

13 Day Italy & Medjugorje Pilgrimage

Visiting Rome, Pietrelcina, Piana Romana, San Giovanni Rotondo, Assisi, Loreto, Ancona, Split, Medjugorje, Siroki Brijeg & Tihalijina

**Spiritual Director
Rev. Dan Morales**

June 15th – 27th, 2015

Pilgrimage Price: \$ 3,699.00 per person Double/Triple

Mon, June 15th: Houston/Rome - Depart Houston airport on your overnight flight to Rome. Dinner served in flight.



Tue, June 16th: Rome

Upon arrival in **Rome** we are transferred to our hotel. En route we stop at *St. Paul Outside the Walls* for Mass. Remainder of the day is free to enjoy Rome on your own.

Wed, June 17th: Papal Audience

This morning we go to St. Peter's Square for the Holy Father's General Audience (provided the Holy Father is in residence). After lunch (on our own) we have a Panorama of Rome and we visit the *Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore* where we have Mass. After Mass we visit St. John Lateran.

Thu, June 18th: Rome/Pietrelcina/San Giovanni Rotondo

Morning departure to San Giovanni Rotondo. En route we stop at **Pietrelcina**, birthplace of **Padre Pio**. We visit his home, the **Church of Santa Ana**, where he was baptized and we have Mass at **Santa Maria degli Angeli**. We stop at **Piana Romana**, where Padre Pio received the invisible stigmata, before continuing to **San Giovanni Rotondo**. Upon arrival we visit the **Basilica of Our Lady of Grace**. During our stay in San Giovanni Rotondo we visit **Padre Pio's Tomb**.

Fri, June 19th: St. Michaels Cave

This morning we visit **St. Michael's Cave**. In the year 492 a man named Gargan was pasturing his large herds in the countryside. One day a bull fled into the mountain, where at first it could not be found. When its refuge in a cave was discovered, an arrow was shot into the cave, but the arrow returned to wound the one who had sent it. Faced with so mysterious an occurrence, the persons concerned decided to consult the bishop of the region. He ordered three days of fasting and prayers. After three days, the Archangel St. Michael appeared to the bishop and declared that the cavern where the bull had taken refuge was under his protection, and that God wanted it to be consecrated under his name and in honor of all the Holy Angels.

Sat, June 20th: San Giovanni Rotondo/Assisi Morning departure to **Assisi**. Upon arrival in Assisi, we visit the *Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli* to see *the Porziuncola*, this is where St.

Francis died. After our visit we go to the upper city to see the *Basilicas of St. Francis and St. Clare*, where we see the *Tombs of the two Saints*. We have *Mass at the Basilica of St. Francis*.

Around 1000 BC, large groups of people settled in this area. These were the Umbrians. They lived in small fortified villages on high ground. Around 450 BC the Umbrian villages were taken over by the Etruscans. Then the Romans took control of central Italy in the *Battle of Sentinum* in 295 BC. They leveled out some land in terraces and built a large town called *Asisium* on the side of Mount Subasio. This town became Assisi. Some buildings still can be seen from the Roman times. They include the walls, the main piazza, and the Temple of the Goddess Minerva, which is now the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. In 238 AD all the people of Assisi became Christian because of the teaching of Bishop Rufino. It is believed that Bishop Rufino's body is buried under the Cathedral Church of San Rufino in Assisi.

Sun, June 21st: Assisi – Free day for private devotions.



Mon, June 22nd: Assisi/Loreto/Ancona Overnight Ferry

Morning departure to **Ancona** to board our **overnight ferry to Split**. En route we stop at the Holy House of Loreto.

The **Holy House of Loreto** is one of the most revered Marian shrines in the world. Since medieval times, the Holy House is believed to be the very home in which the Virgin Mary lived, conceived and raised the young Jesus.

A large basilica has been built around the small shrine, and the sacred site attracts as many as 4 million Catholic pilgrims and visitors each year.

According to the New Testament, Jesus was raised by Mary and Joseph in a small town called Nazareth, near Jerusalem. Joseph was a carpenter, and their house was humble. Three centuries after the life of Jesus, the newly-converted Emperor Constantine built a basilica over the humble brick house believed to have sheltered the Holy Family.

According to Catholic tradition, the Holy House came under threat during the turmoil of the Crusades, so in 1291, angels miraculously translated the house from its original location to a site in modern-day Croatia. An empty space was left in Nazareth and a small house suddenly appeared in a field in Croatia. The bewildered parish priest brought to the scene by shepherds who discovered it, had a vision in which the Virgin Mary revealed it was her former house.

On December 10, 1294, the house was again moved by angels because of the Muslim invasion of Albania. It landed first in Recanti, Italy, but was shortly thereafter moved for a third time to its present location in Loreto.

The Holy House of Loreto, or *Santa Casa di Loreto* in Italian, has been venerated by pilgrims great and small, including many popes and saints, and numerous miracles and healings have been reported. Scientists are said to have confirmed the materials to be the same as those found in Nazareth and the house lacks normal foundations.

The origin of the Marian shrine of Loreto is that a miraculous statue or image of the Virgin was brought from Croatia to Loreto and placed in a humble abode that came to be venerated as well.

The Statue of the Madonna was carved in cedar of Lebanon from the Vatican Gardens and was put in place of the 14th century statue that had been destroyed by a fire in the Holy House in 1921. It was commissioned by Pope Pius XI, who crowned it in the Vatican in 1922. Since the 16th century it has been garbed in a mantle called "dalmatic".

In 1469, a large basilica was built over the Holy House at Loreto, and still stands today. In 1507, a marble enclosure was constructed around the House inside the basilica, and in 1510, the site was officially approved for pilgrimages. Over the centuries, countless pilgrims have kneeled inside the basilica around the Holy House, wearing a trough in the hard rock.

In 1910, Our Lady of Loreto became the *patron saint of pilots*, because of the tradition of the house's flight from Nazareth. On September 8th, the traditional birthdate of the Virgin Mary, pilots gather at the shrine to pray and participate in a colorful procession.

After our visit we continue to Ancona to board our overnight ferry to Split.



Tue, June 23rd: Split/Medjugorje

Upon your arrival in Split you are greeted by your guide and transferred to **Medjugorje**. After dinner, meet your Tour escort who will give you details of your program. Attend the evening program at the St. James Church. Enjoy evening at leisure.

Wed, June 24th: Medjugorje

After breakfast meet your tour escort in the hotel. Join the daily English Mass, visit the Apparition Hill and climb Holy Cross Mountain, via Way of the cross. During the day you have the opportunity for confession or to spend time in prayer in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Free time for lunch and shopping. A meeting with visionaries will also be scheduled (depending on availability). In the evenings attend the recitation of the Rosary and the healing service at the St. James Church.

Thu, June 25th: Siroki Brijeg & Tihalijina

After breakfast meet with the tour escort and transfer to Siroki Brijeg and Tihalijina. Afternoon transfer back to Medjugorje. Evening program in the church.

Fri, June 26th: Medjugorje Free day for private devotions.

Sat, June 27th: USA Morning departure to Split or Dubrovnik airport for the return flight to the USA.

Tour No. IME0615		
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