

A TASTE OF ITALY
FLORENCE * TUSCANY * ROME

✪*✪
QUEEN OF THE ROSARY
FATHER GARY PENNINGS

✪*✪
5 – 16 OCTOBER 2020
File # OT562 / February 28, 2020

D - 1

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER
Depart on your overnight transatlantic flight to Italy.

USA TO ITALY

D - 2

TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER
07:00 AM AA 240 arrive in Rome Fiumicino Airport from Dallas.

ARRIVE IN FLORENCE

Upon arrival in the Roma Leonardo da Vinci Intercontinental Airport, disembark make your way through customs. Collect your luggage and exit the secured area. You will be greeted by our local representative and proceed to your coach for transfer north to Florence, approximately three and half hours away, traffic conditions permitting. Drop off at your hotel. After check-in, you will have the balance of the day at leisure.

This evening, you will enjoy a welcome dinner with your group.

Florence is one of the most beautiful cities in Italy. It is the birthplace of many of the men who have more profoundly influenced the course of human history in every field of knowledge, art, literature and philosophy. Most of the world's artistic patrimony is believed to be here, in Florence. Florentia, the city of flowers was the place where the Renaissance grew and anticipated Enlightenment and thus Modernity as a whole.

Florence is reached every day by crowds of visitors who, in the attempt of seeing the city in only few days, are often overwhelmed by the huge amount of beauty and culture that the simple walking around its ancient streets imposes to every eye.

 Dinner

D - 3

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER
The center of Florence will be the spectacular frame of a tour dedicated to the city's glorious past and also to its stimulating present life. The slow-paced four-hour walking tour will introduce you to the most important monuments of Florence.

CLASSICAL FLORENCE TOUR

Begin at the Cathedral with the famous Dome by Brunelleschi and the gold "Paradise" doors of the Baptistery. You will see elegant palaces, pass some fashionable shops, and walk through the charming

narrow medieval streets. Continue on to Piazza Signoria, which has been the political complex of Florence since the 1300's when Florence was considered the richest city in Europe.

Walk to the Ponte Vecchio, the bridge which attracts so much curiosity not only for its unique and charming appearance but also for the fabulous jewelry shops that line the bridge.

End the tour at the Accademia Gallery of Fine Arts Museum where you will have the opportunity to admire the eternal Florence masterpiece: Michelangelo's David (plus a few of his other pieces).

Your guide will bid you farewell at the end of the tour. Balance of the day at leisure.

 Breakfast

D - 4

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER

RENAISSANCE FLORENCE

Your three-hour tour this morning is dedicated to Renaissance Florence.

You will visit the famous Uffizi Gallery with highlights of the key pieces housed in this museum. The Uffizi is the most important and visited museum in Florence. The Uffizi palace was designed and begun in 1560 by the architect Giorgio Vasari in the period when Cosimo de' Medici, first Grand Duke of Tuscany, was bureaucratically consolidating his recent takeover of power.

Built in the shape of a horseshoe extending from Piazza della Signoria to the Arno River and linked by a bridge over the street with Palazzo Vecchio, the Uffizi were intended to house the administrative offices (uffizi) of the Grand Duchy. From the beginning, however, the Medici set aside a few rooms on the third floor to house the finest works of their collections.

The Gallery was subsequently enriched by various members of the Medici family. Two centuries later, in 1737, the palace and their collection were left to the city by Anna Maria Luisa, the last Medici heir, and today houses one of the world's great art galleries.

End your tour after your visit and spend the rest of the day at leisure to explore on your own.

 Breakfast

D - 5

FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER

FLORENCE TO TUSCANY VIA SIENA & SAN GIMIGNANO

Check out this morning and prepare for your departure from Florence. On the way to your accommodations in the Tuscan countryside, you will drive through the scenic Chianti Region on your way to visit Siena and San Gimignano.

Siena is listed as one of the UNESCO world heritage sites and follow this wonderful itinerary, which will take you through some of the town's most important places.

