

15 Day Grand Tour of Italy & Sicily
visiting Palermo, Sciacca, Agrigento, Siracusa,
Taormina, Praia a Mare, Rome, Siena, Florence, Padua & Veince



Spiritual Director
Msgr. Philip J. Franceschini

October 15 – 29, 2007

Mon, Oct 15th: New York/Rome

Depart Newark airport on your overnight flight to Rome. Dinner served in flight.

Tue, Oct 16th: Rome

Upon arrival in **Rome** we are transferred to our hotel. Free day. (D)

Wed, Oct 17th: Rome – **Papal Audience**/Cruise - This morning we go to St. Peter's Square for our Papal Audience (provided the Holy Father is in residence). After our audience, we depart to the port of Rome for our overnight cruise to Palermo. (B,D)

Thu, Oct 18th: Palermo/Sciacca

Upon arrival in the port of **Palermo** we are met by our driver for our visit of the famous **Benedictine Abbey of Monreale**. Situated on the slopes of Mount Caputo about four miles south of Palermo, Monreale overlooks the Conca d'Oro, the beautiful valley beyond Palermo. The 12th c. Cathedral houses fine mosaics representing a complete cycle of the Old and New Testaments, and the Cloisters. Monreale is world-renowned for its dazzling mixture of Arab, Byzantine and Norman artistic styles framed by traditional Romanesque architecture. The beautiful mosaics in Monreale Cathedral are said to be one of the world's largest displays of this art, surpassed only by Istanbul's Basilica of Saint Sofia. Monreale's mosaics cover every inch of the vast interior - more surface than the Church of Saint Mark in Venice. We continue to Monte Pellegrino, a promontory that overlooks Palermo's bay. Here we visit the **Sanctuary of Santa Rosalia**, Palermo's patron saint. After our visit, we depart to **Sciacca**. Looking to the sea and dominated by Monte San Calogero on its east side, Sciacca has the oldest terme baths of Sicily and one of the biggest towns on the southeast coast. Upon arrival we check into our hotel. (B,D)

Fri, Oct 19th: Sciacca

This morning we depart to Mount Kronos to visit the of **Basilica of San Calogero**. After Mass, we visit the caves which are named for a monk who realized that the vapors could treat several diseases. He provided the area with stone benches for sick people. The largest cave is la Grotta del Santo (the saint's cave), where San Calogero probably lived, l'Antro di Dedalo (Daedalus's cave) and la Grotta degli Animali (The Animals' cave). Today the caves are part of the modern establishment of the Grande Albergo delle Stufe. The geysers originate from an underground hot water spring flowing beneath Mount Kronio. We return to Sciacca for free day in this seaside city. Visit the potters' shops along the main street for original works by the local people. Or, walk down to the seashore to see the colorful fishing boats. Don't forget your bathing suit! (B,D)

Sat, Oct 20th: Sciacca/Agrigento/Siracusa

This morning we depart to Siracusa. En route we visit the archeological area known as **the Valley of the Temples** — one of the world's most important archeological sites. We have a guided tour of the valley and the temples. After our tour we journey across the central part of Sicily. Along the way we pass Enna a hillside town in the very heart of Sicily. Upon arrival in Siracusa, we visit the **Basilica of Madonna delle Lacrime** which holds the plaque of Our Lady of the Tears. From August 29 to September 1, 1953, a plaster plaque of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, placed over the headboard of the bed of a young couple, Angelo Iannuso and Antonina Giusto, shed human tears. The phenomenon took place at intervals inside and outside of the house. Many saw, touched, gathered and tasted the salt of those tears. (B,D)

