

Pilgrimage Guide to Italy

March 24-April 4, 2014

For John & Mary Smith

By:

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St. Francis Pilgrimages

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Pilgrimage, not tourism...

10-12 days: Rome, San Giovanni Rotondo, Mont Sant'Angelo, Lanciano, Loreto, Manoppello, Siena, Ovieto, and Cascia

Suggested itinerary:

March 24: depart New York

March 25: arrive Rome; afternoon- visit NAC; *overnight Rome*

March 26: morning: papal Audience; afternoon: basilicas; *overnight Rome*

March 27: morning: Rome-SGR; afternoon: visit SGR; *overnight SGR*

March 28: morning: Monte Sant'Angelo; afternoon: SGR; *overnight SGR*

March 29: morning: depart: Lanciano; afternoon: Manoppello, Loreto; *overnight Loreto*

March 30: morning: Loreto; afternoon: depart for Assisi; *overnight Assisi*

March 31: full day: Assisi; *overnight Assisi*

April 1: full day: Siena; *overnight Assisi*

April 2: full day: Cascia/Norcia; *overnight Assisi*

April 3: Orvieto/overnight in Rome near Fiumicino

April 4: return home

Notes:

- Daily Mass: there will be ample opportunities in any of the churches along your itinerary; however, the Masses will all be in Italian. The only exception might be in Assisi where you could possibly join an English group at the Basilica of St. Francis; or in Rome, at the NAC.
- I know you didn't have Assisi on your list of places and is not critical on your itinerary, since you've been there before; however, it is a great central location to make day trips; plus, the drivers we use live there, so you wouldn't have to pay their overnight expenses.
- I verified the opening times at the church of Manoppello to be: 6.00am-12.30pm; 3.00pm-6.30pm

Suggested Pilgrimage Itinerary March 24-April 4, 2014

Monday, March 24, 2014

Depart New York-Rome

In Rome March 25-27:

Before going to Rome, I recommend purchasing a Catholic guidebook on the main Christian churches while you are there. "A Catholic's Guide to Rome: Discovering the Soul of the Eternal City" by Frank Korn is really good.

What to do in Rome:

I have suggested some places to do and see. You can do whatever you want on any day. Keep in mind, however, that the Papal Audience is fixed on Wednesday and the Papal Angelus is on Sunday; the other places can be switched in any order:

- Take open-air hop-on/hop-off bus tour.

- Visit the four major basilicas. This is one of the things you mentioned that you wanted to do. I have listed several guides below. Loredana can hire a car and driver as well. St. Peter's basilica (built upon tomb of St. Peter), St. Paul Outside the Walls (built upon the tomb of St. Paul), St. John Lateran (the cathedral of Rome – don't skip the adjacent Holy Stairs), and St. Mary Major. St. Paul's is a little on the outskirts, but St. Mary Major and St. John Lateran are accessible by public transport, taxi, or on foot.
- Walking tour through historic part of Rome: start from St. Peter's square, walk by Castel Sant' Angelo, then across river to Piazza Navona, then Church of St. Ignatius, Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, finish at Coliseum. You could do this on your own, or else hire a guide.
- Vatican Museums/Sistine Chapel: entrance is on the north side of the Vatican walls. You can purchase tickets on the spot. You can hire a guide or go it alone by renting a headset and typing in numbers of each piece to hear background on it.
 - Cost is 16 euros
- Guided Scavi archaeological tour of the necropolis and actual tomb of St. Peter underneath St. Peter's basilica. **You must request reservations well in advance in order to get the time you are requesting**, as they only allow 250 people per day. So when you make your request, give them several days they can choose from.
 - All information (including reservations and purchasing tickets) are at the following site:
 - http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/institutions_connected/uffscavi/documents/rc_ic_uffscavi_doc_gen-information_20090216_en.html
 - For a virtual tour of the Necropolis:
http://www.vatican.va/various/basiliche/necropoli/scavi_english.html
 - Cost is 12 euros
- Papal Audience (Wednesday morning). This is a wonderful event that you do not want to miss. You will see the Pope and hear him give a reflection in numerous languages (including English). In March, it may be done in Nervi hall (aka Pope Paul VI auditorium next to the Vatican; otherwise it will in St. Peter's square). It starts at 10:30am and goes until about 11:45am.
 - To get tickets: at the end of this document is a letter you should fax to the Prefect of the Pontifical Household to request tickets. They should mail you a letter confirming your tickets. However, if you do not receive a mailed confirmation letter you should take your fax request to the Bronze doors (underneath the colonnade to the right of the façade) at the Vatican on Tuesday afternoon (between 2:30-6:00pm) to pick up the tickets. You will present the letter to the Swiss guards who will allow you in to an office to pick up your tickets for the Audience. Cost is free.
- Papal Angelus (Sunday at noon). This is another option to see the Pope and hear him give a reflection in Italian. It is done from one of the windows in the papal apartments. However, you probably won't be there on Sunday.
 - No tickets are required: you just walk in the square and look up at the apostolic palace (to the right of the square). At 12:00pm, the pope will

