



TOUR RELIGIOUS ITALY 4

VENICE - FLORENCE - ASSISI - ROME

DAY 1 ARRIVAL DAY - Arriving in Venice, we are met and transferred to our hotel in the nearby Mestre area for dinner and overnight.

DAY 2 VENICE - Venice, the Queen of the Cities! The glories that are Venice have attracted Byron, Goethe, Wagner, Shakespeare and now – you! Following Mass in one of her beautiful churches, time is spent this morning walking the sights of Venice: the splendid Piazza San Marco and the incredibly rich Byzantine Basilica of San Marco. We marvel at the intricate network of elegant squares lined with stately Renaissance villas and palaces. This afternoon we are free for shopping, personal adventure or an optional romantic gondola ride through the inner canals of Venice. Dinner and overnight at our hotel.

DAY 3 VENICE/FLORENCE - This morning, we depart Venice for our journey to Florence where our first stop will be a visit to the Academia Gallery, here we view Michelangelo's famous "David". (OR MEDICI). We continue for a visit of the Duomo, the heart of the city, here we admire the cupola by Brunelleschi, completed in 1240, its campanile by Giotto. Once outside we view the Baptistery's with its incomparable bronze doors by Ghiberti. Afterwards, we set out to the Piazza della Signoria, dominated by the Palazzo Vecchio and its embattlement crowned tower. Across from the Palace, we visit the Loggia dei Lanzi with the statues of the Perseus by Cellini; Giambologna's the "Rape of the Sabines" and "Hercules." Following free time for Lunch on our own we visit the Basilica of Santa Croce. Among the most famous interred here, lies Galileo, Rossini, Michelangelo and Macchiaveli. We celebrate Mass here. Following some free time for shopping or personal adventure, We conclude with a drive to the "Piazzale Michelangelo" for a panoramic view of city spectacular city. Return to hotel for dinner and overnight.

DAY 4 FLORENCE/SIENA/WINE TASTING/ASSISI - This morning, we journey through the Italian countryside arriving in the magnificent city of Siena, which invites us to stroll through its Gothic streets. After we celebrate Mass at the Dominican Church commemorating St. Catherine take the escalator down to the famous Piazza del Campo. This shell shaped square is the dramatic setting for the annual Palio bareback horserace. The piazza's focal point is the Palazzo Pubblico, the public palace, which dates back to 1250. We continue uphill to visit the monumental Cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary. We have a delightful Tuscan wine tasting and luncheon at one of the famous vineyards. We arrive later this day to the hilltop village of Assisi, the home of St. Francis for dinner and overnight at our hotel.

DAY 5 ASSISI - This morning we celebrate Mass at the Basilica of St. Francesco. After our visit of the Basilica, we begin our walking tour of the village. Included, is a visit to the Church of St. Clare to view the crucifix that spoke to St. Francis. The balance of the day you have time for shopping and exploring Assisi on your own before dinner and overnight at our hotel.



DAY 6 ASSISI/ MONTESILVANO - Departing Assisi our first stop is in the lower town for a visit to the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, and the Portiuncula, Francis' Church of the Little Portion. This morning we drive east to Loreto. We celebrate Mass and visit the site of the Santa Casa or Holy House. Ancient tradition tells us angels carried the house of the Holy Family from Nazareth to Loreto as it was about to be destroyed by Holy Land invaders. After our visit, we continue southwards to Montesilvano (Pescara area) for dinner and overnight at our hotel on the shores of the Adriatic Sea.

DAY 7 LANCIANO/SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO - This morning we visit and pray at Lanciano, the site of the oldest Eucharistic Miracle certified by the Church. After almost eight centuries, the Body and the Blood still maintain all the characteristics of fresh human material. We continue south to San Giovanni Rotondo where we celebrate Mass at the tomb of Saint Padre Pio and visit the sanctuary. We transfer to our hote for dinner and overnight.

DAY 8 SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO/SUBIACO/ROME - We depart early this morning for Subiaco. It was here that Saint Benedict and his sister Scolastica retired at the end of the 5th Century and built five little monasteries. We visit the Monastery of St. Benedict, which dates from the 13th and 14th centuries. We visit the Sacred Cave where Benedict lived as a hermit for three years. The staircase holds the earliest portrait of St. Francis without his halo or stigmata. Lunch is on our own. We celebrate Mass in Subiaco (if time permits otherwise we celebrate Mass in Rome before dinner). Dinner and overnight at our hotel in Rome.

DAY 9 ROME - This morning, we go to Vatican City where we celebrate Mass below St. Peters. Afterwards, we see the treasures of the Vatican Museum. We marvel at Michelangelo's restored frescoes in the Sistine Chapel and the wonders of St. Peter's. This afternoon, we tour Rome's sites; we start with a visit to the Basilica of St. Mary Major, then we pass by the Roman Forum, the Arch of Constantine, the Coliseum, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We visit the Church of St. Peter in Chains to view Michelangelo's possibly most celebrated sculpture, the "Moses." We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

DAY 10 ROME - This morning we make our way to St. Peter's for an audience with Pope Francis if he is in residence. This afternoon, we visit the Holy Stairs and Basilica of St. John Lateran. We continue to St. Paul Outside the Walls. This huge, imposing Basilica, second only to St. Peter's and one of the largest churches in the Christian world, contains an unusual gallery of papal portraits: 265 tablets portraying the popes of the past. We conclude our day at one of the Catacombs, burial place of early Christians where we celebrate Mass. Dinner and overnight at our hotel.

DAY 11 ROME FREE DAY - Today is free for rest, optional tours, shopping or personal adventure or you can buy our extra excursion by our Tour Manager. We have the opportunity to explore the culinary delights of Rome tonight, as dinner is on our own. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 12 DEPARTURE DAY - Breakfast at the hotel. Departure to Rome airport. End of the tour.
