

Join Fr. Arechabala on a Pilgrimage to

# Shrines of Italy



Rome, Italy

Assisi, Italy

## OCTOBER 9-19 (20), 2023

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# SAMPLE DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

## Day 1, Mon, Oct 09: Depart for Rome

Make your way to your local airport, where you will board your overnight flight(s). Your meals will be served on board.

## Day 2, Tue, Oct 10: Arrival in Rome

Welcome to Rome, also known as "The Eternal City". Upon landing at Rome airport, claim your baggage proceed to the arrival hall, where your tour guide and/or driver will greet you. Following check-in at the hotel, enjoy some free time to unpack, relax or explore Rome on your own. Your tour escort may suggest places to visit. Later this afternoon, your group will meet in the hotel lobby for a meet and greet with fellow pilgrims and your Priest. Together depart for Mass. Following Mass, you will attend a welcome dinner. After dinner you have the opportunity to join in a walk to St. Peter's Square for the Rosary (optional).

## Day 3, Wed, Oct 11: Rome: Papal Audience - Trevi Fountain - Basilica of St. John the Lateran - Holy Stairs - Basilica of St. Mary Major

After breakfast, we start the day with the Papal Audience in St. Peter's Square! The Audience is celebrated each Wednesday by His Holiness, Pope Francis (pending the papal schedule). Following the Audience, we will visit the Trevi Fountain, where you may enjoy some free time on your own for lunch. This afternoon, visit the oldest of the four major Basilicas in Rome and the home to the relics of Peter and Paul, the Basilica of St. John the Lateran. This Basilica is where Pope Francis became installed as Bishop of Rome. Next, you will cross the street to visit the Holy Stairs. These Holy Stairs are the very-steps leading up to the praetorium of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem on which Jesus stepped on his way to trial during his Passion. In the fourth century, these stairs were brought to Rome by Saint Helena. People ascend on the Holy Stairs on their knees, in memory of Christ's agonizing Passion. We conclude your day with a Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. St. Mary Major is the only Basilica that reigns from its original structure and is an authentic jewel in the crown of Roman Churches. This Basilica contains a relic from the Manger of the Infant Jesus. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

## Day 4, Thu, Oct 12: Rome: St. Peter's Basilica - Vatican Museum - Appian Way - Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls - Catacombs

This morning, you will enjoy an early breakfast before making your way to one of the largest Christendom Church, St. Peter's Basilica. Build on the site where St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome, was martyred. Our Pope Francis became the first pontiff to visit the necropolis, where pagans and early Christians were buried since extensive archaeological excavations were conducted decades ago. It is here that you will view Michelangelo's Pieta. This stunning marble sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary holding Christ after His crucifixion, death, and removal off the cross before being placed in the tomb. Continue to proceed to the Vatican Museums. At the world-renowned museum, view the most impressive of edifices, galleries, and awe-inspiring relics. Additionally observe the Tapestry Gallery, Raphael Rooms, Sistine Chapel, and Michelangelo's Masterpiece, the restored mural of the Last Judgment. The final stop on your Vatican tour is the tomb of Saint John Paul II. After free time for lunch, we will continue on a short journey down the Appian Way, the earliest road from Ancient Rome. This road leads to the Domino Quo Vadis Chapel, the Baths of Caracalla, the Arch of Drusus, the Tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the catacomb of St. Callixtus. The day concludes with a visit to the Basilica of St. Paul, outside the walls. Originally founded by Emperor Constantine in the 4th century this Basilica is the burial place of Saint Paul the Apostle. Next, make your way to a local restaurant for dinner. Following dinner, you will have time to explore the streets of Rome or return to the hotel for overnight.

## Day 5, Fri, Oct 13: Rome - Monte Cassino - San Giovanni Rotondo

Following breakfast, you will board your bus to enjoy the scenic route to Monte Cassino. We will pass through the Roman countryside that is known for its villas and vineyards. Your tour escort will share interesting information regarding the spiritual, historical, and cultural aspects of Italy. Around 530 A.D. Monte Cassino, the principal monastery of the Benedictine Order founded by Saint Benedict. After a tour, you will have an opportunity to visit the gift shop. Board your bus and continue to San Giovanni Rotondo, the hometown of Saint Padre Pio. Upon arrival in San Giovanni Rotondo, check-in, enjoy dinner in a restaurant, and overnight.

## Day 6, Sat, Oct 14: San Giovanni Rotondo (View Incorrupt Body of St. Padre Pio) - Monte Sant' Angelo

This morning, after breakfast, you will visit the Old Church. After Mass, tour the sanctuary, where you will view the crucifix, in front of which St. Pio received the stigmata. Visit the confessional from where St. Pio spent an innumerable amount of hours listening to confessions. Next, you will board the bus and travel along the beautiful Gargano Peninsula to the Grotto of St. Michael the Archangel, a shrine consecrated by St. Michael. At this Grotto, St. Michael appeared to a bishop to assure him that his diocese will not be annihilated, as the bishop feared. After some free time we head back to San Giovanni Rotondo, a drive with breathtaking views of the ocean and surrounding countryside. Some time for devotion and reflection before enjoying a delicious dinner and an overnight in San Giovanni Rotondo. \*Candlelight Procession - Between May and October, attend the weekly candlelight procession at the Sanctuary of St. Pio after dinner, at 9:00 PM. These processions are lit by candlelight and are guided by the Most Holy Rosary. Following this prayerful experience, return to your hotel for a restful overnight.