come out and deliver a 15-minute address and prayer. It is in Italian and Latin.

The following are some moderately-priced religious hotels in Rome Close to Vatican. If you want something else or these are not available, let me know and I will make some more recommendations.

1. Il Cantico

This is my first recommendation for its convenience and location (very close to St. Peter's), excellent food, and first class ambiance and service. It was just fully renovated and opened in October, 2012.

- 5-10 minute walk to St. Peter's
- Cost: around 85 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)
- You can contact them via email to reserve

2. Casa Tra Noi

800 meters from Vatican (20 minute walk)

This is a little more economical than Cantico, and the rooms are a little more dated, and you can hear through the walls. The location is in a quiet spot though, even though it is about a 20 minute walk, and uphill to get there. The restaurant is excellent.

- cost: Half Board around E65 double

3. Madri Pie

Just 200 yards from Vatican

The rooms here are a little worn, but may be offset because it is very close to Vatican

About E80 per night per person

NB: They do not have a restaurant – B&B only

cost: B&B around E55 double per person

4. SANTA MARIA ALLE FORNACI

Excellent location- 5 minutes to Vatican; rooms are a little worn; service not great

They only offer B&B

6. St. Peter's B&B

Small B&B-5-minute walk to Vatican;

I had a small group stay here once and they said: *“We didn't think the rooms were too small. The rooms were very nice, updated and very clean. there is no dining room, so you have to eat at a little bar in your room. A plus is that there is 24/7 access to the kitchenette which is well stocked with packaged food and the best espresso machine! A drawback is that one must go up and down 23 stairs to get to the rooms and there are only 5 rooms. It would only be good for a very small group.”*

- Guides in Rome
 - If you want to hire a licensed tour guide for any part of the experience in Rome, I can recommend a number of good English-speaking guides. They

are outstanding and will give you an excellent overview of the places you are visiting. Cost is between 120-200 Euros for 3-4 hours.

Restaurants in Rome:

If you are interested in good local restaurants, I would recommend going to the area near St. Peter's called Borgo Pio. It's lined with restaurants and eateries. Skip the ones where the salespeople come outside and try to entice you in, while the sit-down restaurants serve good, authentic Roman food. Generally, *trattorias* are a little more homestyle, simple, a little more economical, while genuine and good; while *ristoranti* are higher-end.

If you are interested in restaurants, I can send you a list of those we recommend.

Suggested itinerary:

Tuesday, March 25, 2014

Morning: Arrive in Rome airport

Rest and relax. Walk down to St. Peter's square for leisurely visit. This may be a good time to visit the NAC on this afternoon – or the Scavi, or any of the other items from the above list.

Wednesday, March 26

Morning: Rome papal audience (see instructions above)

Afternoon: visit papal basilicas (use hired guide and driver; see above)

Thursday, March 27:

Departure for San Giovanni Rotondo (by car it takes about 4 hours)

You mentioned hiring a car and driver for the next part of the itinerary. I would definitely advise keeping your car/driver until you get to Assisi, where the driver lives. He can still take you on some of the other day trips, but you won't have to pay his room and board. Here is a company we have worked with for many years. Michele (Michael in English) is very good, speaks decent English and amicable. Contact him to see if he's available. If not, he can give you another driver, or I can find one. Note that hiring a car and driver is not cheap: plan on spending around 350 euros per day for the car, plus room and board for the driver (about 100 euros per day).

Accommodations in San Giovanni Rotondo:

Note that there are many recently built hotels in San Giovanni Rotondo so there is a lot of choice. In Puglia, food is excellent, and prices are fairly economical.

1. Centro Spirituale

This is a very good option for location, quality, and great food. It was renovated about five years ago and is very pleasant. However, it requires a fairly steep walk up to the church of Padre Pio (they do offer van service for a small fee, in any case).

