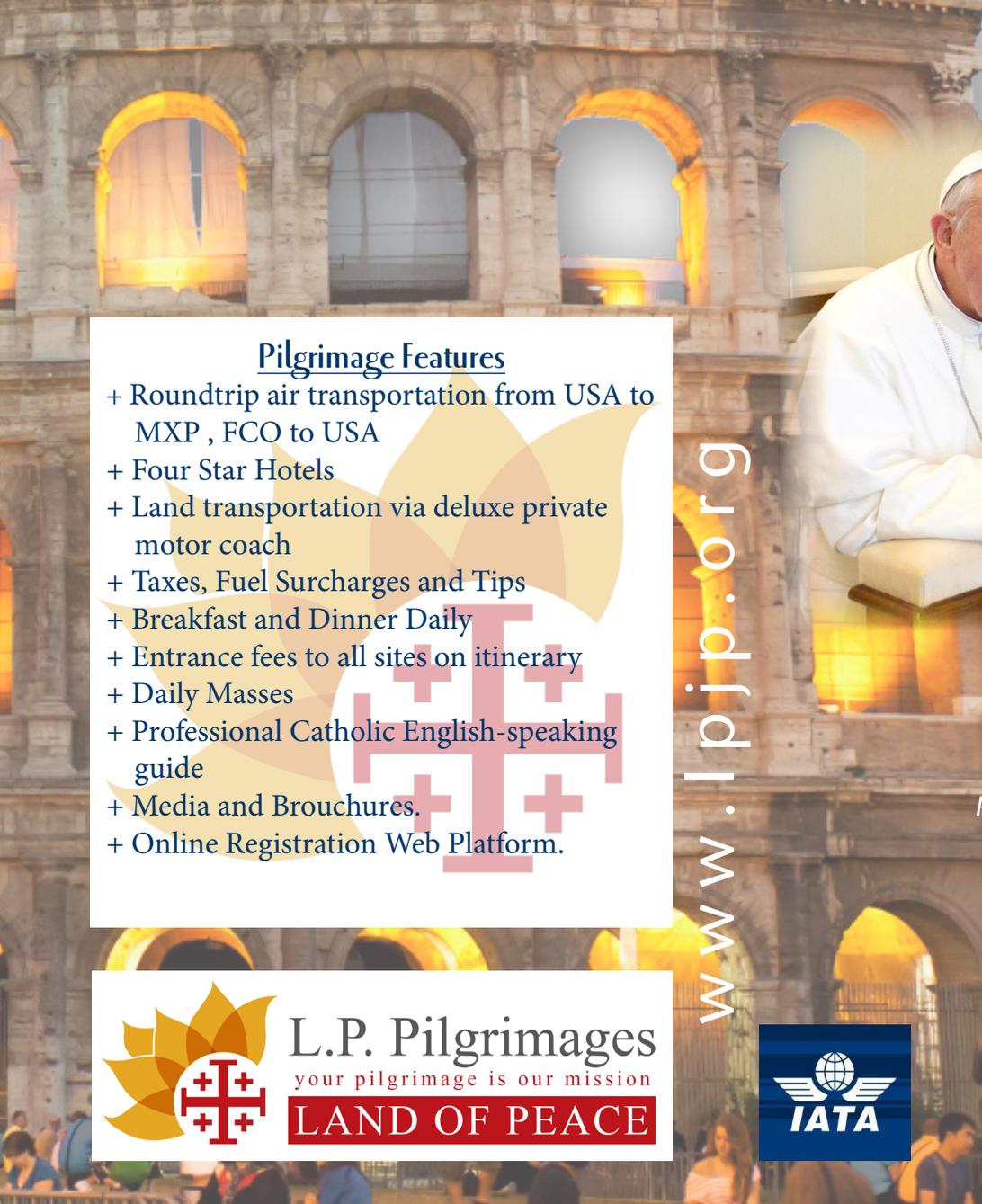


12 Day Italy

Walking With Francis and Benedict



Pilgrimage Features

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DAY 1: U.S.A. / EUROPE.

Tour members will depart to Rome. Dinner and breakfast will be served aboard the flight.

