MAY 6 - 14, 2027

Pilgrimage to

ITALY

WITH FR. ANDREW JONES & FR. PEYTON PLESSALA



FR. PEYTON PLESSALA
YOUR CHAPLAIN

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May 6, 2027 | Departure from the United States
Our pilgrimage begins as we depart the United States from Montgomery (MGM) on our overnight flight to Rome, Italy. Dinner and breakfast will be served during the flight.

May 7 | Arrival in Rome & Transfer to Assisi
Upon arrival at Rome's Fiumicino Airport, our local professional tour escort will greet us and accompany us by motorcoach to Assisi, the hill town of St. Francis and St. Clare. After check-in, we gather this evening for a welcome dinner to begin our pilgrimage together. Overnight in Assisi. (D)

May 8 | Assisi, St. Clare, St. Carlo Acutis, San Damiano & the Porziuncola
Today is given entirely to Assisi. We begin at the Basilica of St. Clare, resting place of the foundress of the Poor Clares, where we venerate her incorrupt body and pray before the San Damiano Cross, from which St. Francis heard the call to rebuild the Church. A short walk brings us to the Sanctuary of the Renunciation, the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where we venerate the tomb of St. Carlo Acutis, the first millennial to be canonized, a boy of fifteen who called the Eucharist his highway to heaven and who died of leukemia in 2006. We continue to the Basilica of St. Francis, where we celebrate Mass at the tomb of the Poverello, whose radical embrace of poverty and love of creation continue to inspire the Church eight centuries later, and view Giotto's frescoes of his life. After time for lunch and quiet prayer in the upper town, we descend to the Church of San Damiano, where the crucifix spoke to St. Francis and where St. Clare and her sisters lived out their days, still among the most peaceful corners of Assisi. We conclude at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, built around the tiny Porziuncola chapel so beloved of St. Francis, and see the Cappella del Transito, marking the spot where he died in 1226, along with the thornless rose garden associated with his victory over temptation. The evening is our own in Assisi. Overnight in Assisi. (B)

May 9 | Assisi to Rome, San Clemente & the Colosseum
After breakfast we take leave of Assisi and travel south through Umbria to Rome, where we check in to our hotel for the remainder of our pilgrimage. This afternoon we celebrate Mass at the Basilica of San Clemente, entrusted to the Irish Dominicans, a church built in three layers: a twelfth-century basilica crowned by a golden mosaic of the Cross as the Tree of Life, above a fourth-century church that holds the relics of St. Clement, third successor of St. Peter, and the tomb of St. Cyril, apostle to the Slavs, and beneath that a first-century Roman house. A short walk brings us to the Church of St. Peter in Chains, where we venerate the very chains tradition holds bound St. Peter during his Roman imprisonment, and pause before Michelangelo's imposing Moses. We come down to the Colosseum and walk its perimeter, where tradition holds that early Christians gave witness to their faith even unto death, pausing at the neighboring Arch of Constantine, raised in honor of the emperor whose Edict of Milan in 313 ended centuries of persecution and opened the way for the Church to flourish. From there we walk the length of the Via dei Fori Imperiali toward Piazza Venezia, the Roman Forum lying open below us on one side and the forums of the emperors on the other, finishing in view of Trajan's Column and the Victor Emmanuel Monument. The evening is at leisure. Overnight in Rome. (B)

May 10 | St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museums & the Sistine Chapel
This morning we celebrate Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in Christendom, raised over the tomb of the fisherman to whom Our Lord entrusted the keys, and we remain afterward to pray at the tombs of the Apostle and of St. John Paul II and to pause before Michelangelo's Pietà, a moving meditation on Our Lady cradling her crucified Son. We then enter the Vatican Museums, home to one of the world's great collections of sacred art, passing through the Gallery of Maps and the Raphael Rooms and concluding in prayerful silence beneath Michelangelo's frescoed ceiling in the Sistine Chapel. The evening is at leisure. Overnight in Rome. (B)

