

SHRINES OF ITALY

DAY 01: NORTH AMERICA/ ITALY :Depart North America via jet service. Dinner and breakfast will be served on board.

DAY 02: ROME THE ETERNAL CITY: Upon arrival in Rome, you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. Enroute you will drive along Via Cavour, Piazza Della Repubblica with Najads Fountain, Via Nazionale, Piazza Venezia where you will drive by the monument of King Victor Emanuel II. Drive on the Via Del Fori Imperiali for a *panoramic view* of the Roman Forum and capitol Colosseum, the Arch of Constantine, Circus Maximus, Aventin Hill, and Porta S. Paolo. Proceed to the hotel for the balance of the day at leisure. Dinner and overnight in Rome.

DAY 03 : PAPAL AUDIENCE AND VATICAN This morning we transfer to St. Peter's Square for the *Holy Father's General Audience and Blessing*. Proceed to visit the *Vatican Museum and Library, as well as the Sistine Chapel*. Continue to *Visit St. Peter's Basilica* built on the site where St. Peter was martyred. Construction of St. Peter's began in 1506 and was completed in 1626. St. Peter is buried here along with many other popes. Dinner and overnight in Rome.

DAY 04: ROME'S MAJOR BASILICAS AND CATACOMBS This morning we will start with a visit to *St. Mary Major*, one the of oldest shrines dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, built by Pope Liberius in A.D. 358. According to tradition, the church originally built in response to a request from the Blessed Virgin Mary. During the night of August 4, 358, the Virgin appeared to Pope Liberius and the Roman patrician Giovanni in their dreams. Continue to *Basilica of St. John in Lateran*, the former residence of the popes prior to their return to Rome in 1377. St. John Lateran is Rome's cathedral; it is here that the pope officiates in his capacity as bishop of Rome. Next we will visit *St. Paul Outside the Walls* The burial place of St. Paul the Apostle. The chapel of relics has numerous relics, the most notable of which are a set chains said to be the prison chains of St. Paul, used in the last days before his execution. This afternoon we proceed via the *Appian Way* on our way to visit the Catacombs. Visit the *Catacombs of St. Callixtus* where early Christians held their forbidden service to escape persecution. The Catacombs were also used as Christian cemeteries. Return to your hotel for dinner.

DAY 05: ROME/MONTE CASSINO/SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO Depart Rome our first stop will be Monte Cassino Visit the *monastery of Monte Cassino*, the mother house of the Benedictines, which was founded by St. Benedict in 529. Proceed to San Giovanni for dinner and overnight.

DAY06 : SAN GIOVANNI / MONTE SANT' ANGELO Morning visit San Giovanni Rotondo The shrine of *Our Lady of Grace houses the tomb of Padre Pio*. Visit the Tomb of Padre Pio, the Confessional of Padre Pio, the Crucifix from which Padre Pio received the stigmata. Proceed to *Monte Sant'Angelo* View the statue of St. Michael the Archangel in the cave of Monte Sant'Angelo where the angel appeared in 490,492,and 1656. The sanctuary is one of Christendom's most celebrated shrines. St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Gerald Majella, St. William of Vercelli and six different popes have pilgrimaged to this holy spot. Return to San Giovanni for dinner and overnight.

DAY 07: SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO/LANCIANO/ LORETO/ ASSISI Proceed to Lancino. *Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano* This miracle took place during the eighth century when a Basilian monk was saying Mass in the little town of Lanciano. Shortly after the consecration, the priest, who had been doubting the Real Presence or our Lord in he Eucharist, found himself holding a host that had changed into flesh. The wine, on the altar had changed into blood.

Continue to Loreto *Holy House of Loreto* According to tradition, angels transported the home of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Nazareth to Croatia, and finally to Loreto in 1294, where in now lies in the Basilica of the Holy House. Proceed to Assisi for dinner and overnight.

DAY 08: ASSISI Morning visit to the *Basilica of St. Francis*, the upper Basilica with Giotto frescos representing St. Francis, life, the lower Basilica and the Tomb of St. Francis . Continue to the *Basilica of St. Clare*, the basilica was built between 1257 and 1265 and houses the incorrupt body of St. Clare *Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels and the Portiuncula Chapel*, the birthplace of the Franciscan order. Dinner and overnight in Assisi.

DAY 09: ASSISI/ORVIETO/SIENA This morning we visit the *Cathedral of Orvieto* In a chapel of the Cathedral of Orvieto is the holy corporal containing the blood from the Eucharistic Miracle of Orvieto in 1263 that occasioned the proclamation of the Feast of Corpus Christi and inspired St. Thomas Aquinas to write the famous hymn "Tantum Ergo." Continue to Sienna *St. Catherine of Siena, was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1970. Visit Basilica of St. Dominic* here we view the incorrupt head of St. Catherine. Siena is also home of the *Eucharistic Miracle of Siena*. In the small church of St. Francis is a collection of incorrupt hosts dating back to 1730. Return to Assisi for dinner and overnight.

DAY 10: ASSISI / FLORENCE Proceed to Florence. Upon arrival we will take a panoramic view of Florence. **Visit the Academy Gallery**, where you will see some of the most famous works of art in the world including "David" by Michelangelo. Dinner and overnight in Florence.

DAY 11: FLORENCE Today's tour of Florence starts at the *Basilica of Santa Croce* (Basilica of the Holy Cross) the largest and most beautiful of all Italian Franciscan Churches and the burial place of Michelangelo and Galileo. Continue to *Santa Maria del Fiore* (the Duomo) the cathedral of Florence with its great representation of Tuscan Gothic Architecture. Balance of the day at leisure. Dinner and overnight.

DAY 12: FLORENCE / PADUA. The *Basilica of St. Anthony* contains the remains of the beloved miracle-worker. Considered one of the Catholic Church's greatest preachers, his incorrupt tongue is kept in the Chapel of Reliquaries. Dinner and overnight in Padua.

DAY 13 PADUA / VENICE This morning enjoy sightseeing of Venice, like no other place in the world. Visits include the Grand Canal, Rialto Bridge, Ca'Doro, *San Marco Basilica* and Piazza, Doges' Palace with its splendid rooms decorated by 16th century artists such as Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese, the *Bridge of Sighs*, Murano Glass Factory. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

DAY 14: VENICE / NORTH AMERICA Transfer to the airport for your return flight to North America. Arrival in the afternoon local time.