



# PROROME



## Chesterton Schools Network 2026 Pilgrimage to Italy Initial Itinerary

This pilgrimage features six nights in Rome, one night in Florence and three nights in Assisi. While the Sunday Angelus and/or General Audience with Pope Leo XIV will surely prove to be a highlight, the itinerary includes a touring program purposefully crafted to immerse the group in the vast heritage, history and cultural patrimony of Catholic civilization. The goal of this trip is to convert the hearts of the students as they pass through places made sacred by the blood of the martyrs and the faith of the saints.

Space is limited and is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Registration opens on June 20, 2025 and closes on July 20, 2025.

For questions regarding pilgrimage policies, chaperone guidelines and more, please contact Mrs. Julie Bowles by email at [julie@chesterton.org](mailto:julie@chesterton.org).

**Week Uno - March 16 - 27, 2026 (Lenten Pilgrimage)**

\$2700 per person + air

For more information or to register please visit [www.prorome.com/csn2026](http://www.prorome.com/csn2026) or contact ProRome Tours directly at [office@prorome.com](mailto:office@prorome.com) or by phone at (434) 953 1112





## Trip Itinerary

\*\*\*\*The below itinerary is meant to illustrate the different sites that you will visit. Please note that the sites will not be visited in this order. Final itineraries will be provided four weeks prior to departure.\*\*\*\*

### Monday, March 16 Departure

Flight information TBD.

### Tuesday, March 17 Arrival | Introductory Tour Of Rome

Upon arrival, the group will be met by the tour manager and board a private coach for Rome. If time allows, an introduction to Rome will include a walk to St. Peter's Square, and continue along the Via della Conciliazione to the Bridge of the Angels, with attention to churches and piazzas in the surrounding area. Evening rendezvous at the church of Santa Maria in Traspontina for Mass. Dinner and overnight at hotel, TBD

**Holy Mass: Santa Maria in Traspontina**

### Wednesday, March 18 Papal Audience | Centro Storico "Part 1"

Day begins with the Papal Audience in St. Peter's Square with the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV.

Following the audience is a walking tour of Rome's centro storico, the historic city center, with an emphasis on monuments of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Rome was the epicenter of

religious renewal sparked by the Council of Trent, as saints, popes and religious orders sponsored magnificent works of architecture and art that still proclaim the message of Catholic truth and tradition to the world.

The Chiesa Nuova is the burial place of Saint Philip Neri - and the birthplace of the Chesterton Schools Network! Mass at the Chiesa Nuova. Nearby is the Piazza Navona, which in Roman times was the Stadium of Domitian, where the child Agnes was martyred in the year 304. Today she is honored at the Baroque church of Sant'Agnese which crowns the piazza. Opposite the church is Bernini's exuberant Fountain of Four Rivers. The nearby churches of San Luigi dei Francesi and Sant'Agostino are embellished with masterpieces by Caravaggio. Sant'Agostino is dear to Pope Leo XIV; it houses the tomb of St. Monica and is the headquarters of the Augustinian Order.

A highlight of any visit to Rome is the Pantheon, one of the most fascinating buildings ever constructed. Originally a temple to the planetary deities, it was completed around 125 AD under the Emperor Hadrian. In the year 609 it was consecrated as a church and dedicated to Saint Mary and the Martyrs. This Christianized pagan temple is the only fully intact building from Greco-Roman antiquity. The immense circular structure is a wonder of Roman engineering while its religious history reflects Rome's "eternal" character.

**Holy Mass - Chiesa Nuova**

### Thursday, March 19 St. Peter's Basilica | Vatican Museums & Sistine Chapel | Soiree

Early breakfast followed by Mass at St. Peter's Basilica. After a guided tour of the basilica with its artistic, historic and spiritual riches, there is the option to climb to the top of Michelangelo's dome to experience the singularly most incredible panorama of Rome!

Free time for lunch before touring the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel. Founded in the 16th century, the Vatican Museums preserve the world's greatest collections of Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance art. Evening Chesterton Schools Network Soiree.

**Holy Mass: St. Peter's Basilica**

### Friday, March 20 St Paul Outside The Walls | Ancient City

Breakfast, then departure for the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls for a Network Mass. This is the second largest church in Rome, built over the tomb of St. Paul, which is visible from the confessio situated in front of the high altar. A tour of the basilica recalls the story of St. Paul and his martyrdom and burial in Rome. The basilica itself has a fascinating history, from its consecration in the year 402, to the year 1823 when it was almost lost to fire, to its subsequent rebuilding which was aided by gifts and donations from world over.

Lunch, followed by exploring the remains of Rome's ancient center of power. The Roman Forum and Palatine Hill, the Colosseum and Basilica of San Clemente: all tell a part of the story of the Eternal City, from its founding in the 8th century BC, to its imperial monuments of the 1st and 2nd centuries, to Rome's sacking in the 5th century - which overlapped with its rebirth as the Christian capital. By the 7th century the Forum was home to several Christian churches, the most exceptional being Santa Maria Antiqua at the base of the Palatine.

