



Dear Sir or Madame,

Thank you for taking the time to read about Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages' December 2015 "Jubilee Year of Mercy" Pilgrimage with the optional "Add On" Pilgrimage to Norcia. This promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

If you would like to join us after reading through the attached Registration Packet, simply mail the following completed forms to our US office — space is limited and we have had over 100 people who have shown great interest in this pilgrimage. If you intend to join this pilgrimage, I strongly recommend you email me at TNorris@InsideTheVatican.com or call our office at 202.536.4555 to have your spot reserved for 3 days. This will hold your space until we receive your registration information.

The following items will need to be mailed to the address below:

1. **Registration Form**—one per person with a copy of the picture page of your passport.
2. **Letter of Recommendation** – it is due within 30 days after deposit, but no later than 30 days before the date of departure.
3. **Deposit** - Check for \$500.00 per person. If you choose to join us for the "Add On" pilgrimage to Norcia in addition to the December 2015 "Jubilee Year of Mercy" Pilgrimage, please note this on your Registration Form in the appropriate area. An additional deposit will not be necessary.
Checks payable to Inside the Vatican.

Our US office address is:

Inside the Vatican magazine
14 W Main Street
Front Royal, VA 22630

If you should have any questions about the pilgrimage, please feel free to call me. I can be reached directly at 202.536.4555, or by email, TNorris@InsideTheVatican.com. If you would like to reserve your spot after business hours just send me an email and I will respond to you to next business morning.

Please let me know how I can assist you in joining this pilgrimage!

Theresa Norris
Executive Assistant
Inside the Vatican magazine



Inside the Vatican Magazine “Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage
“Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage – December 4 - 10, 2015
(Optional add-on) “Norcia Retreat” Pilgrimage – December 10 - 14, 2015

A Personal Invitation from Dr. Robert Moynihan:

Dear friend,

I am writing to invite you to join me in Rome at the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy. This promises to be an extraordinary time of grace, just before Christmas in Rome.

Pope Francis, in his Bull of Indiction announcing the Holy Year, spoke about his reasons for declaring it. “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy,” he wrote. “These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him.”



So this “Year of Mercy” pilgrimage is essentially “Christocentric” — centered on Christ. Our days will begin with Mass, near the tomb of St. Peter, and we will have special readings to center our thoughts on the meaning of Christian mercy as we prepare to pass through the Holy Door, which Pope Francis will open on December 8. “I have chosen the date of 8 December,” Pope Francis wrote, “because of its rich meaning in the recent history of the Church. In fact, I will open the Holy Door on the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.”

Pope Francis adds: “The Church’s first truth is the love of Christ. The Church makes herself a servant of this love and mediates it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of one’s self. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy.”

We would like your journey with us to be “an oasis of mercy” in your life, a pilgrimage that enriches your life and deepens your faith. Although we will visit many very special places, our journey is a pilgrimage, not a tour. The spiritual dimension — the search for a deeper encounter with God — is central. This is why the pace of our pilgrimages will be slow and peaceful, not rushed. There will be time for prayer and contemplation.

So, please consider joining me on this extraordinary journey for the opening of the Holy Year of Mercy. We expect it to be a wonderful, joyful, and memorable time, with many hours devoted to prayer and meditation.

— Robert Moynihan
Founder and Editor of *Inside the Vatican* magazine



A Note from Deborah Tomlinson

Welcome to Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages. Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages began in 2008, and since then we have led over 22 pilgrimages to the heart of the Church. It has been our policy to keep the size of each pilgrimage small, rarely more than 15 people, in order to keep the experience personal and intimate.



We have found that the small pilgrimages create a bond of friendship that is very special. At the end of our journey together our pilgrims often discover that not only have they visited some of the most important shrines in the Christian world, but they have also made deep friendships with one another, and with those they have met along the journey, that will last a lifetime.

These pilgrimages are a total immersion experience — unrepeatable and unforgettable, informative and transformative. The focus is not solely on the stones of St. Peter's Basilica and the other basilicas and holy shrines, but also on those living stones which are the souls of the people we encounter — the Benedictine monks of Norcia, the cardinals and Monsignors of the Vatican, the Swiss Guards in Rome and even ourselves, the pilgrims.

Dr. Robert Moynihan, the founder and editor of *Inside the Vatican* magazine (founded in 1993), and I will be traveling with you for the entire pilgrimage. Robert is an expert on all things Roman, and his love of Italy is contagious.