DAY 2: MILAN Wednesday 16 Oct 2019

Upon arrival in Milan, meet with our Tour Leader and driver at airport and visit of the city of Milan. We will start with Duomo Square and the Milan Cathedral. Dedicated to St Mary of the Nativity (Santa Maria Nascente), it is the seat of the Archbishop of Milan, currently Archbishop Mario Delpini. The Gothic cathedral took nearly six centuries to complete. It is the largest church in Italy (the larger St. Peter's Basilica is in the State of Vatican City) and the third largest in the world. We will continue with an open bus tour of the city with stop in Castello sforzesco, St. Ambrogio Basilica. Holy Mass at St Ambrogio Basilica. Check in our hotel. Dinner and overnight.

DAY 3: MILANO/SOTTO IL MONTE/VERONA/MANTOVA

Breakfast at a tour hotel and departure to Sotto il Monte, birth Place of Pome John XXIII. On Friday November 25th, 1881, at 10:15, in via Brusiccio 42, in the Palazzo owned by Counts Morlani, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born, the fourth of thirteen children. In 1893 the patriarchal Roncalli family, bound to further expand itself, moved in the nearby building of the Colombera. Nowadays the native house, cared for by the fathers of PIME, is a museum dedicated to mementos of Blessed Giovanni XXIII and his humble traditions. Once inside the house you can climb upstairs and visit the room where, on November 25th, 1881 the pope-to-be John XXIII was born. The foundation stone of P.I.M.E. in Sotto il Monte Giovanni XXIII was blessed by Pope Roncalli on March 18th, 1963, the opening held on October 30th, 1965 in the presence of Cardinal Giovanni Colombo, Archbishop of Milan, and Monsignor Clemente Gaddi, Bishop of Bergamo. Visit of Caimaitino, First home of the Roncalli family and summer house of Monsignor Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, when he was Bishop and also when he was Cardinal. At the end of the visit departure to Mantova with stop in Verona. In Verona we will start our visit with Bra Square and the Arena (roman amphitheater), the Balcony of Juliet, Erbe and signori Square and the Santa Anastasia church. At the end of the visits departure to Mantova. Known locally as la bella addormentata – the sleeping beauty – this ancient city and UNESCO World Heritage site doesn't just owe its sense of timelessness to the lack of tour buses. Marooned between artificial lakes on three sides, the old town has remained almost unspoiled, and of medieval dimensions that make it a joy for fans of leisurely exploration on foot.

Gonzaga is the local name to conjure with; the family took control of the city in the 14th century and created a thriving cultural and artistic centre there during the Renaissance. It's their buildings, art collections and love of opera that continue give Mantua its intellectual confidence today. The Gonzagas held glorious sway for over 200 years, but by 1708 the last Gonzaga had been deposed by the Austrian Hapsburgs, who relinquished the city briefly to France during the Napoleonic Wars before returning it to a united Italy in 1866. At the arrival Visit of the old city. Dinner and overnight in our hotel

DAY 4 : MANTOVA/FLORENCE

Breakfast in hotel and visit of Palazzo Te. At the end of the visit, after a 220 km journey, we will reach Florence. Visit of Florence: Piazza del Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore, the St. John Baptistery, and the Giotto Bell Tower. Free time for lunch and continue of the visits with Piazza della Signoria, Palazzo Vecchio, the "Ponte Vecchio", where many gold artisans have their ancient laboratory, then Palazzo Pitti and the Boboli's Garden. Dinner and overnight in our hotel in Florence.

DAY 5: SAN GEMIGNANO /VOLTERRA/ASSISI

Breakfast in hotel and departure to the Chianti Region. We will visit San Gimignano, the town of the hundred towers with its San Giovanni door, Cisterna Square, Duomo square and the Loggia. We will transfer then to Volterra, another fantastic medieval town. We will visit the Roman theatre and the castle. We will have lunch in a local restaurant and after the visit we will transfer to Assisi. Accommodation in our Hotel, dinner and overnight.

