



Christ Church Charlotte
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

and



Instruments of Peace: A St. Francis Pilgrimage
Christ Church Charlotte
October 1-12, 2024
Optional Rome Extension: October 12-15, 2024

Francis of Assisi is remembered as a peacemaker for his love of the whole creation, his ministry of service, and work for church reform. This pilgrimage will explore these themes of St. Francis' life and ministry, along with his counterpart St. Clare, and consider how we experience inward peace and build a more peaceable world. Begin by understanding the medieval world of Francis and Clare with a visit to Florence where you'll learn about the medieval history of the city and take in its fantastic collection of European art. This learning continues with a short visit to the charming Tuscan hill town of San Gimignano before continuing to the hills outside of Assisi where we'll stay for the duration of the pilgrimage. Here we focus on Sts. Francis and Clare by visiting sites connected to their ministries and taking in the natural bounty of the Umbrian countryside through eating local food, short walks in nature, and visiting producers of wine, cheese, and other agricultural products. Those wishing to extend their trip have the option of spending additional time in Rome before returning to the United States.

Itinerary found below. Prices available soon (airfare not available until November 2023)

Tuesday, October 1, 2024 | Departure

Participants depart Charlotte for an overnight flight to Florence or Rome.

Wednesday, October 2, 2024 | Arrival, transfer to Florence

Participants arrive in Florence or Rome and meet their private coach for a transfer to their hotel in Florence. After settling in, the group will gather for opening reflections before dinner (included). Overnight accommodations within walking distance of central Florence.

Thursday, October 3, 2024 | Guided day in Florence

Today will orient you to the key sites and museums of Florence with an expert local guide. Begin the morning with a **walking tour** to help familiarize you with the city and its rich history. The tour includes the **Duomo** (Cathedral of Santa Maria de Fiore, exterior only) and a short visit to the **Accademia Gallery** housing the famous “David” sculpture by Michaelangelo. The walking tour concludes in Florence’s **Central Market** where you can enjoy lunch (on your own). After lunch we will reconvene for a guided tour of the **Bargello Museum**. Your guide will bring expertise in art history, making the development of art come to life in the sculptures and statues of the museum. In the evening enjoy dinner (on your own) in any of Florence’s excellent restaurants. Overnight in Florence.

Friday, October 4, 2024 | Uffizi Gallery and free afternoon

The **Uffizi** is one of the most impressive museums in Europe with a collection of over 1500 works of art displayed in a historic property. A guide will help orient you to the highlights of the museum then you will have free time to explore its galleries at your leisure. The rest of the day is free for you to explore the museums, shops, and eateries of Florence. Lunch and dinner are on your own. Overnight in Florence.

Saturday, October 5, 2024 | Winery Visit and San Gimignano

This morning we will depart Florence and head for the Tuscan hills. After a visit and tasting at a local **winery**, we will arrive in the Tuscan hilltown of San Gimignano. The town was an important pilgrimage stopover during medieval times and is a scenic resting stop for modern pilgrims and tourists. After a visit to the remains of a **12th century pilgrim shelter** and the **cathedral** in the town square, you’ll be free to explore on your own. Dinner (on your own) and overnight in San Gimignano.

Sunday, October 6, 2024 | Worship in San Gimignano

Enjoy a leisurely start to the day in San Gimignano before the 11am English-language mass at the **Convent of St. Augustine** where you can also take in the magnificent frescoes depicting the life of the eponymous saint. After worship and lunch (on your own), we will depart San Gimignano to our accommodations at an agriturismo near Assisi where we'll stay for the duration of the pilgrimage. Dinner (included) and overnight at Incantico Agriturismo.

Monday, October 7, 2024 | Assisi: Calling

For our time near Assisi, we will begin each day with morning worship and a conversation around key themes in the life and ministry of St. Francis and St. Clare. Today provides an introduction to their lives and call to the monastic life. We explore these themes further with visits to the **San Damiano Church** where Francis first heard God call him to "Go and repair my church." The church later became the convent for Clare and her young order of nuns. After lunch (included), we will end with a visit to the **Basilica of St. Clare** and free time in Assisi's charming historic center. In the evening, return to Incantico for dinner (included) and overnight accommodations.

