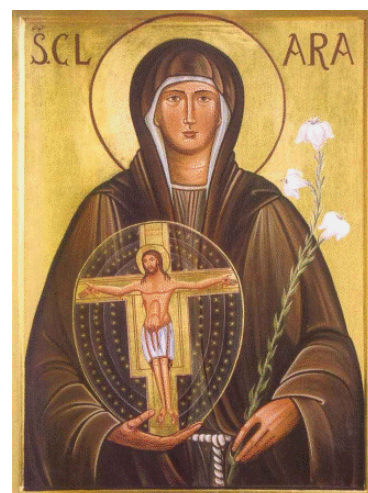


11-Day Pilgrimage to Italy In the Footsteps of the Saints September 13-23, 2010

\$2,690 (ground + air from Atlanta or Chicago)
\$1,690 (ground only)

Accompanied by Bret Thoman, SFO
Spiritually Led by Fr. Carl Diederichs



A pilgrimage in the footsteps of the saints is to step back in time to discover Italy's ancient buildings and artwork. It is to enjoy beautiful panoramas, ornate churches and museums while learning about local culture and history. More important for the pilgrim, however, is to become better acquainted with the saints through an exploration of the places, people, and events that shaped their lives. By standing on the ground where they were born, walking the streets they walked, touching the stones of the churches in which they prayed, and saying a prayer at their tombs, one can more intimately connect with what God did in their lives eight centuries ago. Through the experience and example of the saints of times past, we can have a clearer sense of what God is speaking to us today.



***Included in Price:**

- Rome including papal Audience, major Basilicas, Assisi, House of Mary in Loreto, Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, Padre Pio/San Giovanni Rotondo, Rieti Valley, Saint Benedict in Nursia, Saint Rita in Cascia, Camilla of Camerino (who will be canonized a saint in October, 2010), plus scenic Italian towns off-the-beaten-path, and more.
- 4 nights in Assisi, 1 night in Loreto, 1 night in San Giovanni Rotondo, 3 nights in Rome in 3- or 4-star hotels (2 pilgrims per room)
- Nonstop flight from Atlanta or Chicago (including all taxes and fuel surcharges)
 - Continental breakfast plus dinner daily
 - Chartered Motor coach and ground transportation (*per itinerary*)
 - Guide with spiritual reflections and prayer
 - Daily Mass
- **NOT Included** are one meal per day, tips/gratuity, and optional travel insurance.

For more info, contact: Bret Thoman, SFO

Tel: 770-402-4335

www.stfrancispilgrimages.com

See Next Page for Itinerary

Monday, September 13

Depart on overnight non-stop flight from Atlanta (on Delta Airlines) or Chicago (on American Airlines) to Rome Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino airport. Dinner and breakfast is served on board.

Tuesday, September 14

We will offer a private chartered bus at 10:00am to our hotel in Rome once the group flight arrives. After dropping off our suitcases at the hotel, Villa Aurelia, near St. Peter's: www.villaaurelia.net we will visit the Basilica of St. Peter's. After visiting the Basilica, we will return to our hotel for check-in. We will conclude with dinner in our hotel.

Wednesday, September 15

Today we will continue our pilgrimage in the footsteps of the saints in St. Peter's Square. We will witness the Holy Father give his weekly General Papal Audience in seven languages. In the afternoon, we will visit St. Paul's Basilica, followed by a guided tour of St. John Lateran (the cathedral of Rome) and a bus tour by the archaeological sites of Rome including the Coliseum and Roman Forum. We will offer dinner and overnight in Rome hotel.

Thursday, September 16

Today we will leave Rome for Assisi with a stop in the Rieti Valley, a panoramic area with several Franciscan hill hermitages, known as the second Assisi. We will visit Greccio, the town where St. Francis created the first live nativity scene, and from where the English word, crèche, derives. We will arrive in Assisi in the late afternoon and have dinner and overnight in our Assisi hotel, Villa Elda: www.villaelda.com

Friday, September 17

In the morning, we will have Mass and a guided visit of the Basilica of St. Francis (1182-1226), which houses St. Francis' tomb. The Basilica was built in his honor and was adorned with important frescoes by famous 13th century Italian artists. After lunch, we will explore medieval Assisi with a walking tour through some other important Franciscan sites including Francis' birth-home, the home of his first follower, and the Basilica housing the body of St. Clare. We will conclude with dinner and overnight.

Saturday, September 18

Today we will visit several more well-known saints native to Umbria. Cascia, a beautiful hill-town, houses the body of Augustinian nun Saint Rita (1371-1447), the saint of the Impossible. She was a daughter, sister, wife mother, nun, and stigmatic. In Nursia (Norcia) visit the birthplace of St. Benedict (480-547), who was founder of the Benedictine Order, and his twin sister Scholastica. St. Benedict was born of a noble family in Nursia and went to Rome to study. He eventually founded twelve monasteries and wrote the famous Benedictine Rule which still guides monastic life to this day. We will return to Assisi for dinner and overnight.

Sunday, September 19

Today we will visit two more important Franciscan churches: the church of Saint Mary of the Angels where Francis' favorite church is housed, and San Damiano, where the famous crucifix spoke to Francis, and where Saint Clare lived in an enclosed monastery. The afternoon will be free. Dinner and overnight will be offered in Assisi.

Monday, September 20

Today we leave Assisi, continuing our journey in the footsteps of the saints through the Apennine Mountains to the charming region of the Marches. In Camerino, we will visit the body of Blessed Camilla Battista da Varano in a monastery of Poor Clare sisters. Blessed Battista da Varano (1458-1524), was the daughter of the powerful duke of Camerino who underwent a profound conversion leading to her entrance into the Poor Clares and many mystical experiences. She will be canonized a saint on October 17 of this year, so right now is a special time for the sisters and people of Camerino. We will continue to Loreto for overnight in a religious hotel: www.casaaccoglienzasangiuseppe.it

Tuesday, September 21

In the morning we will visit the Basilica built over the house of Mary in Loreto. This house has been studied by many scholars who have concluded that the stones are actually from Nazareth, and the house was most likely transported to Loreto during the Crusades. After our visit, we will go south along the Adriatic and visit the body of St. James of the Marches (1391-1476), a saint dedicated to peace, social service and reconciliation. After lunch with the friars, we will continue to Lanciano to visit the most well-known Eucharistic Miracle in the Catholic Church. We will arrive in San Giovanni Rotondo for dinner in our hotel: www.centrospiritualepadrepiro.it

Wednesday, September 22

In the morning, we will have a guided tour of the church and monastery where Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (1916-1968) lived most of his life. Padre Pio was known for many supernatural experiences such as bilocation, reading souls, and bearing the wounds of Christ. Here we will celebrate Mass, as well as visit the new church built recently by renowned architect, Renzo Piano. In the afternoon, we will return to Rome for final dinner and overnight: www.salesianum.it

Thursday, September 23

We will depart in our chartered bus to Rome Fiumicino airport for return flight home.

**The itinerary is subject to change due to factors beyond our control. However, the focus on the spiritual nature of the trip will always be the overall objective, and will not change.*

***The Papal Audience is dependent on the presence of the Holy Father in Rome.*