Siena is the embodiment of a medieval city. Its inhabitants pursued their rivalry with Florence right into the area of urban planning. Throughout the centuries, they preserved their city's Gothic appearance, acquired between the 12th and 15th centuries. During this period the work of Duccio, the Lorenzetti brothers and Simone Martini was to influence the course of Italian and, more broadly, European art. The whole city of Siena, built around the Piazza del Campo, was devised as a work of art that blends into the surrounding landscape.

Start your sightseeing from the Basilica of St. Dominic's, where the relics of St. Catherine's have been revered for many centuries. Walk along the old Via Francigena, Siena's Medieval backbone, where you will see the headquarters of the oldest bank in Europe, the Monte dei Paschi. Continue to walk by the elegant Sienese mansions of the noble families to reach the Cathedral dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption.

This superb example of a Gothic architecture boasts a rich artistic patrimony: Michelangelo, Donatello, Bernini and Giovanni Pisano all left their presence here with some of their most famous masterpieces. Your walk will surely take you to its center, the famous Piazza del Campo. Its special shape seems to hug the guest and invite him to preserve in his memory the experience of a journey through time.

Continue with your driver to San Gimignano in the Tuscan countryside.

San Gimignano, famous for its towers is one of the most charming and picturesque of all Tuscan hills. The city gained its prominence due to its location, rising from the hills of the upper Elsa Valley, facing the land of Volterra and positioned right on one of the most important stretches of the medieval via Francigena. The towers dominate the town in the manner of skyscrapers in our modern cities. At one time there were more than 70 towers, built as symbols of wealth and as a security precaution by the town's prosperous merchants, but only 14 remain today. Walk through the wonderfully preserved town square at the Piazza della Cisterna and visit the 13th century town hall - the Palazzo del Popolo. There are good views from the Rocca citadel and the entire town is an excellent place to stroll and soak up the atmosphere.

Continue on a panoramic drive through the countryside on your way to your accommodations. Spend the afternoon at leisure.

 Breakfast  Lunch

D - 6

SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER

ASSISI AND PERUGIA

Your escort will meet you this morning for a full-day excursion to the major cities of Umbria. You will start in Perugia, where you will have time to explore with your guide, and then head to Assisi for a guided visit of the basilica and hilltop town.

Perugia is the provincial capital of Umbria, located in the heartland of Italy about halfway between Rome and Florence. It is an ancient hilltop town that has preserved its wonderfully medieval character in the historic center, and is encircled by more modern areas in the lower regions. Perugia is a city rich in art, architecture and historical significance as well as a place of learning with two distinguished universities and many academies of art and music. The city's Etruscan walls, medieval churches, renaissance and baroque palaces still bare witness to its past splendor. For a special treat, look out for one of the local sweetshops - Perugia chocolate is famous world-wide!

Continue to the hill town of Assisi, where you will visit with your guide. Exploring the town and enjoying the views are only precursors to the wonderful Basilica of St. Francis. Architects, masons and stone-cutters have given Assisi an incomparable appearance, and time seems to have come to a standstill before this beauty. The Middle Ages continue to reign supreme and the streets of Assisi are typical of medieval towns set on a hillside. The entire town center is enclosed within the city walls, a sign and guarantee of safety. These walls have witnessed various events and hold the secrets of the city's great history.

Return to your accommodations in the Tuscan countryside at the end of the day.

 Breakfast  Lunch

D - 7

SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

VAL D'ORCIA COUNTRYSIDE

You will be met by your escort for your full-day excursion to the Val D'Orcia area of Tuscany for a day of wine and cheese tasting.

In the Val D'Orcia, Italy's "Golden Valley", where the colors of dry clay and golden earth share the hills; dark green moss and undergrowth cover the base of rocky crags and old farm houses, the gentle colors found in the orderly lines of vineyards mix with the silver grey of the olive groves.

The hilltown of Montepulciano, is renowned for its Vino Nobile di Montepulciano wine. Its narrow streets and beautiful piazzas are lined with distinguished Italian Renaissance palazzos, wine cellars with 13th century grottoes, gastronomy shops, cafes and wine stores.

In the medieval hilltown of Montalcino, famous for Brunello wine, you can stroll the narrow streets, stop at Italian wine, honey and gastronomy stores, or outdoor cafes, or sip some Brunello at the medieval fortress, now an enoteca.

