Code: ITA11-002

PILGRIMAGE to ITALY,
Rome, Assisi, Florence, Pisa

This pilgrimage takes eleven days and combines the visit to the Christianity of Rome and with the Spirituality of Assisi. Also a visit to some of the most fascinating cities of art in the world that are Florence and Pisa. Of particular importance is the visit to the Vatican City complex with the Vatican Museums, the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica and the Necropolis.
A magnificent and unforgettable itinerary !

DEPARTURE
Departure from your airport with destination: ITALY. Meals and overnight are aboard your flight.

Day 1 ROME – FLORENCE
Welcome to Italy !
After customs formalities, you will meet your English-Spanish speaking companion who will be with you throughout the tour in Italy. We will depart by private bus to Florence, stopping at an autogrill for free lunch, where you will arrive after about four hours of driving.
Hotel accommodation in Florence, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 2 FLORENCE
Day is dedicated to the visit of Florence, the city that saw at work the greatest Italian geniuses of painting, sculpture, architecture, also the cradle of the Italian language with Dante Alighieri. We recommend, with your expert guide, an itinerary that starts from the Basilica of Santa Maria Novella, one of the sites where the history of Italian art was born and where some of its brightest artistic exponents such as Giotto, Brunelleschi, Botticelli and many others were formed. Next the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with the splendid dome of Brunelleschi, the Tower of Giotto and the Baptistery. From here you can then reach the Piazza della Signoria which overlooks the Palazzo Vecchio and the statue of Michelangelo's David. Here you will have some free time for a snack and to visit the surroundings up to the characteristic Ponte Vecchio on the Arno River. Nearby is the Uffizi Gallery, this museum is one of the most important in Italy and would deserve a day to visit with the many pictorial and sculptural works it contains. The afternoon continues with the Church of Santa Croce, a Gothic-Italian Basilica and here you can breathe spirituality, beauty and memory with the tombs of great artists such as Galileo Galilei and Michelangelo.
Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

DAY 4 PISA – ASSISI
Early in the morning you will leave Florence and after about two hours by coach you will reach Pisa with a visit of the wonderful Piazza dei Miracoli, a Unesco World Heritage Site. Here you can admire: the large Basilica dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta in Tuscan Romanesque style and the jewel of the leaning Tower of Pisa and the Baptistery. We leave you some free time for the visit and photos and lunch. In the early afternoon we board our coach to arrive in Assisi

in the late afternoon. Our accommodations will be at the foot of the city of San Francesco (Saint Francis) in the town of Santa Maria degli Angeli.
Dinner at the hotel and overnight.

DAY 5 ASSISI

Day dedicated to the guided tour of Assisi, the atmosphere of spirituality that you breath takes us back to the times of the Saint and his ministry. A lot of time will be spent visiting the Basilica, the first example of a transition from Romanesque to Gothic-Italian. At the Basilica's inner walls above you can admire the Frescoes of Giotto and his school, among the most important with the scenes of the Saint's life. Then continue to admire in the lower Basilica an atmosphere of spirituality around the tomb of San Francesco and more very high pictorial works. Our itinerary continues through the medieval city crossing the Town Hall Square to the church of Santa Chiara, among the first followers of Saint Francis and founder of the Order of the Clarisse. The late Romanesque-Gothic church encloses the tomb of the Saint in the crypt. Here you are left some free time for lunch and what you may desire to purchase in the many souvenir shops. In the afternoon you visit the Convent of San Damiano, located in an oasis of peace and spirituality, and is the privileged place of the origins of Saint Francis and his conversion and then convent of the Clarisse. Then you go down for the visit to the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the majesty of the Sanctuary gathers inside with the small chapel of the "Porziuncola" or chapel of transit, where Saint Francis died on the evening of October 3, 1226 at just 44 years old and laid naked on the ground as he had requested.
Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

DAY 6 ASSISI – ORVIETO – ROME

We depart Assisi and drive to Rome via Orvieto where we visit the gothic Cathedral built to house the holy relics of the Eucharistic Miracle of Bolsena. It was this miracle that occasioned the proclamation of the Feast of Corpus Christi and inspired St. Thomas Aquinas to write the famous latin-hymn "Tantum Ergo." Then you'll enjoy lunch in a local restaurant with local Italian tasting meals. In the afternoon we proceed to Rome and settle into our hotel for dinner. Overnight in Rome.