**Holy Mass: St. Paul Outside the Walls**

### Saturday, March 21

#### Saint Mary Major | The Catacombs | The Lateran | Holy Cross In Jerusalem | Trastevere

Early breakfast and visit to one of Rome's most beloved churches, the Basilica of Saint Mary Major, with Holy Mass near the tomb of Pope Francis. Touring the basilica is a call to prayer: the miraculous icon Madonna Salus Populi Romani (Rome's most important Marian image) has been at St. Mary Major since the 6th century; the manger in which Christ was born was brought to the basilica in the 7th century; many pray at the tomb of St. Pius V to ask the intercession of this pope of Lepanto and the Counter Reformation. Journey from St. Mary Major to the Via Appia Antica "outside the walls" and the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, named for the soldier-martyr buried and venerated there. Group lunch on the Via Appia at Ristorante Cecilia Metella.

Afternoon at the Cathedral of Rome, the "Lateran Basilica," built by the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. This church is known as mater et caput - mother and head of all the churches of the world because it remains the official seat of the Bishop of Rome since its founding. This is also the site of the Holy Stairs, the very stairs that Christ ascended when He was brought to trial at the Praetorium of Pontius Pilate. The stairs are climbed on one's knees out of respect for our Lord and His Passion. A short distance away is the Basilica of Holy Cross in Jerusalem where more relics of Christ's Passion are safeguarded, including a large piece of the True Cross and nails from the Crucifixion.

An evening spent in Trastevere, Rome's most popular neighborhood, reveals legendary churches, relics and art, as well as bustling restaurants, bars and markets. The counter-reformation Spanish saint, Teresa of Avila, is venerated at the church of Santa Maria della Scala which houses the relic of her hand. Yet an aura of early Christian antiquity also permeates Trastevere, particularly in its basilicas: Santa Maria in Trastevere was the earliest site of Christian worship in Rome; the Basilica of San Crisogono dates to the 4th century (it also houses the shrine and incorrupt body of the mystic Blessed Anna Maria Taigi); finally, the monastery and basilica of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere are an oasis of tranquility. The church is built over the house of the early Christian martyr Cecilia. In the year 821 St. Cecilia's incorrupt body was transferred from the Catacombs of Callixtus to this church built in her honor.

**Holy Mass: Basilica of Saint Mary Major**

### Sunday, March 22 Angelus & The Centro Storico "Part 2"

After attending Mass at a church of preference, the group will rendezvous in St. Peter's Square for the Angelus with the Holy Father. A leisurely Sunday will be marked by a stroll through the centro storico that includes the famous piazzas of the Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps, as well as the nearby church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte where our Lady appeared to the Jewish anti-Catholic Alphonse Rattisbonne, who was instantly converted and became a priest. The walking tour is complete with visits to the Jesuit churches celebrated for their astonishing illusionistic ceilings: the church of the Gesu - where St. Ignatius of Loyola is buried, and the basilica of Sant'Ignazio - where St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Aloysius Gonzaga are buried.

**Holy Mass: Independent today: choose a church!**

# ITINERARY CONTINUED



## Monday, March 23 Florence

Early departure for Florence. Introduction to the city from the incomparable medieval church of San Miniato. San Miniato is a glory of Tuscan Romanesque architecture that overlooks the Arno Valley and offers a breathtaking panorama of the city below. The church holds the relics of St. Minias, an Armenian prince who was martyred in about 250. Mass at San Miniato.

Lunch, followed by a walking tour of the city's centro storico. The church of Santa Croce, begun in 1294, is a wellspring of important medieval and Renaissance art. It is also where Michelangelo, Galileo and Machiavelli are buried. The Piazza della Signoria is the central square of Florence, with its towering medieval city hall, the Palazzo Vecchio. The church of Santi Apostoli is one of the oldest churches in Florence, believed to date from the year 800, with Charlemagne present at its founding. Santi Apostoli houses three fragments of stone from the Holy Sepulchre that Godfrey of Bouillon gifted to a Florentine crusader, Pazzino de' Pazzi, for his heroism during the Siege of Jerusalem. A plaque on the wall of the church's tiny piazza shows the height that the flood waters reached during the tragic flood of 1966. The tour continues along the Via Tornabuoni, the most elegant shopping street in Florence, and ends at the Piazza San Giovanni and the visual delight of the city's Baptistry of San Giovanni and Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore (the Duomo). Dinner and overnight at hotel, TBD

**Holy Mass: San Miniato**

## Tuesday, March 24 Florence | Assisi

Free day in Florence includes a tour of the Uffizi Gallery which houses many masterpieces by the greatest painters of the Italian Renaissance. Important places to explore independently are the Florence Cathedral (the Duomo) and Baptistry, the Monastery and Basilica of San Marco and the Accademia Museum to view Michelangelo's David. Mass at San Marco.