Brunello di Montalcino" made its appearance in the middle of the 19C, prepared by Clement Santi from a selection of Sangiovese Grosso grapes, the larger-berried clone of the Sangiovese variety. This dry wine is one of the best Italian reds. It's a strong, structured and tannic wine and it has got a very long life.

Proceed to the town of Pienza, a lovely little town known for its panoramic location on the hills of Val D'Orcia and its Tuscan delicacies.

Pienza is a tiny village in the same valley of Val d'Orcia. The village is located only a few kilometers to the west of Montepulciano amidst gentle undulating hills and wonderful natural landscapes. Pienza enjoys a strategic position standing high atop a hill, dominating all the Orcia Valley with extraordinary views.

This charming village is widely known as the "ideal city of the Renaissance", the creation of the great humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini who later became Pope Pius II. Piccolomini had the money and influence to transform his birthplace village, the humble Corsignano, into what he considered the Utopian city should be, exemplifying the principles and philosophy of classical times and of the great Italian Renaissance. Thus, Pienza became the realization of a dream!

After your visit, meet your driver again for your return to your accommodations.

 Breakfast  Winery visit with tasting and lunch / Cheese Producer visit with tasting

D - 8

MONDAY 12 OCTOBER

TUSCANY TO ROME VIA ORVIETO

Check out and prepare for your departure from Tuscany. Your escort will meet you after breakfast this morning for your transfer south to Rome. En route you will stop in the hilltop town of Orvieto for some time at leisure to explore.

In Umbria you will visit Orvieto, famous for its Etruscan ruins as well as its Gothic cathedral and the excellent wines preserved in its underground cellars. The imposing outline of the Duomo, the emblem of Orvieto throughout the world, stands out above the city skyline like a beacon signaling to ships in the night.

For a full view of the breathtaking cityscape of Orvieto it is well worth climbing to the top of the 13th century Torre del Moro, the most central and highest point in the city, which commands a 360° view over the rooftops and the lush surrounding countryside.

After your visit, continue to your next accommodations in the Eternal city, Rome. Balance of day at leisure. It's hard to say what you'll find most breathtaking about the Eternal City - the opulence of the Vatican, the timelessness of the Forum, or the gory resonance of the Colosseum.

Let your senses take in the pleasures the city has to offer from the grandiose thrill of feeling centuries of turbulent history under your feet to the small but potent intoxication of eating chestnut gelati on a hot day. Rome offers something for everyone.

 Breakfast  Lunch

D - 9

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER ANCIENT ROME AND MARIA MAGGIORE BASILICA

Your escort will meet you at the hotel after breakfast this morning for a tour of Ancient Rome. You will arrive at the Colosseum where your walking tour begins with a visit of the famous site of the spectacle of gladiatorial combat. You will then make your way to the Roman Forum and explore the ruins of this ancient political, religious and commercial center.

Your walk will continue to Piazza Venezia where you will walk to visit one of the city's four major basilicas.

Built on a pagan temple dedicated to the goddess Cybele, the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore was built in the mid-fourth century under the orders of Pope Liberius. According to legend, **the** Virgin appeared before the Pope with the instructions for building the church, and the shape of the floor was designed based on a miraculous snowfall.

Over the years, the basilica has had many different names, such as Saint Mary of the Snow (due to snow that led to the church's shape), Santa Maria Liberiana (for Pope Liberius), St. Mary of the Nativity (because it received a relic of the Holy Nativity), and it was finally called Santa Maria Maggiore, as it is the largest of the 26 churches in Rome dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Visit at leisure and spend the rest of the day to explore on your own.

NOTE: Large bags/backpacks/suitcases are not permitted in the Colosseum and Roman Forum. Only very small bags are allowed. In order to expedite security checks, please consolidate your metal objects into one small bag and do not bring oversize items with you on the day of your tour as there are no cloakrooms at the Colosseum.

 Breakfast

D - 10

WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER PAPAL AUDIENCE

This morning you will meet your escort for your transfer to St. Peter's Square to attend the Papal Audience.

In Spring, Summer and part of Autumn the audience is normally held in St Peter's Square to accommodate the large crowds. You have reservations to enter the seating area near the front, but it is on a first come first served basis. Your escort will assist you in getting seated.