We will spend 5 nights in Rome celebrating the opening of the Jubilee Year of Mercy; a Jubilee Year is one of the most profound occasions for one's visit to Rome. What a very special and exciting time to be in the Eternal City! Dr. Moynihan will share his knowledge and experience of the past 30 years as one of the leading Vatican journalists and scholars. Robert and I will also introduce you to some of our friends inside and around the Vatican. These Roman days will be filled with many experiences that will make you feel like a "Vatican insider," not a typical tourist. The Vatican will become familiar to you as you gain a new understanding of how the Church operates. During the pilgrimage our daily conversations will be enriched with reflection on the meaning of Mercy in our lives.

After our Roman days, you will have the option to continue on for an additional 4 nights at our "Norcia Retreat." We will visit Norcia, the birthplace of St. Benedict, the Patron Saint of Europe and the founder of monastic life. Father Cassian, our friend and founder of the current Benedictine community in Norcia's centuries-old monastery, will meet with us there to share a reflection. These moments with Father Cassian are often among the most memorable highlights of our trip.

Pope Francis wrote about the importance of pilgrimage in the Year of Mercy in the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy:

The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a viator, a pilgrim travelling along the road, making his way to the desired destination. Similarly, to reach the Holy Door in Rome or in any other place in the world, everyone, each according to his or her ability, will have to make a pilgrimage. This will be a sign that mercy is also a goal to reach and requires dedication and sacrifice. May pilgrimage be an impetus to conversion: by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us.

I hope to greet you in Rome!

— Deborah Tomlinson
Chief Operating Officer of *Inside the Vatican* magazine

***Inside the Vatican Magazine* “Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage**
December 4-10, 2015
Rome and Vatican City

Friday, December 4, 2015 — Leave from the US. You will have packed lightly, but taken all you need for this unique pilgrimage. Safe flight!



Rome and Vatican City

With a population of 2.7 million, Rome is one of the most populated cities in Europe, and one of the oldest. As we stroll over the time-worn cobblestones, the many layers of Roman history will begin to unfold. From the sculpture and architecture of the Ancients to the vestiges left from the early Church, through the Medieval and Renaissance periods with the masterpieces of artists such as Michelangelo, Raphael, and Bernini, Rome is truly a treasure-trove of art, culture and history.

Contained in the heart of the city of Rome is the sovereign city-state Vatican City, whose territory consists of a walled enclave within the city of Rome. The Vatican has an area of approximately 110 acres, a population of around 840, and is the smallest country in the world.

This is a unique time in the Vatican as Pope Francis continues to define his pontificate, and Emeritus Pope Benedict continues to reside in Vatican City in a small convent inside the Vatican gardens, not far from the *Domus Santa Marta*, the residence of Pope Francis. The Vatican will be alive with pilgrims from around the world who have come to witness the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. It is a privileged time to be part of the living Body of Christ – the living stones of the Church, during these days of the “two Popes,” Benedict and Francis, both so very different and yet each so filled with the love of Christ and of His Church.

Saturday, December 5 — Welcome to Italy! You arrive at Fiumicino airport, about 10 miles outside of Rome to the west, near the Mediterranean Sea. You may have seen the sea as your plane circled to land.

You will be met by your driver at the gate as you come out with your luggage after going through customs — you will walk right through the “nothing to declare” line. Your driver will escort you to the Hotel Michelangelo, where Deborah and Robert will greet you upon your arrival. The Hotel Michelangelo will be our Roman home for the next five nights and is located steps away from St. Peter’s Basilica. Once we settle in, there may be time to rest before we head to lunch at one of our favorite restaurants near the Vatican.



We will visit this image of Divine Mercy in the Basilica of Santo Spirito

After lunch, we will visit the Basilica of Santo Spirito — the sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Rome established by St. John Paul II on January 1, 1994 (*photo left*). Since the beatification of Sister Faustina in 1993, the church has been served by the sisters from the Congregation of Our Lady of Mercy, St. Faustina’s order. There we will participate in the Divine Mercy Chaplet, before attending a private Mass. Confessions will also be made available in preparation for this pilgrimage.

On our way to dinner, Dr. Moynihan will lead us on a “familiarization” walk into Vatican City, paying special attention to St. Peter’s Square, in front of St. Peter’s Basilica, which was built above the tomb of St. Peter, the first Pope and the apostle to whom Christ entrusted “the keys of the kingdom.” Our Welcome Dinner will be at one of our favorite restaurants near the Vatican. Our first day will end early so we can all be rested for the journey to come...