- Cost: around 60 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)

2. Hotel Approdo

This is another good option. The food is excellent as well; however, it is a 600-meter walk to the church. Some of the rooms are in need of a little updating. It is owned and run by the Capuchin friars and is overall very pleasant.

- Cost: around 50 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)

What to do in San Giovanni Rotondo:

- Arrange a guided tour of the old church, sacristy, friary, museum and new church. I can contact the pilgrimage office for you.
- There is an English speaking office that is open periodically throughout the season. It is a little tricky to find, but I can show you how to get there. If it is open, a gentleman from North Carolina works there and he will show you some videos of Padre Pio in English as well as show you some special relics.
- Day trip to Monte Sant'Angelo (about 30-45 minutes by car). There is a grotto there known as the Sanctuary of Saint Michael the Archangel, who appeared four times in the Middle Ages. Throughout the centuries, millions of pilgrims have gone to Monte Sant'Angelo to visit the famous shrine, in particular during the high middle ages as a stopping point en route to the Holy Land during the Crusades.

Monte Sant'Angelo

“For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” 1 Thess: 4, 16

A grotto in the town of Monte Sant'Angelo houses the Sanctuary of Saint Michael the Archangel. According to legend, St. Michael appeared here four times: in 490, 492, 493, and in 1656. The legend of the Archangel's apparition is celebrated on May 8. According to tradition, it all started when a local nobleman lost the best bull of his herd. After much searching, he found it kneeling in a cave. Unable to approach it, Elvio shot the bull with an arrow, but the arrow turned around and struck the man instead. The man went to see his bishop, who ordered three days of prayer and fasting. At the end of the three days, St. Michael the Archangel appeared to the bishop and said: “I am Michael the Archangel and am always in the presence of God. I chose the cave that is sacred to me. There will be no more shedding of bull's blood. Where the rocks open widely, the sins of men may be pardoned. What is asked here in prayer will be granted. Therefore, go up to the mountain cave and dedicate it to the Christian God!”

Soon, Michael appeared to the bishop a third time, ordering him to enter the cave. He said: “It is not necessary that you dedicate this church that I have consecrated with my presence. Enter and pray with my assistance and celebrate the Sacrifice. I will show you how I have consecrated this place.” The bishop then commissioned a chapel to be built at the entrance to the cave. The church became known as the Celestial Basilica.

St. Michael made another appearance here in 1656 during a great plague. The local bishop invoked St. Michael for protection, and the archangel appeared to him. The plague then ceased, and the mountain shrine became more popular than ever. Throughout the centuries, millions of pilgrims have gone to Monte Sant'Angelo to visit the famous shrine. Among the pilgrims are many popes (Gelasius I, Leo IX, Urban II, Alexander III, Gregory X, Celestine V, John XXIII as Cardinal, John Paul II), saints (Bridget of Sweden, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi) emperors, kings and princes (Louis II of Italy, Otto III, Henry II, Matilda of Tuscany, Charles I of Naples, Ferdinand II of Aragon).

Friday, March 28

Morning: visit Monte Sant'Angelo (see above).

Afternoon: visit San Giovanni rotondo

Saturday, March 29

Morning: depart from San Giovanni Rotondo and head north to Lanciano. (160 km; two-hour drive)

Depart early enough in order to arrive at the church of the Eucharistic Miracle before 11:00 noon (note that church closes between 12:30-3:30).

Lanciano is a medieval town in Abruzzo famous for the church that houses the first and most important Eucharistic miracle in the Catholic church. The story is told of an 8th century Basilian monk, doubtful of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, who was celebrating Mass. During Mass, the host turned into a live piece of flesh, and the wine transformed into real blood, which eventually coagulated into five globules, irregular and differing in shape and size. The Host-Flesh can be very closely observed by visitors today, and it has the same dimensions as the large host used during Mass. Many scientific inquiries have been done throughout the centuries, the latest in the early 1970s, which determined the following: the host is actual flesh and the blood is real blood; both the flesh and blood are human; the flesh consists of muscular tissue from the heart; the flesh and blood are AB blood-type. Without concluding on the authenticity of the miracle, all the scientists who studied the phenomena agreed that there is no explanation of how the flesh and blood over the course of 12 centuries did not decompose, even though they have been continuously exposed to the atmosphere and biological agents.

