

Grand Catholic Italy

Escorted by Rev. Anthony J. Herold, VG ~ 12 Days Sept 8 – 19, 2018

\$3,990.00 per person based on double occupancy.

Contact Mary Jo Dopson at Gateway Travel & Cruise
563-242-1025 or 800-747-1025 ~ www.gatewaytc.com

Itinerary-

Day 1 – Sept. 08 *Off we go to Italy*

Via your motor coach from Davenport to Chicago O'hare.

Air France Sept. 8, 2018 Chicago – Paris 7:45p – 11:05a on Sept. 9, 2018

Air France Sept. 9, 2018 Paris – Rome 1:05p – 3:10p

Day 2 – Sept. 09 *Welcome to Rome!*

Our group will be transferred to our hotel where the rest of the day is free.

Day 3 – Sept. 10 *Enjoy settling in to the lifestyles of Rome.*

At 5pm, meet your Tour Director, then enjoy the evening's welcome dinner at a local restaurant to celebrate your spiritual journey through Italy.

Day 4 – Sept. 11 *Rome*

Begin your discovery in Vatican City with a guided visit of the **VATICAN MUSEUMS**, a unique collection of religious and secular art that spans for centuries, with some of the finest examples of Renaissance paintings, including the **SISTINE CHAPEL**, world famous for Michelangelo's ceiling paintings and The Last Judgment, as well as for being the place where the conclave takes place for the election of the new popes. Continue the visit with monumental **ST. PETER'S SQUARE**, where the Pope prays the Angelus every Sunday in front of thousands of believers; and the **BASILICA**, not only an incredibly rich architectural and decorative wonder, but also the place where all Catholic popes are buried. Cross the Tiber River and dip into ancient Roman history. See the Colosseum, the largest amphitheater ever built, and the Roman Forum, site of military processions, elections, trials, and the overall center of Roman public life for centuries.

Day 5 – Sept. 12 *Rome*

This morning, attend the **PAPAL AUDIENCE** (subject to availability) for the chance to see the Pope and receive the Papal Blessing. Later, visit **ST. PAUL OUTSIDE THE WALLS**, ONE OF Rome's four major Papal basilicas built by Constantine on the grave of St. Paul, beheaded by Nero around 65-67 AD, and explore the mysterious ancient **CATACOMBS** that run under the city. During the persecutions, the catacombs were used as places of refuge for the celebration of the Eucharist. Next, visit **ST. JOHN LATERAN BASILICA** and the **HOLY STAIRS**, brought from Jerusalem to Rome around 326 AD by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Officially, pilgrims may only ascend these 28 white marble steps on their knees. Then, visit the hallowed halls of **ST. MARY MAJOR BASILICA**, its beautiful treasures are of inestimable value, and represent the Church's role as the cradle of Christian artistic civilization in Rome. For nearly sixteen centuries, St. Mary Major has held its position as a Marian shrine par excellence and has been a magnet for pilgrims from all over the world who have come to the Eternal City to experience the beauty, grandeur, and holiness of the basilica.

Day 6 – Sept. 13 *Rome-Cascia-Assisi*

Depart Rome today and head north into Umbria for a stop in Cascia to explore the life of St. Rita, known as the "Saint of the Impossible." Visit the **BASILICA**, see the tomb with the saint's incorrupt body, and attend Mass. Also, visit the lower basilica, home of the Eucharistic Miracle, which is commemorated each year with the Feast of Corpus Christi. Continue to hilltop Assisi, home of St. Francis and St. Clare. Here, visit **ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS BASILICA**, where St. Francis consecrated St. Clare as the "Bride of Christ," and the **PORZIUNCOLA**, where he founded the Franciscan Order of Friars minor in 1209.

Day 7 – Sept. 14 *Assisi*

Attend Mass this morning, followed by a guided walking tour of Assisi. Visit the **BASILICAS OF ST. FRANCIS** and **ST. CLARE**, and see the crucifix that spoke to St. Francis, who abandoned a life of luxury for a life devoted to Christianity after hearing the voice of God, who commanded him to rebuild the Christian church and live in poverty. He is the patron saint of animals and the environment. St. Claire was one of St. Francis' first followers and founded the Order of Poor Clares, a monastic religious order for women in the Franciscan tradition. A short trip by minibus takes you to the **CARCERI HERMITAGE**, a peaceful oasis in the woods of Mount Subasio where St. Francis came to pray. Finally, visit the **MONASTERY OF ST. DAMIAN**, a Franciscan shrine built on the spot where St. Francis heard the voice of Christ, and where he wrote the Canticle of the Creatures. The convent founded by St. Clare is still intact, and is where she died in 1253. This afternoon, you may wish to join an optional excursion to magnificent medieval Spello.