Sunday, December 6 — Rome. We will have a simple, delicious breakfast at the Hotel Michelangelo before departing for Sunday Mass. The Hotel Michelangelo is known for having one of the best breakfast buffets in Rome! (There will be time to observe the 1-hour fast). You will have the option of attending the English Mass at the Basilica of Santo Spirito, or a Latin Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. After Mass, which will end just before noon, we will gather in St. Peter’s square to hear Pope Francis’ Angelus message and to pray the Angelus together, along with many pilgrims from around the world. After lunch near the Vatican, there will be free time to shop, rest or to visit St. Peter’s Basilica on your own. This is a good time to purchase items for the Papal Audience on Wednesday.

In the late afternoon/early evening, we will taxi to the Spanish Steps, where we will begin a slow stroll to the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, and the Piazza Navona (*photo right*). Along the way, Dr. Moynihan will point out many interesting places, peeling away the layers of Roman and Church history.

The Basilica of Sant’Andrea delle Fratte has a very special side chapel. In fact, it is so special that many come to Rome just to pray at this side altar. Our Lady appeared there to Alphonse Ratisbonne, an avowed anti-Catholic Jew, in 1842, manifesting herself exactly as she appears on the Miraculous Medal, effecting his miraculous conversion.





Chapel of the Our Lady of the Miracle in the Basilica of Sant'Andrea delle Frate

The first Miraculous Medals were struck in 1832, and while the Miraculous Medal devotion was already circulating throughout France after St. Catherine Labouré's Marian apparition, it was this miraculous apparition to Ratisbonne which provided the impetus to bring the Miraculous Medal devotion to Italy.

Many pilgrims from all over the world travel to Rome just to visit this shrine in devotion to the Miraculous Medal. This special side chapel is also where St. Maximilian Kolbe offered his first Mass (April 29, 1918).

On the walk back to the Vatican area, we will stop at another one of our favorite restaurants in Rome for dinner, then enjoy a gelato from one of the best Gelaterias in Rome on our way back to the Hotel Michelangelo.

Monday, December 7 — Castel Gandolfo/Manoppello.

We will be up early to enjoy another delicious breakfast in the Hotel Michelangelo before we travel across the Italian peninsula towards the Adriatic Sea.

Our first stop will be Castel Gandolfo, which is only 30 miles Southeast of Rome. With stunning views over Lake Albano (*photo below*) and beyond, to the coastline of the Mediterranean sea, the Papal Palace at Castel Gandolfo has been a favorite holiday residence for the popes since the 17th century. Pope Pius XI oversaw

the creation of a model farm, which still produces eggs, milk, oil, vegetables and honey for local employees or for sale in the Vatican supermarket in Vatican City. Pope Pius XII, who allowed war refugees sanctuary in the villa, died there in 1958, as did Pope Paul VI two decades later. Amongst the hidden treasures that we will enjoy are the magnolia garden, the path of roses and that of aromatic herbs, the square of holly oaks and the breathtaking Belvedere garden.

After our visit to the Papal gardens, which are considered by many to be more beautiful than the Vatican Gardens in Rome, we will have lunch in a famous restaurant over looking scenic Lake Albano, only steps away from the Papal Palace.



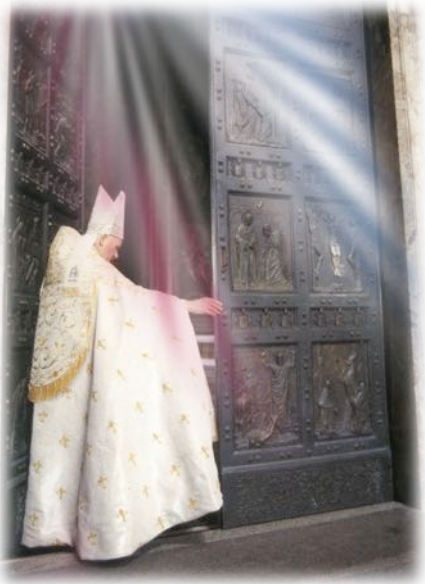
We continue our journey after lunch and head towards the Adriatic Sea for about two hours, to the little town of Manoppello, Italy (population 157 — yes, it's tiny!) in the rugged Abruzzo region. There, we will visit the Shrine of the Holy Face — the shrine which contains a mysterious cloth (*photo left*) bearing the image of a man with wounds on his face, an image some believe is the actual face of Christ, formed at the moment of his Resurrection. Pope Emeritus Benedict visited this Shrine in 2006 to venerate the Holy Face of Manoppello.

We will have dinner at the same restaurant Pope Benedict dined in when he visited Manoppello — a family-owned restaurant where *Nonna*, Grandma, cooks with the fresh ingredients from the region. A real Italian experience!