DAY 7 CHRISTIAN ROME

We celebrate Mass at a local church this morning before going to see the Holy Father praying the Angelus at noon from the window of his study overlooking Saint Peter's Square. After the Angelus, Pope Francis will give his Apostolic Blessing, which extends to you, your loved ones, and any devotional items that you have brought with you to be blessed. Following lunch, in the afternoon, you will visit the oldest of the four major Basilicas in Rome, and the home of the relics of Peter and Paul, the Basilica of St. John the Lateran. This Basilica is where Pope Francis was 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. The Stairs were brought to Rome by Saint Helena in the fourth century. Ascending these stairs on your knees is done in memory of Christ's agonizing Passion. We conclude our day, with the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the Church dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. St. Mary Major reigns as the only Basilica that has kept 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 stay.

DAY 8 ANCIENT ROME

We begin our day visiting the fascinating Church of San Clemente, an early Christian basilica in Rome dedicated to Pope St. Clement (d. 99 AD). In the 19th century, excavations under the present basilica uncovered not only the original fourth-century basilica directly underneath, but also on an even lower level the remains of the first-century Christian House Church that most probably was the home of Pope Saint Clement who was the third successor of St. Peter. We walk to the Colosseum where in the arena fights between men and beasts, gladiatorial contests, races, and simulated naval battles took place and which Pope Benedict XIV dedicated to the memory of the Christian martyrs. We continue to the Roman Forum, the religious, political, and commercial center of ancient Rome, and for centuries, the entire civilized world and we also see the Arches of Constantine & Titus. Next, we visit the Pantheon and the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, where St. Catherine of Siena is buried under the main altar. After which we offer you free time and an opportunity to visit the Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steps and Piazza Navona on your own.
Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

DAY 9 VATICAN TREASURES

This morning, we start with a visit to the Vatican Museum where we will see the magnificent rooms painted by Raphael as well as the Sistine Chapel. Next, a tour of St. Peter's Basilica and the fascinating Scavi or Vatican Necropolis, the excavations under St. Peters where St. Peter was buried after his martyrdom. There will be free time during which people may explore St. Peter's, pray in one of the chapels, ascend to the top of the cupola, visit the Basilica's Treasury, or shop for souvenirs. The afternoon is at leisure to explore Rome on your own.
Dinner and overnight in the Hotel.

DAY 10 PAPAL AUDIENCE and THE CATACOMBS

We return to Vatican City to attend a Papal Audience in St. Peter's Square with Pope Francis surrounded by the magnificent colonnade of Bernini. Following the Audience, you will have free time to visit the Basilica and have lunch. This Basilica was built on the site where St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome, was martyred. Also, it was Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who was the first Pontiff to visit the Necropolis since extensive archaeological excavations were conducted at the ancient site decades ago. It is here that you will view Michelangelo's Pieta. Following lunch, we drive to the Basilica dedicated to the other great apostle of Rome, Saint Paul Outside the Walls. We continue to the Catacombs of Saint Sebastian, to venerate the tombs of the martyrs, and see some of the earliest examples of Christian art. Tonight we enjoy a farewell dinner in a local restaurant.
Overnight in Rome.

DAY 11 DEPARTURE

This morning we are transferred to the airport for our flight back to our country.

THE PRICE INCLUDES:
Accommodation at 4* hotel, air-conditioned double room, private bathroom and porterage service.
Half-board (continental breakfast and dinner)
Farewell dinner in a typical restaurant in Rome and music,
Deluxe bus for the whole tour, tools and parking fees, driver full board included.
Spanish and English speaking tour escort for all the touring in Italy
Full assistance from our offices in Italy
Guided visits with local art historian guides in Rome, Vatican, Assisi, Florence, Pisa as per program. Travel information and welcome gift from our incoming Italian agency

THE PRICE DOESN'T INCLUDE:
Intercontinental flights and taxes
Travel Insurance
Drinks, tips, personal extras,
Entrance fees to archeological sites and monuments
City taxes to be paid at the hotel;
Any other feature that is not mentioned under "The Price Includes"