

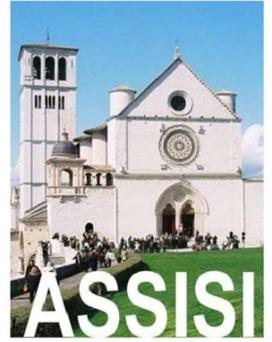


Pilgrimage/Holiday

Saturday 21st November 2026

through to

Saturday 28th November 2026



PRICE PER PERSON

£1,295 in a shared room (twin or double) : **£1,645** in a single room

£500 non-refundable deposit is required immediately on booking to secure a place

The price includes

Coach travel in Italy from and to Ciampino airport and the return journey between Rome and Assisi.
(For Leicester/Nottingham pilgrims return travel (Syston - Stansted) is also included.

7 nights bed, breakfast and evening meals in both Rome and Assisi plus
an optional guided itinerary, walking the streets of Rome and introduction to Assisi.

The price does not include:

Drinks, snacks and personal expenses during the days of our pilgrimage.

City Tax. Optional coach or taxi fare if additional trips are arranged.

Travel Insurance which is the responsibility and a condition for each person travelling with us.
and it is very important that this is arranged immediately you book with us and pay your deposit

DEPOSITS AND BOOKING YOUR PLACE

Booking forms and non-refundable **£500** deposits are required

Immediately after confirming that a place has been reserved.

Places may still be available after we have booked for the first groups,
but please note that the above cost may be adjusted if needed to allow for increase in air fares.
especially now in light of rising fuel costs caused by the war.

Our Watermead pilgrimages to centres around Italy, France, Malta, etc. were previously arranged and led by Fr John Daley (spiritual leader of the Watermead Apostolate), but when he became ill and unable to travel it was necessary for someone to honour the arrangements made for taking pilgrims and so I guided the groups in his place. I might not have Fr John's booming voice to help people, but I do know well many of the streets and churches of Rome (and Assisi) having helped on these pilgrimages for well over 30 years. As far as I can count, I have been to Rome nearly 60 times and Assisi around 15 times, so know the cities and streets better than I know my own hometown of Leicester. There will also be some in this year's November group who have travelled with us before several times and who I'm sure will be able to advise and assist new pilgrims.

We did consider not continuing these pilgrimages when Fr John died in 2024, but we do have many contacts in the various destinations, secured by his friendliness with them over the years, and it seemed to keep the pilgrimages going would honour what was part of his legacy to us.

Our November 2026 pilgrimage group will be around 40 in number and at present pilgrims are from Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Liverpool and Scotland. Air travel is from Stansted and Manchester airports. Airport travel for Leicester and Nottingham pilgrims will be by coach from Syston, with the pick-up point notified later. Those flying from Manchester will be making their own airport travel arrangements and Liverpool pilgrims are advised to liaise their travel with Pat Murphy.

HOTELS AND MEALS

The hotels we use in both Rome and Assisi are the same as we have used in previous years and are perfectly placed for walking and exploring the two cities. We are usually treated as a special group thanks to Fr John's friendship with the owners over the years and the rates we pay for our groups' accommodation does usually reflect this.

The Hotel Della Conciliazione, Via Borgo Pio 163, 166 Roma, Italy

The Hotel Windsor Savoia, Viale Guglielmo Marconi 1, 06081, Assisi (PG), Italy.

In *Assisi* breakfast and evening meal will be provided by the hotel restaurant and in *Rome* the hotel provides only our breakfast (which is usually excellent), with our evening meals arranged at the restaurant that became Fr John's favourite over the years. This restaurant, *Da Marcello's*, has changed hands since 2019 but during the last few years the new owners, also friends, still treat us very well. The arranged breakfast and evening meal each day is included in the price of the pilgrimage holiday, as are the tips which are customary to all pilgrimages we arrange. The menu in *Assisi* is usually set but with good choice (vegetarians catered for) and in *Rome* we shall be ordering from the restaurant's available tourist menu, which I usually manage to tweak according to the group's requirements.

You can find links to both hotels on our Watermead website (<https://www.watermead-apostolate.co.uk/pilgrimages>) or search the internet to view. Rooms at both are en-suite and provide towels, hair dryers and complimentary toiletries (although most like to take their own) and TV's.

Each hotel now asks individuals to pay a city tax, which is expected at the end of the stay and I shall advise you of the cost before we travel. (We did previously include this in the price, but last year the Rome hotel charged people as they returned their key card and I then had to obtain refunds – all very confusing and time-consuming, so we think best people pay this themselves).

UK TRAVEL

For those travelling from Leicester and Nottingham, note that we shall leave Syston for Stansted airport during the very early hours of Saturday morning (pick-up to be advised) and, as with previous years, we hope to have the possibility to park a limited number of cars for the week. Those travelling from Manchester airport will be making their own arrangements and should liaise with Pat.

AIRLINE

At present the air ticket price and timetable is arranged through Ryanair, with both groups arriving at Ciampino airport, Rome, mid-morning, and onward travel (a mixture of small coach and taxis) arranged to arrive at our Rome hotel around lunchtime.