During the Renaissance and subsequent centuries it was believed that the Florence Baptistry (11th century?) was originally a Roman temple. This is because its structural sophistication and classical perfection defied the existing architectural techniques employed in Italy. Interestingly, recent

archeology has unearthed ancient Roman pavements underneath the octagonal structure, as well as remains of an ancient baptistry building and a small church that both date from the 4th or 5th century. The Baptistry's bronze doors (begun 1452) in the east portal facing the cathedral are by Ghiberti. Michelangelo called them "the Gates of Paradise" due to their unsurpassed beauty and craftsmanship. The immense cathedral (begun 1296) was built on the site of the ancient church. When completed, it was the largest church in the world after St. Peter's Basilica. But, it had stood for over 100 years without a dome because no trees could be obtained of the height required to build the wooden scaffolding necessary to construct its immense dome. But, in 1420 Brunelleschi began construction of the dome - a dome that did not depend on traditional scaffolding! Instead, the builders utilized cantilevered platforms that attached to the dome and were movable, rising with the dome as work progressed. The Campanile (bell tower) of the Duomo was designed by Italy's most important painter, Giotto, in 1334. The sculpture that adorns the exterior depicts the common medieval iconography of biblical scenes combined with scenes of daily life. Climb the bell tower if time allows.

The Monastery of San Marco is now a museum dedicated to the Dominican artist Fra Angelico (d. 1455; beatified by St. John Paul II in 1982). The holy friar painted mystical images on the walls of the monks' cells as an aid to their prayer and meditation. He also created numerous altarpieces, some of which are now housed in San Marco's museum. Fra Angelico's friend, St. Antoninus of Florence, is entombed in the Basilica of San Marco. Preserved in the monastery is the cell of San Marco's most famous prior, Savonarola, the fiery preacher who passionately warned about the decadence of Florentine society in the late 15th century. His story is complex, but in 1998 the Archdiocese of Florence opened the cause for Savonarola's canonization.

The nearby Accademia Museum is home to Michelangelo's David (1501- 1504), originally meant to be placed in a niche on the exterior of the Duomo, some 40 feet above the ground!

Later afternoon departure for Assisi, arrival, check-in and dinner, TBD

**Holy Mass: Basilica of San Marco**

## Wednesday, March 25 Assisi

After breakfast, Mass at the basilica of San Francesco, the burial place of St. Francis of Assisi. This magnificent church is the first ever built as a "double church" - that is, a church on top of a church! In 1230, four years after Francis' death, his body was placed in the Lower Church, directly under the high altar of the Upper Church. Along the Upper Church nave, the master Giotto painted the famous fresco cycle of scenes from the life of St. Francis.

Lunch in Assisi's centro storico. Its medieval streets still capture the spiritual peace that permeates Assisi. The church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva on the main square was once a Roman temple to the goddess Minerva; its Corinthian porch is still preserved. Continuing along the Via Santa Chiara one arrives at the basilica of St. Clare. In 1260, Clare's incorrupt body was brought to the new church built in her honor. Her basilica also preserves the San Damiano crucifix, which spoke to St. Francis at the once-ruined church of San Damiano and instructed him "Rebuild my Church."

**Holy Mass: San Francesco**

## Thursday, March 26 Assisi

Breakfast, then depart via motor coach for the basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli for Mass. The basilica enshrines the little chapel known as the Portiuncula (little portion). It is here that St. Francis founded the Franciscan order and where the first Franciscans lived and prayed. It is where St. Francis died. Visit to the church at Saint Damiano, which was very important in the life of St. Francis. This is where the "San Damiano Crucifix" spoke to him, saying: "Francis, go and repair my house which is falling into disrepair." This is also where, in 1224, Francis wrote the Cantic of the Creatures.

Lunch followed by a free afternoon, with the option to hike to Eremo delle Carceri, an isolated spot where St. Francis sometimes went to pray and contemplate God.

**Holy Mass: Santa Maria degli Angeli**

## Friday, March 27 - Departure

Transfer to FCO. Flights home TBD.

**Holy Mass: TBD**





## More Details

### ► Total Cost

\$2700 + air

### ► Payment Schedule

\$300 - Deposit due at registration

\$1200 - Due September 15, 2025

\$1200 - Due October 15, 2025

Airfare - Due November 15, 2025

### ► Price Inclusions

- Airfare (cost and routing TBD)
- 10 Nights Lodging in Double/Triple/Quadruple Occupancy Rooms
  - 6 Nights Rome
  - 1 Night Florence
  - 3 Nights Assisi
- Private Coach Throughout
- Daily Breakfast
- Additional daily three-course meal (either lunch or dinner) with water included
- Private ProRome Tours Catholic Tour Manager
- Private English-Speaking Guides
- Whisper System (Headsets)
- Mass Donations
- All Gratuities
- Welcome box and trip merchandise
- All Applicable Local City, State and Country Taxes and Fees

### ► Price Exclusions

- One daily meal (either lunch or dinner - TBD)
- Beverages other than water at included meals
- Trip insurance (available for purchase through ProRome)
- Any personal expenses



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