Sun, Oct 21st : Siracusa/Taormina

After Mass we have a free morning to visit Siracusa. **Siracusa** is a wonderful city where historic cultures are evident in the narrow streets and lovely courtyards of the old houses. It is the birthplace of Archimedes and, at one time, it rivaled Athens as the most important city of the Greek world. This morning we visit the **Church of St. John the Baptist**. It is the oldest church in the West, second in age only to its Eastern counterpart located in Antioch, Turkey. In its crypt, **Saints Paul and Luke were said to have preached to the Christian community**. In the ruins of the church wedding ceremonies are regularly conducted today. We have free time for lunch (on our own) on Ortiga Island before continuing to Taormina. Upon arrival in Taormina, we are free to enjoy Sicily's most famous resort. Wander through the tiny streets and alleyways. This is the city of the "jet set" and the shops and boutiques reflect this. Stop for espresso at a sidewalk café. Sit in the Square which overlooks Mt. Etna, and watch the world go by. (B,D)

Mon, Oct 22nd: Taormina/Praia a Mare

Today we travel to Messina to board our ferry to Villa San Giovanni. Once boarded, we are free to go to the upper deck and take in the beauty of the bay and the coasts of Calabria and Sicily. Arriving in Calabria we start our journey up the western coast of Italy to the beautiful resort of **Praia a Mare**. (B,D)

Tue, Oct 23rd: Praia a Mare/Rome

Morning departure to Rome. Today we continue our journey up the western coast of Italy. Leaving Calabria, we travel through the regions of Campania and Lazio. Upon arrival in **Rome** we are transferred to our hotel. Remainder of the day is free. (B,D)

Wed, Oct 24th: **Tour of Rome**

This morning we have a **Tour of Rome** including the Roman Forum, the Coliseum, the Monument to Victor Emmanuel, Piazza Navona, the Pantheon and the Trevi Fountain. Remainder of the day is free to enjoy Rome on our own. (B,D)

Thu, Oct 25th: Rome/Siena/Florence

Morning departure to **Florence**. En route we stop in Siena to visit the Duomo where we see the head of St. Catherine of Siena. Next we visit the convent of St. Catherine before continuing to the Piazza del Campo where the world famous Palio, is held every July. After our visit, we continue to Florence. (B,D)

Fri, Oct 26th: Florence/Padua

This morning we have a tour of the city's priceless treasures including the Piazza del Duomo, center of religious life in medieval Florence. We see the Baptistery with its' masterfully crafted bronze doors – Michelangelo declared them the "Gates of Paradise." Next to the Academy to see Michelangelo's David. We also visit the Basilica of Santa Croce, burial place of Michelangelo, Galileo and Machiavelli. After our visit we continue to **Padua** to visit the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua where we have Mass near the **Tomb of St. Anthony**. (B,D)

Sat, Oct 27th: Venice

Today we have a full day tour of **Venice**. Upon arrival in Venice we take a short cruise along the Grand Canal to St. Marks Square. At St. Marks we are met by our guide for our walking tour of Venice including St. Marks Square where we see the Clock Tower with its famous Moors. We visit St. Marks Basilica with its Byzantine and European architectural styles and dazzling mosaics. We stop to pray at the **Tomb of St. Mark** before continuing our tour. After our tour, we have free time for lunch (on our own) and shopping before our motor launch meets us to take us across the canals to Santa Lucia. Here we visit the Church of St. Geremia and St. Lucy to view the body of **St. Lucy**. We have free time before our dinner at **Trattoria Povoledo in Santa Lucia**. After our dinner we return to Padua. (B,D)

Sun, Oct 28th: Padua/Rome

Morning departure to Rome. This evening we have a Farewell Dinner at **Da Meo Patacca**. (B,D)

Mon, Oct 29th: Rome/USA

Morning departure to Rome airport for our return flight to the USA . (B)

Tour Price: \$ 3,250.00 per person Double & Triple Single Sup \$ 650.00

Tour Includes: Air Fare from New York, Four Star Hotels, Deluxe Motorcoach, Sightseeing as per itinerary, Breakfast & Dinner Daily, Daily Mass and Rosary, Porterage (one piece of luggage) at hotels, Taxes and Service Charges.