From the BULL OF INDICATION of the EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE of MERCY

... My thoughts now turn to the Mother of Mercy. May the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us may rediscover the joy of God's tenderness. No one has penetrated the profound mystery of the Incarnation like Mary. Her entire life was patterned after the presence of mercy made flesh. The Mother of the Crucified and Risen One has entered the sanctuary of divine mercy because she participated intimately in the mystery of His love... -- Pope Francis March 13,

Tuesday, December 8 — Rome: Feast of the Immaculate Conception. This Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception will be extraordinary, as it will mark the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Mass



will be in St. Peter's Basilica, with Pope Francis celebrating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and opening the Holy Doors to St. Peter's Basilica (*photo left, with John Paul II in 2000*). After Mass, we will head to St. Peter's Square for the Angelus led by Pope Francis. Thousands of pilgrims will be praying together in joyous celebration. As you look out into the crowds, you will experience in a very special way the universality of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Lunch will be a festive occasion as we discuss the events of the morning and the joy of the Jubilee Year.

A visit to one of our Vatican monsignor friends will follow a rest after lunch. We will hear stories about the universal Church from a very wise priest who has lived many decades in Rome at the service of the Popes. These encounters are often a highlight for our pilgrims, and fondly remembered through the years as intimate and personal moments shared. As is fitting, the monsignor will give us a meditation on Mercy.

Dinner will follow a visit to Santa Maria in Trastevere (*photo below*), a neighborhood just south of the Vatican. This relatively small church in the “hip” and “trendy” neighborhood of Trastevere (“across the Tiber”) may have existed as a house-church as early as 112 AD. In ancient times, this area was the old “port” of Rome, and people from the East might well have visited here, including early Christians. By 220 AD, this site was one of the official “first 12 parishes” in Rome as confirmed by Pope Callistus I, who is buried under the main altar.

Although there is a rivalry between this church and Santa Maria Maggiore (the Basilica of St. Mary Major) as to which is the first church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, dating and tradition generally hold that this church possesses that honor. At the front of the church's exterior, you will see stones bearing dozens of Latin and Greek inscriptions. These came partially from the ancient church itself, but also from the catacombs. They are memorial monuments — gravestones of a sort — from early Christian martyrs in the time before Christianity became tolerated.



Dinner will be in a place visited by many locals in this area, where *Nonna* oversees each meal!

Wednesday, December 9 — Rome. People will be coming from afar for today's Papal Audience at 10:30 a.m., but we will only have to walk a few blocks after breakfast to find our seats.

During the audience, Pope Francis will share a brief teaching and reading in Italian, but it will be translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese, and sometimes other languages, depending on the groups visiting.



The Pope will follow with a greeting to all gathered in St. Peter's Piazza. At the end of the Audience, the Pope will lead us in the "Our Father" in Latin. This prayer will be printed on the back of the Papal Audience ticket. After the "Our Father," Pope Francis will impart his Apostolic Blessing upon the crowd, which also extends to our loved ones at home. He will bless any item that you may have purchased along our journey together.

After lunch and a brief rest, we will depart for the three other patriarchal basilicas in Rome, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran and St. Paul's Outside-the-Walls. St. Peter's Basilica is the 4th patriarchal basilica. Each of these churches is a glorious monument to the Faith and contains treasures of art and faith that can take one's breath away.

In **St. Mary Major**, for example, there is a painting of Mary (*photo right*), which is believed to have been painted by St. Luke himself, making it the oldest painting of Mary in the world. It is called the *Salus Populi Romani* (English: the *Protectress of the Roman People*) — *Protectress* is a translation of the Latin "*salus*" which means "salvation" or "health." It has historically been the most important Marian icon in Rome, and was crowned by Pope Pius XII in 1954. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI venerated the *Salus Populi Romani* on different occasions, and asked Mary on each occasion to "pray for us."

One of Pope Francis' first acts after his election was to pray before the *Salus Populi Romani*. In May of 2013, the month dedicated to Our Lady and the Holy Rosary, Pope Francis also prayed his first public Rosary before this ancient and venerable image. He has also visited it many times since then.

The *Roman Breviary* states: "After the Council of Ephesus (431) in which the Mother of Jesus was acclaimed as Mother of God, Pope Sixtus III erected at Rome on the Esquiline Hill, a basilica dedicated to the honor of the Holy Mother of God. It was afterward called Saint Mary Major and it is the oldest church in the West dedicated to the honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary."



The *Salus Populi Romani* is one of the so-called “Luke images” of which there are many throughout the world. These are believed to have been painted from the lives of Jesus and Mary by St. Luke himself. According to the account: “After the crucifixion, when Our Lady moved to the home of St. John, she took with her a few personal belongings — among which was a table built by the Redeemer Himself in the workshop of St. Joseph. When pious virgins of Jerusalem prevailed upon St. Luke to paint a portrait of the Mother of God, it was the top of this table that was used to memorialize her image.”