## Day 7, Sun, Oct 15: San Giovanni Rotondo - Lanciano - Loreto - Assisi

After breakfast, you will head to Lanciano. Upon arrival in Lanciano, celebrate Mass at the Church of St. Longinus. This church is the site of the Eucharistic Miracle that occurred in the eighth century. At the time of the Miracle, there was a Basilian monk, who struggled with the belief in the real presence of The Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. During the time of Mass, the monk, with doubt in his voice, said the "Words of Consecration", and the bread turned into living flesh, and the wine transformed into live blood. Have some free time to explore Lanciano, before continuing toward the Adriatic coast to the great Marian shrine of Loreto to visit the Holy House of Nazareth and the beautiful Madonna of Loreto. Over 50 Pope's have made a pilgrimage to the house transported by angels to this hill in central Italy in 1294. Tradition has it that this is the house in which Mary first prayed the Magnificat, in which Jesus grew to manhood, and in which the Holy Family lived. Continue on to Assisi, the hometown of St. Francis. Upon arrival in Assisi, enjoy dinner before retiring to your room.

## Day 8, Mon, Oct 16: Assisi (St. Francis)

As you visit the birthplace of St. Francis, you will become captivated as the atmosphere has not changed since St. Francis began his ministry in the early 13th-century. You will start a tour at the St. Francis Basilica, visit the tomb of St. Francis, and have the opportunity to view a series of frescoes depicting his life, along with a few of the saint's possessions. Followed by a visit to the Santuario Della Spogliazione where Blessed Carlo Acutis' tomb is placed. Carlo is the first millennial to be declared Blessed who loved the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. From there, you will continue on a walking tour through this picturesque town, including the birthplace of St. Francis, and end with a tour of the Church that honors St. Clare, the foundress of the Poor Clare Sisters. St. Clare followed the teachings of St. Francis very closely by also living a life of poverty and humility. Enjoy some free time - you may take this time for additional prayer, shop in the many gift shops, or enjoy a nice lunch. After lunch, board the bus, which will take you outside of the walls of Assisi, to the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. Here is where St. Francis spent most of his life. This Basilica is made up of two structures, both of which you will visit. The first structure is the "Porziuncola" which is where St. Francis founded his order of the Friar Minor (Franciscans). The second is the "Capella del Transito" which is the place St. Francis died. During your time here, you will have the opportunity to visit the beautiful Rose Garden where St. Francis and other friars lived, as well as the cave where St. Francis retired to pray. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

## Day 9, Tue, Oct 17: Assisi - Gubbio - La Verna - Assisi

After breakfast, drive through the beautiful Umbrian mountains to Gubbio. Enjoy this medieval town with a visit to St. Francis Church to celebrate Mass. Following Mass visit Gubbio, which seems painted onto the hill, a succession of backdrops against which towers and houses stand out, all embraced by walls. St. Francis freed the town from a terrible and fierce wolf who afflicted it. After lunch on your own, continue to La Verna, the place where St. Francis, over the years, had been seven times, the last time in 1224 where he received the stigmata. Here you will be able to pray in the Chapel of the Stigmata, the Basilica, and the Chapel of Saint Mary of the Angels. You will also be able to admire the beautiful artworks of Andrea della Robbia. Return to Assisi for dinner and your last overnight.

## Day 10, Wed, Oct 18: Assisi - Cascia - Norcia - Assisi

Following breakfast visit Cascia, home of St. Rita of Cascia, who was born in the nearby hamlet of Roccaporena in 1381. Her incorrupt body lies in the Major Basilica. Below in the Minor Basilica is a Eucharistic Miracle and the remains of Blessed Simone Fidati. At the time of the miracle a certain priest had lost his respect for the Eucharist and when going on a call to administer the Holy Sacraments to an ailing peasant took a Consecrated Host and placed it between the pages of his breviary. When he opened the book, he saw that the Host had turned red with fresh blood and was impregnated with the two pages between which it had been placed! The priest sought out for counsel Blessed Simone Fidati, a pious priest of the time. He recognized the priest's error and gave him absolution. He took the two pages, putting one in a tabernacle in Perugia and the other in Cascia. The miracle is commemorated each year on the Feast of Corpus Christi in Cascia. There are those who look at the bloodstained page and see the image of Christ. After our visit we continue to Roccaporena birthplace of St. Rita where we visit her home and the Shrine of St. Rita. Following Mass, drive along a picturesque, mountainous road to Norcia - the birthplace of St. Benedict. Return to Assisi for dinner and overnight.

## Day 11, Thu, Oct 19: Bonus Day— Assisi - Perugia - Assisi OR Return Home

Drive to Perugia, where St. Francis was imprisoned during 13th century wars - visit the Cathedral with the tombs of two Popes and Mary's 'ring' (pending). Group will visit Church of Santa Giuliana, tour the Sun City: Piazza IV Novembre, Rocca Paoline and Fontana Maggiore and buy a lot's of Baci Chocolates! Return to Assisi for dinner and overnight OR:

After an early breakfast and heartfelt farewells, your group will leave by motor coach and transfer to the Rome Fiumicino airport for return flights home.

## Day 12, Fri, Oct 20: Return Home

For Those who stayed for the bonus day, transfer to Rome airport for flights home.

**\*206 Tours Disclaimer:** The itinerary should be considered as an indication, rather than a contract of places to be visited. Occasionally local religious holidays, national days, weather, traffic conditions and other events may