

ITINERARIES *for* GROUPS

Shrines of SOUTHERN ITALY *and* ROME



DAY 1: NEW YORK/ROME

We depart on an international overnight flight to Rome. Dinner and breakfast are served on board.

DAY 2: ROME/SORRENTO

Upon arrival in Rome, we are greeted by our tour guide, and next board our deluxe motorcoach for transfer to Southern Italy and the magical city of Sorrento with its breathtaking views of the Bay of Naples. Dinner and overnight in Sorrento. (D)

DAY 3: SORRENTO

This morning we enjoy a half-day sightseeing excursion to Naples. We view the historic center, the Basilica of San Paolo Maggiore which boasts two Roman columns as part of its façade, the harbor area, the Angevin-Aragonese Castle built in the 13th century, and stop in the Capodimonte Park to see the Royal Palace of Capodimonte known for its porcelain collection. We return to Sorrento and enjoy an afternoon at leisure for independent sightseeing and shopping. Dinner and overnight in Sorrento. (B/D)

DAY 4: SORRENTO/SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO

After breakfast we depart Sorrento for San Giovanni Rotondo, the site of Sanctuary of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina. Upon arrival we celebrate a Mass there (subject to confirmation). Following Mass, we visit the Padre Pio's tomb and cell, the old church where he received the stigmata, his confessional, and the Sanctuary of Saint Mary our Lady of Grace. Then, we visit the San Michele Pilgrimage Shrine that consists of the original Sanctuary of the Archangel Michael in grotto, the crypt, and the devotional museums. Dinner and overnight in San Giovanni Rotondo. (B/D)

DAY 5: SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO/LORETO

This morning we depart for Loreto with a stop in Lanciano, the town with the Eucharistic Miracle of Jesus in a special Monstrance in the Tabernacle. Later in the afternoon we arrive in Loreto and visit the Basilica of the Holy House. According to some Catholics accounts, the Blessed Virgin Mary had lived in the house enshrined by the Basilica. Dinner and overnight in Loreto. (B/D)

DAY 6: LORETO/ASSISI

After breakfast we leave Loreto for Assisi. We arrive in the Valley of Assisi where we visit the Basilica of St Mary of the Angels where St. Francis spent most of his life. Here we visit the Chapel, the Portiuncula where we celebrate a Mass (subject to confirmation), the rose bush, and the cave where he retired for prayer. We travel up to the quaint hilltop, the birthplace of St Francis that still retains something of the atmosphere of the early 1200s, the period when St Francis began his ministry. We visit St. Francis's huge 13th century Basilica built over his crypt containing many of the saint's possessions and a series of frescoes depicting his life. Continue to the Church of St Clare to see the saint's incorrupt body. The foundress of the Order of Poor Clares followed the teachings of St Francis by living a life of poverty and humility. We may kneel before the San Damiano Cross from which Jesus spoke to St Francis asking him to rebuild His church. Dinner and overnight in Assisi. (B/D)

DAY 7: ASSISI/FLORENCE

Today we bid farewell to Assisi as we head for Florence. Upon arrival, we see the Piazza del Duomo, the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Baptistery of Saint John with its "Gates of Paradise", the Santa Croce Church and finally the famous statue of "David" by Michelangelo located in the Accademia Gallery. Dinner and overnight in Florence. (B/D)

DAY 8: FLORENCE/ROME

This morning we travel to Rome. Upon arrival, we enjoy a half day guided sightseeing tour of Rome. The highlights include the Catacombs, the Appian Way, Capitoline Hill, Basilica of St. Peter in Chains, the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, the Arch of Constantine, and the Circus Maximus. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 9: ROME

After breakfast depart for a full day guided sightseeing tour. We visit the three major basilicas of Rome: the Basilica of St. Mary Major, one of the oldest shrines dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and built on the site where the Virgin Mary appeared in a dream of Pope Liberius; the Basilica of St John in Lateran, the former residence of the popes prior to their return to Rome in 1377; the Holy Stairs, which is believed to be a staircase from Pilate's palace in Jerusalem that Jesus climbed when he was condemned to death and brought to Rome by St. Helena in the 4th century. Time permitting, we may climb these stairs on our knees in memory of Christ's Passion. Continue to the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Wall built over his tomb. In the afternoon we visit the Vatican Museums, home to one of the world's greatest art collections, and Michelangelo's breathtaking Sistine Chapel. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 10: ROME

This morning we celebrate a Mass at one of the side altars in St. Peter's Basilica (subject to confirmation), before attending the Papal Audience (if available). In the afternoon, we tour the St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in Christendom, built over his tomb, and can spend a few moments to pray at the tomb of late Pope John Paul II. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 11: ROME

Today we enjoy a free day to discover the beauty and inspiration of Rome. We can wander through some of Rome's colorful neighborhoods, visit one of the city's museums, or shop. An optional excursion (at additional cost) is offered to Tivoli to visit Hadrian's Villa and Villa d'Este. This evening we enjoy a special farewell dinner with wine and music at the local restaurant. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 12: NEW YORK, NY

This morning we transfer to Rome airport for our flight back home returning the same day. (B)

NOTE: Papal Audience is possible only on Wednesdays and is subject of confirmation. It can be cancelled without prior notice, depends on The Pope's schedule.