“While applying his brush and paints,” it continues, “St. Luke listened carefully as the Mother of Jesus spoke of the life of her Son, facts which St. Luke later recorded in his Gospel.” The account also tells us that the painting remained in and around Jerusalem until it was discovered by St. Helena in the fourth century. “Together with other sacred relics, the painting was transported to Constantinople where her son, Emperor Constantine the Great, erected a church for its enthronement.” So this icon is, in some ways, the greatest treasure in the entire city, as it is connected back through St. Luke to Mary, and to a table made by Christ Himself. In the presence of this icon, we are able to sense the presence of the Holy Family as something close and real to us.

St. John Lateran (*photo right*) is the oldest and ranks first among the four Papal basilicas of Rome, since it is the *cathedra* or “seat” of the Bishop of Rome. For centuries, the Popes lived here. The façade has the inscription *Christo Salvatori*, “To Christ the Savior,” indicating the church’s dedication to Christ—the cathedrals of all patriarchs are dedicated to Christ Himself. As the cathedral of the Bishop of Rome, it ranks above all other churches, including St. Peter’s, and so, unlike all other Roman basilicas, it holds the title of *archbasilica*.



St. Paul’s Outside the Walls (*photo below*) is dedicated to St.

Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, who was beheaded in Rome, and contains his tomb. This very impressive church contains the images of all the Popes in little circular portraits.

Because we only have a few hours to see these historic, magnificent basilicas, we will concentrate on the meaning of each of the buildings, and the life and work of each of the saints for whom these basilicas are named.



Our farewell dinner, hosted by Dr. Robert Moynihan and Deborah Tomlinson, will be a celebratory feast, and special friends and guests of *Inside the Vatican* magazine will be joining us, bidding a fond farewell to those special people and places you will have come to know.

Thursday, December 10 – Farewell. After an early morning Mass, breakfast and last goodbyes, your driver will escort you back to the airport for your return home. Farewell to all our fellow pilgrims, our friends, until we meet again...

Not mentioned in this sketch of our itinerary are perhaps the two most important points...

1) During our days in Rome, we hope to have the chance to meet with a number of Vatican monsignors, and perhaps even an archbishop or cardinal, who will listen and respond to pilgrims' questions and concerns about the Church today, about issues of concern to Church members, and about working alongside Pope Emeritus Benedict and Pope Francis. These meetings change from pilgrimage to pilgrimage, but they are always remembered by pilgrims as special moments to be close to the Pope as he leads the Church in this difficult period of history.

2) We prefer to schedule Mass in the morning, but there is a possibility that Mass times can fluctuate due to circumstances and Vatican events. Each day we will have the opportunity to attend Mass. The Mass schedule for the Rome portion of our pilgrimage will be finalized closer to the time of our departure.

Pilgrimage Overview

Rome

- Spend 5 nights at the *Hotel Michelangelo*
- Visit the Basilica of Santo Spirito –the church St John Paul II appointed to be The Divine Mercy Sanctuary in Rome
- Private tour of St. Peter's Basilica led by Dr. Robert Moynihan
- Day trip to Manoppello to visit the shrine of the Holy Face
- Witness the opening of the Holy Door to usher in the Jubilee Year of Mercy
- Attend a Papal Mass with Pope Francis in St. Peter's Basilica for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- Dine with Dr. Robert Moynihan and special guests and friends of *Inside the Vatican* magazine
- Visit Castel Gandolfo, the Papal summer residence, and tour the Villa Gardens
- Special visits to some of our favorite places inside Vatican City
- Attend a Papal Audience as a guest of *Inside the Vatican* magazine
- Visit the 4 major Basilicas of Rome – St. Peter's, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran and St. Paul outside the Walls
- Walking tour of Baroque Rome – Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon and Piazza Navona – with Dr. Robert Moynihan



Hotel Michelangelo, steps away from St. Peter's Basilica



Cost

- \$3,995 per person – Land Package.
- \$750 additional fee for a single room
- All meals, with water and wine, are included.

Additional Information

- A deposit of \$500 is required at the time of booking by check made payable to *Inside the Vatican*.
- We require a Letter of Recommendation for this pilgrimage. This requirement is waived for all returning pilgrims.
- The number of pilgrims is limited to 15 to allow for a peaceful and personal experience.
- Dr. Robert Moynihan, CEO of *Inside the Vatican* magazine, and Deborah Tomlinson, COO of *Inside the Vatican* magazine, will accompany the pilgrims for the entire pilgrimage.
- There is an “Add-on” Retreat available at the end of this pilgrimage. The information is attached.