Have lunch in Lanciano

Afternoon: continue north to Manoppello (from Lanciano, it is 65 km; approximately 1 hour)

Spend time in the church of Manoppello (NB: opening times: 6.00am-12.30pm; 3.00pm-6.30pm); website: www.voltosanto.it

Continue to Loreto (167 km; 2 hours)

Sunday, March 30:

Morning: visit the Holy House of Loreto

The city of Loreto has been an international destination for pilgrims for centuries for the Marian Sanctuary that is venerated as the Holy House of the Virgin Mary. Tradition says that from within this house the angel appeared to Mary announcing that she would become the mother of Jesus. The house of Mary of Nazareth is composed of three walls of

stacked stones and was originally affixed onto a cave dug into the rock in Nazareth. For many centuries, legend claimed that the Holy House had been miraculously brought from Nazareth to Loreto by angels. However, recent research has shown convincing evidence which affirms that the Holy House of Loreto, like many relics from the Holy Land, was transported by ship at the time of the Crusades. Furthermore, more evidence has shown that the rocks of the three walls of the Holy House would fit well into the existing grotto of Nazareth. Additionally, the stones of the Holy House are worked and refined according to customs of Nazareth of the time of Christ. Also, there are numerous writings and graffiti on the rocks typical of the Judaeo-Christian community in Palestine before the fifth century AD. Our Lady of Loreto was declared the patroness of all travelers flying in or out of Rome's Fiumicino airport in 2010; she has been the patroness of aviators for several decades.

Accommodations in Loreto:

1. Casa San Francesco

This is a newly renovated building just opened for business two years ago. It is my first recommendation for its newly re-renovated look, excellent food, good service. It has a wonderful view of the Holy House from the terrace.

- Cost: around 55 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)
- Tel. 071 977 128

2. Casa San Giuseppe (run by nuns)

This is a decent accommodations – much simpler than Casa San Francesco. It is in a good location, too. Has good food, decent service, and economical price. It is a short drive or 15-minute walk to Loreto Holy House.

- Cost: around 45 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)

NB: The Holy House is open continually and does not close at mid-day. Note that on Sunday, however, it will be crowded.

Afternoon: Continue to Assisi (Loreto-Assisi is 150 km; 2 hours driving time – through the mountains)

Evening: arrive in Assisi

Assisi: March 31-April 3

I know you said that you are not interested in staying in Assisi; however, it is very central, and the other places you want to visit can all be done via day trip from there. Plus, if you use Iacopi as your driver, he lives in Assisi and can go home at night so you don't have to spend money for his accommodations. Therefore I suggest, that you can visit Assisi for one day, and make the next few days day trips from there.

Accommodations in Assisi:

1. Centro Terz'Ordine Francescano (Capuchins)

This is a brand new building just opened for business over the summer. It is my first recommendation for its excellent food, spiritual atmosphere, good service, and excellent price. It is a ten- minute walk to city gates of Assisi

- Cost: around 45 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)

2. Villa Elda

This is another option. It is a family-run hotel down in the valley underneath Assisi. It also has excellent food, good service, and economical price. It is next to the bus stop to get up and down from Assisi.

- Cost: around 45 euros per night per person for Half Board (breakfast and one meal)

NB: I know of numerous other places to stay in Assisi, if you like I can send you more info.

Monday, March 31:

Morning: visit the Basilica of St. Francis. See about having a guided tour in English at that time. There are English speaking friars on staff who give tours for donations of 2 euros or so plus headset rental for 3 euros. I can book your tour.

Then or lunch, I recommend eating at *I Monaci*. It is not far from the Piazza del Comune, the center of Assisi. In my opinion, *Monaci* is the best, most authentic restaurant in the old walls of Assisi. (Most restaurants cater to tourists and do not care about repeat business). This is near the center of Assisi between the Piazza del Comune and the basilica of St. Francis.

If you would like to have a guided catholic tour of Assisi, I can recommend some very good local guides. You should start at the church of Minerva, then go to Chiesa Nuova (birth home of St. Francis), then up to San Rufino (cathedral), then finish at Santa Chiara (where remains of St. Clare are). Keep in mind that the basilica of St. Clare is closed from 12:30-2:30 (the other churches are open continuously).

Tuesday, April 1 – day trip to Siena: (Assisi-Siena is 130 km, 90 minutes)

Morning: day trip to Siena

You may wish to get an early start and consider stopping in Cortona on the way to Siena, as it is on the way. This is the setting of the book and movie “Under the Tuscan Sun”. There is a nice historic area in Cortona, as well as the church of St. Margaret just outside of Siena, which is nearby also the Celle di Cortona (a Franciscan hermitage where St. Francis stayed).

