A Jubilee Year of Mercy
8-Day Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi

Want to customize? We’ll gladly customize an itinerary according to your preferences and budget.

THU, DAY 1: DEPART THE USA: We depart for Rome with complimentary meals and beverages served aloft.

FRI, DAY 2: ARRIVE ROME / ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS / ASSISI: We arrive in Rome and are met by our Catholic Travel Centre representative, who will accompany us throughout the tour. We board our motor coach and make our way to the region of Umbria, and the town of Assisi, clinging to the side of Mount Subasio. This town was home to Ss. Francis and Clare. We stop first at the village of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where we visit the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, containing the Porziuncola, repaired by St. Francis and his followers. The Porziuncola is a tiny church constructed within the Basilica, like a ship in a giant bottle. Nearby is the site of Francis’ death. After our visit, we continue on to our hotel in Assisi. Dinner tonight is at our hotel. (D)

SAT, DAY 3: ASSISI: VISIT OF THE TOWN: St. Francis was born the son of a wealthy cloth merchant, and for the first 25 years of his life, he lived the high life. While going off to war in 1204, Francis had a vision that directed him back to Assisi, where he lost his taste for his worldly life. From then on, his sometimes harsh experiences moved him to live the rest of his life in poverty.

In 1224, he received the stigmata, making him the first recorded person to bear the wounds of Christ’s Passion. He died in 1226, and on July 16, 1228, he was pronounced a saint by Pope Gregory IX. He is known as the patron saint of animals, the environment and is one of the two patron saints of Italy.

St. Clare was born in Assisi in 1194. Like her mother, Clare was very devout. When Clare was 12, her father wanted her to marry a wealthy young man, but she begged to be 18 years old first. When she turned 18, she heard Francis preach and ran away to become one of his first followers. She, along with Francis, founded the Order of Poor Ladies, and wrote their Rule of Life - the first monastic rule known to have been written by a woman. Her mother and sister eventually entered the monastery as well. Following her death, at the age of 59, the order she founded was renamed in her honor as the Order of Saint Clare, commonly referred to today as the Poor Clares.

We begin with Mass at the Basilica constructed over St. Francis’ tomb. The Basilica

“This is the best planned trip I have ever been on. You guys did great. I will definitely use Catholic Travel Centre again!”
- Fr. V.G. - California
has an upper and lower church. The churches have been decorated by the greatest late medieval Roman, Umbrian and Tuscan artists of their time, giving these churches an unequaled importance in the development of Italian art. A local friar will lead our tour.

We continue with a walking tour of the town led by our local guide, visiting the major sites associated with Ss. Francis and Clare, including the Chiesa Nuova, built over the home of Francis' family and the Basilica of St. Clare. Here we also see the original “San Damiano” crucifix that spoke to Francis, urging him to “rebuild My Church.” We also visit St. Mary Major Church. This is the site where some 800 years ago, St. Francis dramatically renounced his father's wealth, disrobing in the presence of his father and the bishop. We have some time for lunch on our own. The balance of the day is at leisure to stroll these historic cobbled streets on our own. Dinner this evening is at our hotel. (B, D)

SUN, DAY 4: ASSISI / ROME: ST. PAUL’S OUTSIDE THE WALLS, CATACOMBS & ANCIENT ROME: This morning, after breakfast, we depart Assisi for Rome. By the year 114 AD, you could travel from present day Scotland to the Sahara desert and still find yourself within the Roman Empire. We still use the Roman alphabet, numerals and months. The Romans developed concrete, glass windows, central heating, public health, civil service and more. Latin formed the basis for most European languages. Today, Rome – “The Eternal City” - remains one of the most beautiful and interesting cities of the world.

We begin our visit of Rome at the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, housing the Tomb of St. Paul the Apostle, affectionately known as the Apostle of the Gentiles. Although heavily restored, the present basilica looks much the same as it did in the 4th century.

St. Paul’s is one of the four papal basilicas that have a Holy Door (Porta Sancta in Latin). The doors are normally sealed shut from the inside so they cannot be opened. They are opened during a Jubilee year, when pilgrims enter through those doors to gain the plenary indulgence connected with the Jubilee. We will enter through the Holy Doors in all four of the major basilicas during our pilgrimage.

We enter through the Holy Door and celebrate Mass. After Mass and a visit of the basilica, we have some time at leisure for lunch on our own before our visit of the Catacombs of St. Calixtus housing many of the tombs of the early Popes and martyrs. Called by Pope John XXIII “the sublimest and most famous in Rome,” these underground burial places for 16 popes, a large number of martyrs and a great many Christians, contain an intricate network of passages and chambers hewn from the soft Roman tufa.