We will make every effort to adhere to the printed program and itinerary. On rare occasions, it may be necessary to adjust arrangements due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control (including such circumstances as the weather, airline schedule changes, hotel requisitions, political disturbances, or transportation mechanical problems). Should such adjustment be necessary, a substitution will be made to the best of our abilities.

Join Inside the Vatican for this once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage!

For more information or to reserve your spot, call 202-536-4555 or email: Pilgrimages@InsidetheVatican.com.



Inside the Vatican Magazine “Year of Mercy”

Pilgrimage

Add On – Norcia Retreat

December 10-14, 2015



Norcia and the Benedictines

Over the centuries, “Nursia” has, in the Italian language, become “Norcia.” However, it is still the same city—the heart of Benedictine monasticism. Benedict and his twin sister, Scholastica, were born here in the late 400s, at the time of the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West. So what we have in Norcia is a “link” to that ancient world which perished with Rome’s fall, but which, through the mediation of Benedict and Benedictine monasticism, came down to us through the so-called “Dark Ages” after Rome’s fall, those centuries from 500 to 1000 A.D., where civilization and learning were restricted to the little enclaves of Benedictine monasteries.

However, for the last two centuries, there has been devastation. The monastery that had flourished for a millennium was closed under the secularizing Napoleonic legislation introduced into Italy two centuries ago, in 1810. So, for 200 years, there were no monks here.

It seemed as if the link with the past had been broken. However, all of that changed with Father Cassian Folsom, an American Benedictine, who has been a friend since 1990. Father Cassian went to Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Emeritus Benedict) in the 1990s, saying that he sensed a vocation to re-found the Benedictine monastery in Norcia, and Cardinal Ratzinger encouraged him to do so. And so he came to Norcia with two companions, and by themselves, with no help, they brought the ancient monastery back to life. What they were doing raised eyebrows, but, bit by bit, other young men came to join them.

Today, there are 18 monks in Norcia, and Father Cassian is gaining a worldwide reputation for his humble zeal in restoring the faith. We will have a chance to talk to him directly, and, if desired, to go to confession to him or to another one of the priests. Then we will attend the Mass celebrated by the monks in their chapel. You may also join them as they chant their prayers each morning and evening in the crypt church.

Ancient Wisdom Continues in the Sibillini Mountains



The ancient village of Castelluccio, perched atop a hill rising from a vast plain surrounded by mountain peaks inside the Sibillini Mountain National Park, is a place forgotten by time. The mists often cover the valleys, but not the village itself. We will visit Castelluccio during our retreat in Norcia.

The region around Norcia, in central Italy, is filled with rugged mountains – the Sibillini Mountains – and steep valleys. This makes it a perfect area for hiking and breathing the fresh, clean air, far from the crowded cities of Italy and the rest of Europe – the perfect place for a retreat after our days in Rome.

This area of Italy is known for its ancient wisdom. After Christian monasticism began to flourish in the desert areas of Egypt, and then of Syria — in the Christian east — during the 300s and especially during the 400s, some monks gradually began to travel westward to Italy and southern France.

In the time of St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.), in the decades just before the birth of St. Benedict in 480 A.D., the valleys around Norcia began to be populated by dozens of these monks. Many were hermits, living a solitary life. Others lived in more or less interconnected small groups, which provided an early model for what would become the communal life of St. Benedict’s monks.



Palazzo Seneca

Over the centuries, this eastern monastic experience was transferred to central Italy, influenced first Benedict himself, and then many others. But what is little known is that there is also a new flourishing of hermitic monastic life in the region outside of Norcia, in the valleys and on the mountain slopes of the Sibillini Mountains. No one knows exactly how many hermits are living there; some claim hundreds. All that is known is that these hills and valleys have become, once again, a “vineyard of the Lord,” where many seek to grow closer to God through a disciplined life of prayer and reflection.

We hope to breathe in this ancient wisdom during our days in Norcia. The Palazzo Seneca (*photo left*) will be our home in Norcia for 3 nights, and is only 50 yards from the main piazza where the Benedictines celebrate Mass. The palace that houses Palazzo Seneca was originally built in the 16th century and was completely renovated a few years ago.



Our dinners in Norcia are enjoyed in front of this wood-burning grill.

A spa and cooking school are just two of the impressive amenities. Quiet time in the Palazzo can be spent sitting in the beautiful library, or in the garden room with a cup of afternoon tea or cappuccino. The family-owned hotel is sophisticated, simple and luxurious, which is why it was awarded the prestigious *Relais & Châteaux* award — an exclusive honor recognizing the finest hotels and gourmet restaurants in 55 countries around the world.