As Rome can get extremely hot and the Audience is outside it is good to come prepared. BRING HATS, SUN SCREEN AND WATER, you can also bring something to read or occupy yourself with while you wait for the Audience to start.

You will need to pass through Security scanners similar to the airport to access the audience, it is advisable to bring only small bags or backpacks and Items such as pocket knives, corkscrews, scissors and similar objects will not be permitted through the checkpoint.

The Papal Audience is scheduled to start at 10.30 AM (Sometimes in Summer due to the heat they may start the audience at 10am instead). Normally a Papal Audience will last 1 1/2 - 2 hrs.

After the Papal Audience, you are free for lunch at leisure in the neighborhood.

VATICAN: THE HOLY SEE

This afternoon, you will all meet near the entrance of the Vatican Museum for your four-hour guided tour of the Museum, the Sistine Chapel and the Basilica.

This tour will take you through the galleries of the Vatican Museums, home to the most celebrated art collection in Europe. You will see the incredible frescoed ceiling in the Sistine Chapel, the extreme expression on Michelangelo's genius. Last but not least, visit the largest sanctuary of Christianity, Saint Peter's Basilica, where proportions appear to have been forgotten in an amazing triumph of marble, bronze and mosaic works.

The tour will end at in St. Peter's Square from which you can take a taxi back to the hotel or continue sightseeing on your own.

NOTE: It is absolutely forbidden to bring into the Museum any bags and backpacks which are cumbersome, umbrellas with spike tip, umbrellas of medium and large size, walking sticks (except those required by disabled visitors to facilitate their movement), camera tripods or metal objects. Items must be deposited in the cloakroom before entering the Museums. These items must then be collected, on the same day, at the end of the visit. The point of exit is 15-minute walk from the entrance. St. Peter's Basilica is often the venue for the Pope to meet international delegations of visitors. In case of any functions scheduled at St. Peter's, the Basilica may be closed to the public at the last minute for security reasons.



Breakfast

D - 11

THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER

**CHRISTIAN ROME WITH CATACOMBS AND
ST. JOHN LATERAN & ST. PAUL OUTSIDE THE WALLS**

A fascinating tour highlighting the history of early Christians during the times of the Romans. The tour will take you beyond the imposing Aurelian walls, along the ancient Appian Way to visit one of the catacombs.

You will discover the galleries where more than 500,000 Christians were buried, the walls of which are decorated with early Christian symbols and beautiful examples of the first religious representations.

As you return to the center of Rome you will stop at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, considered one of the five great ancient basilicas of Rome. The Basilica di San Paolo Fuori le Mura, founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine I is, according to tradition, the burial place of Saint Paul the Apostle. After his execution and burial, Saint Paul's followers erected a memorial called "a cella memoriae" over the grave.

Continue to visit the fourth major basilica of Rome. Founded during the fourth century in honor of St. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, St John Lateran (Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano) is the Cathedral of Rome and the most important of the four major basilicas. It is known as St John Lateran Archbasilica, as is it considered the mother church of the Roman Catholic faithful.

Return to the city center and prepare for your farewell dinner this evening.

 Breakfast  Dinner

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER

ARRIVEDERCI ITALIA

D - 12

Check out this morning and prepare for your departure. Meet your escort at the hotel for your transfer to Rome Fiumicino Airport. Check in for your homebound flight.

11:50 AM AA 719 depart Rome Leonardo da Vinci

 Breakfast

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5 – 16 OCTOBER 2020
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QUOTATION BASED ON GROUP OF 40 TRAVELLERS
USD 3,000 PER PERSON IN DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
USD 3,780 PER PERSON IN SINGLE OCCUPANCY

INCLUSIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

ACCOMMODATIONS as suggested or similar - Double occupancy including breakfast and VAT tax

FLORENCE 3 nights 6 – 9 October 2020
Hotel Athenaeum www.hotelathenaeum.com

TUSCANY 3 nights 9 – 12 October 2020
Palazzo San Lorenzo www.palazzosanlorenzo.it
or (TBD)

