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**Treasures of Italy & Sicily - Itinerary**  
**Mount Vernon Nazarene University**  
**Hosted by Professor John Donnelly**  
**February 22 - March 7, 2025**

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\*MAIN DEPARTURE CITY: Columbus, OH

## ITINERARY

### **Sat. 2/22 - DAY 1 DEPARTURE FROM THE USA**

We meet at a gateway city in the US and depart for Italy. Meals will be served aloft.

### **Sun. 2/23 - DAY 2 MILAN – PADUA – VENICE (or VENICE – PADUA TBD)**

Welcome to Milan **OR** Venice (TBD) where we'll be welcomed by our tour director at the airport. If we land in Milan, enjoy a walking tour, depending on arrival time. We drive east to Padua to begin our exploration of Italy with a visit to the *Scrovegni Chapel* to admire Giotto's moving frescos adorning its walls and ceiling. Afterwards, we proceed to our Venice area hotel for dinner and overnight. (Hotel TBD)

### **Mon. 2/24 - DAY 3 VENICE**

An expert local guide introduces us to the treasures of Venice. Admire the Doges' Palace, the Bridge of Sighs, explore bustling Piazza San Marco and visit beautiful *St. Mark's Basilica*. After lunch, visit the island of *Murano* Glass Factory for a glass-blowing exhibit. In the afternoon, take an included *gondola ride*. We return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

### **Tue. 2/24 - DAY 4 VENICE - BOLOGNA - FLORENCE**

Lush Tuscan vineyards and olive groves surround us as we travel to Bologna, the food capital of Italy. Originally an Etruscan city, Bologna has had traces of civilization since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. On our free time for lunch, see the church of Saint Petronio and Bologna's medieval towers. Continue to Florence in the heart of Tuscany for the evening. Join our tour director on an evening walking tour to get better acquainted with the Tuscan capital. Dinner and overnight in Florence. (Hotel TBD)

### **Wed. 2/26 - DAY 5 FLORENCE**

In the morning enjoy a guided sightseeing tour of Renaissance Florence, once an important center of artistic patronage under the Medici. We'll see some of the city's Renaissance gems including Giotto's Bell Tower, the Church of Santa Croce, the Baptistery, and Piazza della Signoria. Included are visits to the *Duomo*, the *Galleria dell'Accademia* to admire Michelangelo's "David." The afternoon includes a guided tour visit of the *Uffizi Gallery*. In our free time stroll across the Ponte Vecchio for views of the Arno River. Dinner and overnight in Florence. (Hotel TBD)

### **Thu. 2/27 - DAY 6 FLORENCE - ASSISI**

Drive to Assisi for a visit to the *Basilica of St. Francis* to see its remarkable collection of frescoes by Giotto depicting 28 scenes in the life of the saint. Other sites include the Basilica of Santa Chiara, the Piazza del Comune, the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. After dinner explore the streets of this medieval town. Dinner and overnight in Assisi. (Hotel TBD)

### **Fri. 2/28 - DAY 7 ASSISI - ROME**

In the morning we journey to Rome, the *Eternal City*, where we will discover the city's ancient treasures with our expert local guide. Visit some of the treasures of ancient Rome. Included are the Arch of Constantine, the Circus Maximus, and Capitoline Hill. Visit the sprawling *Roman Forum*, once the commercial, political, and religious center of life in ancient Rome, and the mighty *Colosseum* which once held as many as 55,000 spectators. Sightseeing ends as we visit the *Church of St. Peter in Chains* to see Michelangelo's powerful Moses. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (Hotel TBD)

### **Sat. 3/1 - DAY 8 ROME**

This morning's guided tour highlights the wonders of Vatican City, the center of Roman Catholicism. Included are visits to *St. Peter's Basilica* to see Michelangelo's moving "Pieta," the lavishly decorated *Sistine Chapel* with Michelangelo's superbly painted ceiling and the *Vatican Museum* to see its collection of Greek, Roman and Etruscan antiquities. The afternoon is ours for sightseeing the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, Piazza Navona, Spanish Steps, and souvenir shopping, **OR** enjoy an optional excursion to the ancient catacombs of Saint Callixtus, the fascinating underground burial chambers of Roman Christians, the Papal Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls and the Abbey of the Three Fountains The optional excursion, led by Dr. Jeanne Serrao, will cost \$55 per participant. Dinner and overnight in Rome.

### **Sun. 3/2 - DAY 9 ROME**

Enjoy a free day exploring Rome on our own, enjoy shopping **OR** some may wish to visit several of the most important art museums and basilicas in the area or see the Pantheon, Piazza Navona, Trevi fountain, Spanish Steps. Dinner and overnight in Rome.

**Mon. 3/3 - DAY 10 ROME - POMPEII - SORRENTO**

Follow the Highway of the Sun to ancient *Pompeii* for a guided tour of the city's well-preserved treasures once buried beneath the ashes and lava of Mount Vesuvius. This includes visiting the *Villa of the Mysteries*. Later, we take a scenic drive around the azure bay of Naples leading to Sorrento's magical cliffside setting. Dinner and overnight in Sorrento. (Hotel TBD)

**Tue. 3/4 - DAY 11 SORRENTO - REGGIO CALABRIA - FERRY TO MESSINA - TAORMINA**

Drive to Reggio Calabria to board the ferry crossing to Messina in Sicily, where Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Saracens, and Normans have all left their marks through the ages. We proceed to the hilltop town of Taormina on the east coast of Sicily. It sits near Mount Etna, an active volcano with trails leading to the summit. Dinner and overnight in Taormina. (Hotel TBD)

**Wed. 3/5 - DAY 12 TAORMINA - SIRACUSA - TAORMINA**

Sightseeing of Taormina's Roman and Greek remains includes a visit to the *Greek Amphitheatre* dating from the 3rd century B.C. Then drive to the former Greek colony of Siracusa to visit the *Ear of Dionysius*, the *Greek Theatre*, and the *Roman Amphitheatre*. Dinner and overnight in Taormina.

**Thu. 3/6 - DAY 13 TAORMINA - PALERMO**

Journey to Palermo where guided sightseeing of the Sicilian capital reveals the Quattro Canti, the Piazza Pretoria, and the Piazza Bellini. Included are visits to the city's 12th-century Sicilian Norman-style *Cathedral* and the magnificent *Palace of the Normans*. Dinner and overnight in Palermo. (Hotel TBD)

**Fri. 3/7 - DAY 14 DEPARTURE FOR THE USA**

Drive to the airport to board our return flight to the United States.

*\*For passengers not departing from Columbus, Ohio, this cost may vary. Please email [Prof. John Donnelly](mailto:Prof. John Donnelly) or call (740) 501-2172 for more information.*