Norcia Retreat Overview

Norcia

- 3 nights at the Palazzo Seneca
- Meet the Benedictine Monks of Norcia and tour the Basilica of San Benedetto built over the birthplace of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica.
- Private Mass with monks and confession
- Spiritual Reflections with Fr. Cassian
- Lauds and Vespers with the monks (optional)
- Visit Castelluccio and surrounding area of Norcia
- Tour the monks' *Birra Nursia* Brewery

Rome

- 1 night at the Rome Airport Hilton

Cost

- \$2,700 per person – Land Package
- No single supplement
- All meals are included

Additional Information

- Departure – You will depart from the Rome Airport Hilton. All flights to the U.S. depart from Terminal 5. Although the Airport Hilton is connected to the airport by a covered walkway, it is not connected to Terminal 5. Therefore, you will take the free shuttle from the Rome Airport Hilton to Terminal 5 for your flight home.
- The number of pilgrims is limited to 15 to allow for an unhurried, reflective, peaceful experience.
- Minimum number of pilgrims is 10.



Terms & Conditions

“Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage – December 4 - 10, 2015

“Add-on” Pilgrimage – December 10 - 14, 2015

Rates and Payments: Rates are based on the applicable rates in place as of September 1, 2015. Cost for the “Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage is \$3,995.00. Single Supplement cost is \$750.00 per person. Cost for the “Add-on” Pilgrimage is \$2,700.00. No Single Supplement.

1st Payment: \$500.00 — Deposit due at time of booking. **Note: This deposit is non-refundable**

2nd Payment: \$3,495.00 — “Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage Due Monday, October 5, 2015 **Note: Add \$750.00 Single Supplement, if applicable.**
(If applicable) \$2,700.00 — “Add-on” Pilgrimage Due Monday, October 5, 2015 **Note: No Single Supplement.**

Reservations and Payment Schedule: A \$500 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of booking. Balance is due 60 days prior to departure. If your reservation is received less than 60 days prior to departure, then full payment is due at the time of booking.

Transfers: Although individual transfers from the airport are included, it is the responsibility of the participant to notify Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages of any flight delays. If your flight is late or rescheduled and you have not notified Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages, the transfer from the airport is the participant’s responsibility. Group transfers to the airport upon departure are included. Individual transfers to the airport upon departure are not included in this package. Although Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages can book an individual transfer to the airport, if requested, the participant is financially responsible for such individual transfer.

Air Schedule: Land Package participants are responsible for purchasing their own air flights to arrive in Rome on December 5, 2015 and depart on December 10, 2015. If a participant’s flight arrives late or is rescheduled, it is the participant’s responsibility to notify Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages of such air schedule changes.

Travel Documents: A valid passport is required for travel to Italy and **must remain valid until at least 6 months after your departure date from the United States.**

Unused Services: There will be **no refund** for any unused portions of the pilgrimage. Refunds will not be made to participants who miss any part of the pilgrimage for any cause whatsoever.

Itinerary: Although Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages and its agents and representatives will make every effort to adhere to the printed program and itinerary, on rare occasions it may be necessary to adjust arrangements due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control (including, but not limited to, such circumstances as the weather, airline schedule changes, hotel requisitions, political disturbances, or transportation mechanical problems). Should such adjustments be necessary, substitutions will be made to the best of our abilities. A refund will not be given. Any additional costs necessitated by such changes are the full responsibility of the participant. We do not guarantee entrance into Papal events/Masses or preferred seating at these events, due to circumstances beyond our control such as, but not limited to, long security lines, fewer seats available than the actual number of tickets distributed, etc.

Final Package: A final package containing documents, local contact information, a pilgrim book, and travel tips will be mailed to each participant about two weeks prior to departure.

Participation: Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages reserves the right to decline, accept, remove or retain any participant on any of its pilgrimages if, in its sole discretion, it deems accepting or retaining any such participant might be detrimental to the pilgrimage. In addition, all participants must adhere to the rules of the State of Vatican City. In the event any participant is removed from a pilgrimage, Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages is not obligated to refund to such person that portion of the payment allocable to unused services.

Insurance: Travel insurance is not included in this packet, but it is strongly recommended.

Cancellations and Refunds: Cancellations must be received in writing and will be processed according to the date the written notice is received. Although a verbal cancellation is also appreciated, it will not be accepted as official notice. Please mail the cancellation notice to the address below. If you purchase travel insurance, the travel insurance may cover the remaining amount depending on the circumstances of the cancellation and on the conditions of the policy. Check with your travel insurance provider, if applicable. Monies will be refunded, minus the **cancellation fee, as follows:**

- 60 days prior to departure: \$500.00 deposit
- 59 to 30 days prior to departure: \$500 deposit and 50% of total cost*
- 29 days or less prior to departure: 100% of total cost*

*Cost includes: Land Package and single supplement, if applicable.