Boarding our motor coach, we view the Colosseum and the Roman Forum on our panoramic tour of Ancient Rome. We check in to our hotel for the evening. Dinner tonight is at our hotel. (B, D)

MON, DAY 5: ROME: ST. PETER’S BASILICA & LEISURE: We begin today with Mass at the Basilica of St. Peter. We will also have time to pray at the tombs of Saint John Paul II and Saint John XXIII. After Mass, our guide will show us the Basilica. With Michelangelo’s dome, the Basilica is the most prominent building inside Vatican City.

Built over the site of “Old Saint Peter’s” constructed by the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, construction of the new Basilica began in 1506. The building absorbed the attention of 20 popes and 10 architects before completion in 1626. There are over 100 tombs located within the Basilica. These include 91 popes. Here we see the Papal Altar covered with the sumptuous bronze baldachin by Bernini, and the apse, aglow with golden mosaic. In addition to many sculptures and monuments by Bernini and other great artists, we will see Michelangelo’s famous statue of The Pieta.

The balance of the day is at leisure, perhaps to visit some of the excellent religious article shops in the area, visit the Sistine Chapel, or to go on your own to the dome of St. Peter’s Basilica, where you can gain a striking panoramic view of the city. Dinner tonight is at our hotel. (B, D)

TUE, DAY 6: ROME: ST. MARY MAJOR, ST. JOHN LATERAN, ST. PETER IN CHAINS & LEISURE: This morning after breakfast, entering through the Holy Door, we celebrate Mass at the papal Basilica of St. Mary Major, the largest church in Rome dedicated to our Blessed Mother. The present church was built around 440 AD. It was here that Pope Francis celebrated his first Mass.
After Mass, we visit the papal Basilica of St. John Lateran. This is actually the cathedral for the diocese of Rome. It is here that St. Francis persuaded Pope Innocent III to give him permission to begin the Franciscan Order. The night before the Pope had seen a man in a dream and the man was supporting the tottering building of St. John Lateran. The next day, when Francis appeared before Pope Innocent, His Holiness recognized the face from the dream and consented to Francis’s request. Our final stop of the day is Church of St. Peter in Chains: built on the site of one of the oldest churches in Rome. The church houses Michelangelo’s famous statue of Moses. The balance of the day is at leisure Dinner tonight is at our hotel. (B, D)

WED, DAY 7: ROME: PAPAL AUDIENCE, LEISURE, WITH OPTIONAL HISTORIC WALKING TOUR:
This morning we transfer to Vatican City for the General Papal Audience with Pope Francis (subject to Holy Father’s schedule). Audiences are normally held on St. Peter’s Square. After some time for lunch on our own, the balance of the day at leisure. For those who wish, our guide will lead us on a walking tour of historic central Rome, starting with the beautiful Spanish Steps. We continue with a visit to the Trevi Fountain, where we toss our traditional three coins into the fountain to make our three wishes - one for love, one for money, and one to return to Rome. We continue with a visit of the Basilica of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, housing the tomb of St. Catherine of Siena. Along with St. Francis, St. Catherine is a co-patron of Italy. Here we celebrate the closing Mass of our journey. Then we visit the Pantheon, originally built to honor all the gods of Ancient Rome and the church of San Luigi dei Francesi with its three stunning paintings by Caravaggio as well as the Piazza Navona, with its beautiful fountains.
You may wish to stop en-route for a gelato (an Italian ice cream) at the famous Giolitti’s. Tonight we gather for a special farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B, D)

THU, DAY 8: RETURN TO THE USA:
This morning we transfer to the Rome airport with our suitcases overflowing with memories of our Jubilee Year of Mercy Pilgrimage to Assisi & Rome. (B)

Package Pricing Information
From $3,199 per person, plus tips. Includes:
- One free trip for each 15 paying passengers. Please inquire on one-free-for-10.
- Economy class roundtrip airfare from NYC (prices available from other cities)
- Accommodations in first class and superior tourist class hotels sharing twin/double
- Professional tour manager from start to finish
- Sightseeing & entrance fees per itinerary
- Meals per itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Private daily Mass reservations
* Pricing based on travel from November to February, excluding holiday periods, and based on a group of 40 paying persons. For other seasons and/or smaller group sizes, please inquire.

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