(Or you could also stop at the banks of Lake Trasimeno, the largest lake in peninsular Italy. You could have a coffee on the banks, as it is on the way.)

In Siena, Visit:

- Church of San Domenico (open continuously) www.basilicacateriniana.com
 - In this church, the relics of St. Catherine are kept including her head and thumb
- House of Saint Catherine (closed mid-day)
 - You can see the house where she grew up

- Duomo (Cathedral) of Siena (open continuously)
 - This is a beautiful Renaissance church with masterpieces of art
- Il Campo/Palazzo Pubblico
 - This is the well-known square where the famous Palio horse race takes place twice each summer
- Basilica of Saint Francis (Franciscan church of San Bernardino); (open 7:30-12; then from 3:30p-7:00p)
 - There is a Eucharistic Miracle here
 - http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/mir/italian_pdf/Siena.pdf

Saint Catherine was born in the Fontebranda neighborhood in Siena where we find the Sanctuary of the house of Saint Catherine, among the many relics, houses the Crucifix that gave her the stigmata. A short distance away, in the Basilica of Saint Dominic, one can venerate the relic of her head, transported from Rome just a few years after the death of the Saint. In her incessant dedication to the cure of the sick, Catherine often passed entire nights at the beds of the sick who had found assistance in the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala: it is here, in fact, where you can find the Oratory of Saint Catherine of the Night, where the Saint went to pray and rest her sick body, completely wiped out from night vigils.

Return to Assisi for overnight.

Wednesday April 2: Day trip to Nursia and Cascia

(I know you said only Cascia; however, Norcia is very close); Assisi-Nursia (Norcia in Italian) is 80 km/1 hr, 15 minutes

In Nursia there is the birthplace of St. Benedict. On top of it is a monastery run by Benedictine monks, most of whom are from the US. Here is their website. Send them an email in advance and see if they can give you a tour and welcome to their community. <http://osbnorcia.org/>

PS: They recently opened a brewery, which has gained a lot of notoriety. They were recently featured on a number of Catholic websites.

Nursia (Norcia)

“Listen carefully, my child, to your master's precepts, and incline the ear of your heart. Receive willingly and carry out effectively your loving father's advice, that by the labor of obedience you may return to Him from whom you had departed by the sloth of disobedience.” Prologue of Rule of Saint Benedict

St. Benedict (480-547) with his twin sister, Scholastica, was born to a Roman noble family in Nursia. As a boy, he went to Rome to study and to follow his family tradition of political service; however, his understanding of the Gospel caused him to change direction. In the year 500, he fled the city of Rome seeking tranquility and prayer, as he was appalled by the licentiousness of contemporary Romans. Over the next few years in Subiaco (near Rome) Benedict devoted his life to prayer and the solitary life of a hermit. He soon noticed the undisciplined life of other monks who were living the hermit's life

without a sense of stability or discipline. Thus, he would write his Rule which would teach how to live the Christian spiritual life, and how to manage a monastery efficiently. The vow of stability would become the hallmark of Benedictine monastic life. Benedict founded 12 monasteries in his lifetime.

During the chaos that followed the decline and collapse ancient Roman Empire, the Benedictine Rule and monastic life he established would become the stable context for the flourishing of learning, art, and culture. The monastery was a stable social unit and, ideally, a selfless one. The monastic life attracted people who were dedicated to the spiritual search, dedicated to order in the sense of organization. The Benedictine charism and the establishment of monasteries throughout his realm resulted in a harmonic social structure.

The monasteries would guide Western Europe and serve as the bulwark of spirituality and culture for the next five centuries – mainly until the 13th century when the Franciscans (and other mendicant Orders) brought monastic spirituality from the cloister into the cities.

Next, you can go to Cascia, which is very close by (about 20 km/20 minutes). In Cascia, you can visit the monastery of St. Rita. It is open continuously, and you will see the incorruptible body of St. Rita. Behind the main church is a Eucharistic miracle, that you should not miss, as well.

Cascia – St. Rita

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” John: 14:27

Overlooking the beautiful hill-town of Cascia, is an Augustinian convent and church housing the remains of Saint Rita (1371-1447) – the saint of the impossible and patron of marriages, child bearing, and sickness. Her body, incorrupt, lies in the upper Basilica. In the lower basilica are the bodies of Blessed Simone Fidati and Maria Teresa Fasce, in addition to a Eucharistic miracle.