Relais della Rovere www.relaisdellarovere.it

ROME 4 nights 12 – 16 October 2020
Starhotels Michelangelo www.starhotels.com

Sightseeing

- Classical Florence – 4h – including Accademia Gallery, Baptistry and Duomo tickets
 - Renaissance Florence – 3h – including Uffizi Gallery tickets
 - Siena & San Gimignano visits with guide in Siena
 - Assisi & Perugia excursion with guide in Perugia and Assisi including St. Francis Basilica
 - Val d'Orcia excursion with visits to Montepulciano, Pienza and Montalcino
 - Orvieto visit with guide
 - Papal Audience tickets
 - Vatican private guided tour – 4h – including Museum entrance tickets
 - Ancient Rome guided tour – 3h – including Colosseum entrance tickets
 - Visit Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore
 - Christian Rome with Domitilla Catacombs including entrance tickets
 - Visit St. John Lateran and St. Paul Outside the Walls Basilicas
- *including headsets for visits

Transportation

- Meet-and-greet assistance at Rome airport and transfer to Florence hotel
- Coach at disposal from Florence to Tuscany via Siena & San Gimignano – w/ full day assistance
- Coach at disposal for Assisi & Perugia excursion – w/ full day assistance
- Coach at disposal for Val d'Orcia excursion – w/ full day assistance
- Coach at disposal from Tuscany to Rome via Orvieto – w/ full day assistance
- Coach transfer from hotel to Vatican for Papal Audience – w/ assistance
- Coach transfer from Vatican back to hotel
- Coach transfer from hotel to Colosseum
- Coach transfer from Santa Maria Maggiore back to hotel
- Coach at disposal for Christian Rome and Basilicas visits
- Coach transfer from hotel to FCO airport

Meals

- Breakfast at hotels daily
- Welcome dinner in Florence
- Lunch in Tuscany during transfer from Florence
- Lunch in Umbria during Assisi & Perugia excursion
- Val d'Orcia winery visit with tasting and light lunch
- Val d'Orcia cheese producer visit with tasting
- Lunch in Orvieto
- Farewell dinner in Rome

Services

- Assistance from representative offices throughout
- Local emergency contact number
- Personalized itinerary

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Applicable city taxes payable directly to hotel at time of check out
- Tips and gratuities: Tipping is a North American expectation and not customary in Europe. You may tip at your discretion with local currency at end of each service.
- Portorage / luggage handling
- Meals other than breakfast daily at hotels or as specified in inclusions list
- Airfare(s)
- Travel Insurance (highly recommended)
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Items not explicitly specified in the inclusions list

DEPOSIT & PAYMENTS

DEPOSIT - Now	USD 750 per person (double occupancy)	For single occupancy:USD 945 per person
7 JULY 2020	USD 750 per person	USD 945 per person
21 AUGUST 2020	USD 1500 per person	USD 1890 per person

Payments by personal check to "ACENDAS"

Credit card payments are subject to additional fees.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

The consumer must notify your travel agent of his/her intention to cancel the travel service. In the event of cancellation by one or more consumers sharing accommodation with other consumers, the rate charged to the remaining travelling passenger(s) will increase accordingly. All Cancellations must be made in writing. We strongly recommend cancellation insurance.

The following cancellation charges will apply:

Up to 90 days before departure	deposit amount
90-45 days before departure	50% of package cost
44 days or less before departure	100% of package cost

Airfare: American Airlines

05OCT AMERICAN AIRLINES FLT:1261
LV: KANSAS CITY INTL 800A AR: DALLAS FT WORTH 940A
05OCT AMERICAN AIRLINES FLT:240
LV: DALLAS FT WORTH 135P AR: ROME FIUMICINO 700A
16OCT AMERICAN AIRLINES FLT:719
LV: ROME FIUMICINO 1150A AR: PHILADELPHIA 405P
16OCT AMERICAN AIRLINES FLT:1889
LV: PHILADELPHIA 825P AR: KANSAS CITY INTL 1025P

Round trip airfare is \$1360.00 per person.

Cost:

Taste of Italy Ground: \$3,000 per person (double occupancy)
 \$3,780 per person (single occupancy)

Round trip Group Airfare: \$1,360 per person

Total: \$4,360 per person (double occupancy)
 \$5,140 per person (single occupancy)

**Plus: travel insurance which is optional
but STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.**