DAY 6: ASSISI

Breakfast in Hotel and guided visit of the city: Visit the Church of St. Clare which houses her incorrupt body. One of the chapels contains the crucifix that bowed its head and ordered St. Francis to "repair God's Church". Then tour the Basilica of St. Francis built in 1228 to house the Relics of the saint. The "upper" basilica houses beautiful frescoes of Giotto. It is from these frescoes that we will know and understand the life and the spirit of St. Francis. We will have our daily mass there. Lunch in a restaurant and visit of Santa Maria degli Angeli. Free time for personal devotion, dinner and overnight in our hotel.

DAY 7: ST BENEDICTUS JOURNEY

Breakfast in hotel and departure to a journey to St Benedictus places. We will visit Norcia, where the Saint was born then Cascia birthplace of St Rita. We will drive then to Subiaco and we will have two hours of personal devotion there. In the late afternoon we will departure for our last 120 km journey to reach Montecassino. Dinner and overnight in our Hotel

DAY 8 MONTECASSINO/ROME

Breakfast in hotel and visit of Montecassino. The Abbey of Montecassino is one of the most known Abbeys in the world. In 529 Saint Benedict choose this mountain to build a monastery that would host him and those monks following him on the way from Subiaco. Paganism was still present here, but he managed to turn the place into a well-structured Christian monastery where everybody could have the dignity they deserved through praying and working. Ora et labora et lege: this is the motto of Saint Benedict's Rule that the monks still follow in their daily routine. Some of them study in the library surrounded by ancient books, or make researches in the archive on breathtaking manuscripts. Some others host people seeking for a moment of inner peace and serenity. And if you are visiting the Abbey you might meet some of them having a walk in the cloisters before they go back to their rooms to pray alone or to gather later for the common prayer. After the visit we will have the Holy Mass and the lunch in a restaurant. In the afternoon we will leave Montecassino and we will transfer to Rome. Accommodation in our hotel, dinner and overnight

DAY 9: ROME

After Breakfast, we will transfer in St Peter Square for the Audience with the pope**. At the end free time for lunch and then visit of the Vatican Museum, The Sistine Chapel and St Peter's Cathedral. Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel between 1508 and 1512, and later painted The Last Judgment between 1535 and 1541 for Popes Clement VII and Paul III. The primary function of the chapel is the Papal Conclave, providing the place where the College of Cardinals of the church gathers to select a new Pope. Then walk through Saint Peter's Basilica, the present structure completed in 1590 was built over the Byzantine and Middle Ages structures that marked the tomb of Saint Peter. There are more than 100 tombs within the basilica, including most recently Saint John Paul II.

Dinner and overnight in hotel

DAY 10: ROME

Breakfast in Hotel then guided tour of the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran. Six Popes are entombed here. Next door is the Holy Staircase (Scala Santa), brought from Pilate's Palace in Jerusalem by Saint Helena in the 4th century. Climbing the stairs on your knees is a devotion that many pilgrims perform, and a plenary indulgence is granted for completing this feat.

Transfer by bus to the Monastery of St Gregorio al Celio and testify of Mercy at the community of the Missionary sisters of Charity (sisters of Mary Therese of Calcutta)

In the afternoon, continue on your pilgrim journey to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major (Maria Maggiore). We celebrate Mass here. This is the largest Marian church in Rome. Its construction began after the Council of Ephesus in 431 proclaimed that Mary was the Mother of God. Saint Jerome, translator of the Bible into the Latin Vulgate, is buried here.

Dinner and overnight at our hotel

DAY 11: ROME

Breakfast in hotel then guided tour of the ancient Rome. We will start with the visit at the coliseum, also called anfiteatro Flavio. We will proceed through via dei fori imperiali and we will end the visit with the Carcere Mamertino where St Peter were prisoned. Free time for lunch, in the afternoon guided visit of the center of Rome where we can admire Piazza Navona and the Pantheon, the church of St Agostino where is conserved the Michelangelo famous painting "The Pilgrim's Virgins", The Church of San Luigi dei Francesi where we can admire the other famous Caravaggio Paint "The Conversion of St Matthew". We will end with Fontana di Trevi and The Spanish Steps.

Dinner and overnight in hotel

DAY12: ROME USA

After our breakfast, we transfer to the airport to fly back at home keeping the incredible memories of an unforgettable journey.