Tuesday, October 8, 2024 | Assisi: Simplicity and Service

Francis and Clare committed themselves to lives of radical simplicity and service to others. In the morning we will explore these themes together both in their historical context and as they relate to our lives today. In the late morning we will visit the **Basilica of Rivotorto**, in the valley just below Assisi, where Francis and his early followers lived together in poverty and walked to the nearby hospitals to serve the lepers. After lunch (included) we will follow in their footsteps, walking 2km through the countryside to the churches of **San Rufino d'Arce** and **Mary Maddelena**. Here we will have an opportunity to visit with the Franciscan Missionary **Sisters of Susa** to learn how they are carrying out the mission of St. Francis today. In the late afternoon, return to Incantico for dinner (included) and overnight accommodations.

Wednesday, October 9, 2024 | Umbria: Connection to Creation

Francis is remembered for his connection with the natural world including his ability to converse with animals. After exploring these themes together in the morning, we will experience the bounty of the Umbrian countryside with a combination of short walks and **visits to local growers** and producers of agricultural products such as olive oil, cheese, fruits and vegetables. In the late afternoon, return to Incantico for dinner (included) and overnight accommodations.

Thursday, October 10, 2024 | Assisi: Innovation and Reform

Francis is often regarded as a reformer of the medieval Roman church; however he also sought Rome's blessing and received their financial support for his ministry. Today we will explore themes of reform and consider how we embrace personal change or press for institutional change in our world today. We will visit the **Basilica of St. Mary and the Angels** just outside Assisi. The large cathedral encloses a small stone chapel built by Francis during his life. From here we will walk the 3km brick-paved pilgrim path to the massive, ornate **Basilica of St. Francis** where he is buried. The Basilica is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to an incredible collection of 13th and 14th century frescos. After we finish at the Basilica, we'll have lunch together (included) and visit a site in Assisi that far predates St. Francis: the pagan **Roman temple of Minerva**, now a Christian church. Here we can further reflect on how faith and culture are constantly reforming and adapting. In the late afternoon, return to Incantico for dinner (included) and overnight accommodations.

Friday, October 11, 2024 | TBD

Today is a free day, and participants will have several options to choose from for their free time including returning to Assisi to explore and shop, enjoying the scenery and amenities of Incantico, hiking nearby, visiting local producers of wine or foodstuffs. In the evening, we will gather for a closing ceremony before or after dinner at Incantico. Overnight at Incantico.

Saturday, October 12, 2024 | Return Home or extend your visit in Rome

We will depart Incantico in the morning headed for Rome and your return flight to Charlotte. The itinerary for the extension in Rome continues below.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION BEGINS HERE

Saturday, October 12, 2024 | Vatican City

After dropping the group at the airport, those continuing on will head into the center of Rome for a guided visit in Vatican City including the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica with free time in the Vatican museums and gardens. Dinner (on your own) and overnight in Rome.

Sunday, October 13, 2024 | Palatine Hill, Forum, Colosseum, St. Clement Basilica

We begin by exploring the ruins of ancient Rome including the Roman Forum, Palatine Hill, and the Colosseum with a local guide. Close the day by considering the early church in Rome with a visit to the St. Clement Basilica

where Christian worship dates to the 4th century. Dinner (on your own) and overnight in Rome.

Monday, October 14, 2024 | Catacombs and Free Time

This morning, we will consider the life of early Christians in Rome with a visit to the Catacombs of Domitilla including an ancient church, a 2nd century fresco of the Last Supper, and ancient Christian burial places. In the afternoon, enjoy free time to explore Rome on your own. A closing dinner at the hotel is included along with overnight accommodations in Rome.

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 | Return Home

Pilgrims who have extended their trip to Rome will have a private transfer to the airport for their return flight to Charlotte.