fees:** Catacombs, Scavi and Vatican Museums
- **Tickets** to participate in the Papal General Audience with the Holy Father (free of charge)
- All taxes and services charge (valid for the year 2023)
- **Rates are valid for a minimum of 20 paying persons**

EXCLUSIONS:

- Health, trip cancellation/interruption or baggage insurance.
- U.S. Passports must be valid for at least six (6) months subsequent to return date.
- Items of a personal nature (hotel extras, laundry, phone calls, etc.).
- Meals not specified in the program.
- Gratuities to the tour manager, guides and driver.
- Items not specifically mentioned above.

Purchasing a travel insurance in order to protect your tour package investment is strongly recommend.

Reservations and bookings:

- \$300 deposit due August 16, 2023
- \$1,500 due November 1, 2023
- Remaining balance due January 15, 2024

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*Tour to Italy Visiting Rome
and Assisi from March 8th
till 16th 2024*