Private Rooms and Single Supplement: A limited number of single rooms are available at the single supplement rate. If the allotted number of single rooms is booked, any additional single rooms that can be booked subsequently may incur an additional fee.

U.S. State Department & Other Agencies: From time to time the U.S. State Department (www.state.gov) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) and other government agencies and departments issue travel advisories or warnings. These may apply to one or more of the destinations you may be visiting on the pilgrimage. We encourage you to contact these agencies directly to obtain the most current information. Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages cannot change the cancellation terms or conditions based on the issuance of any such warning or advisory or the occurrence of any terrorism, acts of war, health, or other incident in one or more of the places this pilgrimage is scheduled to visit.

Photography: Agents of Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages may take photographs or videos of its trips and trip participants. Participants grant Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages permission to do so and allow Inside The Vatican Pilgrimages to use such photos and videos for promotional or commercial use. These photos will be available on our photo website InsideTheVaticanPhotos.com following the pilgrimage. A minimum fee is required to download all photos from the December 2015 “Jubilee Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage gallery.

Tour Cancellation By Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages: On rare occasions a pilgrimage may have to be cancelled due to lack of participation. In such a case, Inside the Vatican Pilgrimages’ sole responsibility is to provide a full refund, including the deposit.

Letter of Recommendation: Due to the restricted private areas to which we may have access during our pilgrimage, participants may be asked to provide a letter of recommendation from their bishop or pastor, on his official Church stationery, with official embossed parish/diocesan seal. If this is requested, we will provide a sample letter of recommendation which lists our requirements. This letter must be received within 30 days after receipt of your deposit, but no later than 30 days prior to departure. In the event that you have difficulty obtaining the letter, please contact us. However, if we request a letter of recommendation but none can be arranged, your reservation, regrettably, will have to be cancelled, and the cancellation policy will apply. Travel Insurance will not cover this type of cancellation.



Letter of Recommendation

Due to the restricted private areas to which we may have access during our pilgrimage, all participants must provide a letter of recommendation from his or her bishop or pastor, on official church stationery, with an official embossed parish/diocesan seal.

This letter must be received within 30 days after receipt of deposit, but no later than 30 days prior to departure.

In the event that this letter is not obtainable, please contact us. However, if no letter of recommendation can be arranged, your reservation, regrettably, will have to be cancelled, and the cancellation policy will then apply. *This type of cancellation is not covered by the travel insurance.*

Returning pilgrims are not required to provide a letter of recommendation.

A Sample Letter: (letter must be on official parish/diocesan stationery, with the embossed parish/diocesan seal, signed by the pastor/bishop)

September 28, 2015

Dear Deborah,

I have known John/Jane Doe for X years. I understand that they would like to join the Inside the Vatican pilgrimage to Rome and the Vatican. I understand that he/she/they may have access to restricted private areas inside Vatican City. From my encounters with John/Jane, I have every reason to believe that he/she/they will act in a discreet and proper manner befitting the privilege of being a guest inside Vatican City. Therefore, I can recommend that he/she/they join your pilgrimage.

Sincerely,

Father John Smith

Mail letter to:

Theresa Norris
Inside the Vatican magazine
14 W Main Street
Front Royal VA 22630



Registration Form

I will attend:

- “Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage–December 4 – 10, 2015
 “Add-on” Pilgrimage–December 10 – 14, 2015

Name as it appears on your passport: (*Enclose a copy of the picture page of your passport with this form.*)

_____ Name you prefer _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Home Number _____ Office _____ Cell _____

Fax _____ Email _____

Passport Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Date and Place of birth: (*Required by hotels in Italy and Vatican City*)

Hotel Accommodation: Single Double/Twin Triple Matrimonial

Name of Roommate _____

Dietary Restrictions _____

Physical Limitations: (Please note any physical limitations or medical conditions that will impede you from walking long distances, standing, or climbing stairs.) Do You Use: walker cane

Emergency Contact _____ Relationship _____

Contact Numbers _____

I have received and read the Terms and Conditions for the **December 4 - 10, 2015** “Jubilee Year of Mercy” – **December 10 – 14, 2015** “Add-on” Pilgrimage. By payment of my deposit, I accept and agree to all of the Terms and Conditions. I also agree that *Inside The Vatican* cannot be held liable for any injury or injuries sustained during the pilgrimage.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Witness (*a non-family member*) _____

Witness (*print name*) _____