Rita Lotti was born in the tiny hamlet of Roccaporena, near Cascia. Her parents believed their only child was a very special gift from God since she was born to them as they were already getting on in years. Both the civil and ecclesiastical climates at the time were not healthy ones – frequent conflicts and family rivalries were routinely settled by the rule of vendetta – and the scandal of antipopes and their rival bishops was dominating the life of the Church. The Lottis were a devout Christian couple, offering their daughter the witness of strong faith in God and a practical example of Gospel living, especially in their role as official peacemakers or reconcilers among their fellow citizens. Although Rita wished to become a nun, her parents preferred to see her married, arranging a husband for her to which Rita consented.

Thus Rita married Paolo Mancini. Accounts are widely varied as to the type of man he was: one description states that he was a good man though of strong and impetuous character, while another says he was violent and a gambler, still another that he was extremely cruel and filled with every vice. Their marriage was blessed with two sons, perhaps twins, and Rita’s days were soon filled with the typical concerns of wife, mother and housekeeper. Her biographers indicate that Paolo was converted as a result of Rita’s

incessant prayers and reconciling demeanor. However, her life would be forever changed when her husband was ambushed and murdered. The pain of his murder was exacerbated by the fear that her sons would seek to avenge their father's death.

Her example of forgiveness, her words of instruction and pleading, her prayers for their conversion, were unable to persuade the two boys to forego the vendetta that was expected (and even sanctioned) by their social status. Although some say that Rita prayed for the death of the boys, in reality Rita entrusted the cause totally to God, asking him to handle the situation which was beyond her control. As it happened, both sons died within the year.

Now alone, Rita gave herself to works of charity and to a more intense life of prayer. Eventually the desire to enter the convent once more grew in her, and even though the nuns knew her, her request for entrance among the Augustinian Nuns of Cascia was refused on three separate occasions due to certain challenges. There existed a legal statute requiring the permission of the deceased husband's family to allow a widow entrance into Religious life. Further, the nuns did not wish Rita to enter the monastery for fear that the violence hatred, and animosity surrounding Paolo's death would negatively impact the community. But Rita felt deeply that this was the vocation to which she was called and she turned to her three patron saints for intercession. Rita approached Paolo's family as well as their rivals, and was successful in persuading them to put an end to their hostility and to live in peace. In a veritable miracle, the families were reconciled. They signed a document to this effect, and when Rita presented the document to the nuns, they no longer had reason to refuse her. Rita Lotti Mancini now became Sister Rita.

For the next forty years Rita lived the life of an Augustinian nun. Her days were spent in prayer and contemplation, in service to the sick and the poor, and in activities necessary to support the life of the small community. After twenty-five years of religious life, her forehead was pierced by a thorn from the crown that covered Jesus's own head. She bore this wound for fifteen years until the day of her death on May 22, 1457. Given the many difficult situations in her life, St. Rita is known as the Saint of the Impossible.

Return to Assisi for overnight

Thursday, April 3:

Morning: depart Assisi for Rome. Stop in Orvieto.

In Orvieto, you can visit the Cathedra of the Duomo, which houses the Eucharistic Miracle of Bolsena, giving us our feast day of Corpus Christi.

Orvieto

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body.” Matthew: 26, 26

Orvieto, a wonderful medieval town constructed upon tufa rock, boasts a grandiose Cathedral in the Piazza del Duomo. Inside the Duomo is an actual Eucharistic miracle. In 1263, Peter of Prague, a German priest on pilgrimage to Rome, was celebrating Mass in Bolsena, Italy. He had come to doubt the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. During the consecration, blood suddenly dripped from the Sacred Host and covered his

hands as well as the altar. Startled, Father Peter interrupted the Mass and left for nearby Orvieto, where Pope Urban IV was then residing. Having absolved the priest of his past sin, the Holy Father ordered the local bishop to bring him the miraculous Host and the bloodstained altar cloth for examination. Impressed by this miraculous event, the Pope had the Host and altar cloth placed in the Cathedral of Orvieto, where they remain perfectly preserved to this day. This miracle led to the declaration of the feast of Corpus Christi the following year, still celebrated on our Church calendar on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

Overnight near Rome Fiumicino airport.

Accommodations near the airport:

I know of a number of good accommodations near the airport. I will send them to you.

April 4 (Departure)

Return flight to Atlanta.