Day 8 – Sept. 15 *Assisi-Siena-Florence*

Leave Assisi and enter Tuscany. In Siena, meet your Local Guide and learn all about St. Catherine, a saint, a mystic, a doctor of the Church and the patroness of Italy and Europe, as you visit the **BASILICA OF ST. DOMINIC**, **ST. CATHERINE'S SANCTUARY**, and her **HOUSE**. Then, enjoy a walk through the ancient narrow lanes and visit beautiful **PIAZZA DEL CAMPO**. Afternoon arrival in Florence, "Cradle of Renaissance."

Day 9 – Sept. 16 *Florence*

Follow your Local Guide and visit the **ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS** with Michelangelo's David. Later, walk to beautiful Cathedral Square, admire Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistry's heavy bronze "Gate of Paradise." Attend Mass at the magnificent **DUOMO**, with its incredible Renaissance dome designed by Filippo Brunelleschi. Also, see sculpture-studded **SIGNORIA SQUARE** and famous **SANTA CROCE SQUARE** with its Franciscan basilica.

Day 10 – Sept. 17 *Florence-Padua*

Travel through the Apennine Mountains to arrive in the flat Po area. In Padua, a guided visit of the **BASILICA OF ST. ANTHONY** shows you the tomb and reliquaries of this miracle-working saint and patron of lost and stolen articles. St. Anthony is one of the Catholic church's most popular saints. He was a powerful Franciscan preacher and teacher. He was born in Lisbon in 1195 and died just outside Padua in 1231, having led a short but very intense religious life.

Day 11 – Sept. 18 *Padua. Excursion to Venice*

A short drive brings you to Venice. Enter the city in style by **PRIVATE BOAT** and see the sights with your Local Guide. Visit lavish **DOGES' PALACE** and the **BRIDGE OF SIGHS**, **ST. MARK'S SQUARE** and its **BASILICA**. Time at leisure or take an optional gondola ride. Return to Padua and join your traveling companions for a farewell dinner.

Day 12 – Sept. 19 *Padua – We bid arrivederci to Italy*

And start our journey back home early this morning from Venice via Amsterdam on our way to Chicago O'hare.

KLM Sept. 19, 2018 Venice to Amsterdam 6:00a - 8:00a

KLM Sept. 19, 2018 Amsterdam to Chicago 12:25p – 1:55p

After clearing customs in Chicago, our motor coach will be waiting to bring the group back to Davenport.

Vacations Highlights: Round trip transportation DAVENPORT – CHICAGO, round trip airfare in economy class, trip insurance, gratuities. **ROME**-Welcome dinner at a local restaurant; guided sightseeing, visit the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Square and Basilica; see the Colosseum and Roman Forum; Papal Audience (subject to availability); visit St. Paul Outside the Walls, the Catacombs, St. John Lateran Basilica, the Holy Stairs, St. Mary Major Basilica. **CASCIA**-Visit the Basilica and attend Mass. **ASSISI**-Visit St. Mary of the Angels Basilica and the Porziuncola; celebrate Mass; guided walking tour, visit the Basilicas of St. Frances and St. Clare, the Carceri Hermitage, and the Monastery of St. Damian. **SIENA**-Guided walking tour, visit the Basilica of St. Dominic, the Sanctuary of St. Catherine & House, and Piazza del Campo. **FLORENCE**-Guided walking tour, visit the Academy of Fine Arts to see Michelangelo's David; celebrate Mass at the Duomo; walk to Signoria Square, and Santa Croce Square. **PADUA**-Guided visit of St. Anthony's Basilica; farewell dinner. **VENICE**-Private boat ride; guided walking tour, visit Doges' Palace, the Bridge of Sighs, and St. Mark's Square & Basilica. Headsets throughout the tour.

Notes: This tour involves a lot of walking. *For operational reasons, slight schedule changes for the Rome program cannot be excluded.

MEALS: Full buffet breakfast daily; 4 three-course dinners with wine, including a special welcome dinner in Rome, and a farewell dinner in Padua.