May 11 | The Old Appian Way, the Catacombs of St. Callixtus & St. Paul Outside the Walls
This morning we journey out along the Old Appian Way, the ancient road walked by the earliest Christians and, tradition holds, by St. Peter himself as he fled Rome, pausing at the little church of Domine Quo Vadis. We descend into the Catacombs of St. Callixtus and celebrate Mass amid the same underground galleries where the early Church buried her dead, among them the Crypt of the Popes and the tomb of St. Cecilia. We visit the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, raised over the tomb of the Apostle to the Gentiles, whose nave is ringed by mosaic medallions of every pope from St. Peter onward. This afternoon we visit the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, where Bernini carved his Ecstasy of St. Teresa, his rendering of the Carmelite reformer's own account of the wounding of her heart, and the neighboring Church of St. Charles at the Four Fountains, Borromini's small masterpiece dedicated to St. Charles Borromeo. The evening is at leisure. Overnight in Rome. (B)

May 12 | Papal Audience, St. John Lateran, the Holy Stairs & the Holy Cross in Jerusalem
This morning we attend the General Papal Audience in St. Peter's Square and receive the Holy Father's Apostolic Blessing. This afternoon we visit the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the cathedral of the Diocese of Rome, whose facade proclaims it the mother and head of all the churches of the city and of the world. Across the street we come to the Scala Sancta, traditionally believed to be the very steps Our Lord climbed to the praetorium of Pontius Pilate, brought to Rome by St. Helena and ascended by pilgrims on their knees in prayer, and we look into the Sancta Sanctorum, the private chapel of the medieval popes. We celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, raised within St. Helena's own imperial residence to house the relics she brought back from the Holy Land, among them fragments of the True Cross, the title board that hung above Our Lord, and a nail. The evening is at leisure. Overnight in Rome. (B)

May 13 | St. Mary Major & the Churches of Old Rome
We open the day with Mass at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the oldest church in the West dedicated to Our Lady, where we venerate the relic of the Holy Crib and the ancient icon of Salus Populi Romani, so beloved of the popes, and pray at the tomb of Pope Francis. The rest of the day belongs to the churches of old Rome, which we visit on foot. We begin at the Church of the Gesù, mother church of the Society of Jesus, where St. Ignatius of Loyola lies beneath the altar of his chapel and the arm of St. Francis Xavier is venerated. We continue to the Church of St. Ignatius, whose vault carries Andrea Pozzo's soaring painted heavens and whose celebrated dome is an illusion painted on flat canvas, and where St. Aloysius Gonzaga and St. John Berchmans are buried. At Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome's great Dominican church, we venerate the body of St. Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church and co-patroness of Europe, and pause at the tomb of Blessed Fra Angelico. Steps away stands the Basilica of St. Mary and the Martyrs, better known as the Pantheon, an ancient temple given to the Church in 609 and consecrated to Our Lady and all the martyrs. We continue to the Church of St. Louis of the French, home to Caravaggio's paintings of the calling, inspiration and martyrdom of St. Matthew, and to the Church of St. Augustine, where the tomb of St. Monica rests near Caravaggio's Madonna of Loreto and Sansovino's Madonna del Parto. We pause in Piazza Navona before concluding at the Chiesa Nuova, the church of St. Philip Neri, apostle of Rome, where we pray at his tomb and see the rooms in which he lived. This evening we gather for a farewell dinner at Ristorante Abruzzi, near the Pontifical Gregorian University (pending availability). Overnight in Rome.
(B/D)

May 14 | Return Home
With hearts renewed by the grace of pilgrimage and by the intercession of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi and the Apostles Peter and Paul, we transfer to Rome's Fiumicino Airport for our return flight home to the United States. (B)



Your Pilgrimage Includes

- ✓ Roundtrip flights from Montgomery (MGM) *- Includes checked bag, carry-on and personal item*
- ✓ 4-star hotels (2 nights Assisi, 5 nights Rome)
- ✓ Breakfast daily plus two group dinners: a welcome dinner in Assisi and a farewell dinner in Rome
- ✓ Wine served with group dinners
- ✓ Private Masses, including St. Peter's Basilica
- ✓ Papal General Audience tickets
- ✓ Private motorcoach transportation
- ✓ Professional tour manager
- ✓ Licensed guiding & admission fees
- ✓ Audio headsets when touring
- ✓ Tips for restaurant & hotel staff
- ✓ Daily Mass & spiritual activities
- ✓ Name badge & luggage tag
- ✓ Copy of the Magnificat
- ✓ 9am-5pm (EST) reservation support
- ✓ 24/7 travel emergency support

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