Ryanair uses digital boarding passes and access to these will be confirmed nearer the day of travel, dependent on the airline's instructions at that time. Last year we were able to send our travellers a photograph of their digital boarding passes, so that they could travel without using the Ryanair required App. For this reason it is helpful, but not essential, if people travelling with us do bring a (smart) mobile phone, which is able to download and display images.

ROME DAYS

Our Rome hotel is very well placed for visiting the *Vatican* and the road of our hotel (Borgo Pio) has some of the best shops for buying reasonably priced religious items. There are also several Pizza take-aways to obtain snacks if needed and there are small grocery shops where drinks, fruit, etc. can be bought to keep in the room. There is a small fridge in the room.

For reference we use Fr John's book '*Rome - Just around the Corner*', worked on and published during the early months of the Covid pandemic. It is not the same as him personally leading us, but his voice does speak through the pages of the book, which includes many of the stories and knowledge he used to share as he walked us around the streets of Rome. If you have a copy please do bring it with you, as you can refer to it during the week, however, if you do not have a copy these can be obtained through either of our Watermead online shops (<https://www.watermeadshop.co.uk/> or <https://www.watermeadgifts.co.uk/>)

The full itinerary will be advised in October and our days together will depend on various factors (including weather), so may be adjusted. I hope that on **Saturday** afternoon we can visit *St Peter's basilica* (5-10 minute walk from the hotel) and maybe, even, attend the vigil mass. On **Sunday** there will be choices in the morning, including High Mass in the basilica or attending one of the local churches. We would then go to the Pope's *Angelus blessing* in *St Peter's Square* at 12 noon

and in the afternoon I will lead a walk along the *River Tiber* and around the social areas of the city – hoping to include the *Spanish Steps*, *Via Con Dotti*, *Trevi Fountain* and the *Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace)* on route. **Monday** will be a full walking day taking in the *Castel Sant Angelo*, *Piazza Navona*, *Pantheon*, *Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva*, *Campo de' Fiori*, *Jewish Ghetto*, *Church of the Gesù* and many other historic/social attractions and churches, well known and not so well known. There will be a halfway stop for lunch and people can then decide individually whether to go back to the hotel (bus or taxi) or continue walking with the group. **Tuesday** is a day for visiting the famous sites of Ancient Rome (*Forums* and *Colosseum* etc.), although we no longer go inside these historic areas as tickets have to be booked in advance (a couple of months before visiting) and there is no real need as there are plenty of accessible visual points from which to view. Unfortunately, since the pandemic access to many attractions of the city has changed, with some requiring fees and some needing to be booked well in advance – even the *Pantheon* now has to be booked or a long queue faced. Note that the Roman walks are optional and those who want to book to visit the *Sistine Chapel* and *Vatican Museums* will have to book their own visits individually on either Monday or Tuesday and prior to our travel date. Whatever people decide to do each day, we shall all meet to eat our evening meal together. **Wednesday** will be the day for our onward travel to *Assisi* having now experienced a little of what Rome has to offer.

ASSISI DAYS

The coach journey to Assisi takes approximately two and half hours, dependent on traffic and whether we decide to take a comfort stop along the way. On arrival in *Assisi* we shall book into our hotel (*The Windsor Savoia*), and I will explain options for lunch. Our first glimpse of *Assisi* as we travel in from the main road will be of the *Basilica of St Francis of Assisi* and the hotel is a 5–10-minute walk from the Basilica, which we hope to visit after everyone has eaten and settled into their rooms.

This year the bones of St Francis are on display for the 800th anniversary of his death, so I expect that this will change the access to the Basilica that we are used to. I shall research this and give detail later when sharing our finalised itinerary.

Upper Assisi, where our hotel is situated alongside the *Basilica of St Francis*, is basically two streets that wind up the hill to a piazza and the *Basilica of St Clare*, built next to the ancient church of *St George* (the first burial place of both St Francis in 1226 and St Clare in 1253). *St Clare's tomb* is in the crypt of the Basilica and, also, in a side chapel hangs the original *Crucifix of St Damian* through which Francis heard God speak, telling him to rebuild the church. A slight detour on the way back to our hotel finds the church with the Tomb of the millennial saint *Carlos Acutis*. I can direct you to this.

We have two full days on **Thursday** and **Friday** with much to explore in *Upper Assisi* and, also, *Lower Assisi* with its church of *St Mary of the Angels (Santa Maria degli Angeli)* which encases the *Portiuncula*, the little church that Francis did rebuild. I am sure people will prefer to explore for themselves, although on one of the mornings I hope to arrange a visit to the *Monastery of San Damiano* (the place where the crucifix originally hung). It is a peaceful sanctuary with scenic views and is also the place where St Clare died (there will be an additional cost for the shared 10-minute taxi ride).

Saturday we shall leave Assisi during the morning to allow adequate time for travel to Ciampino airport and our mid evening flights home to Stansted and Manchester.

BOOKING CONFIRMATION

If you are interested then please use the contact form on our website (see button) and if we have places available we shall email you a link to the booking form. Once your completed forms and £500 deposit is received flights can be booked and prices secured. The BACS details are given above and on the booking form if you prefer to pay electronically and email your form back, but please pay special attention to writing your name as on your passport, and do include a photo or photocopy of the passport so we can double-check the name and details. This protects from there being a discrepancy in booked flight names, which are expensive to change if incorrect and can delay or stop someone from being able to travel with the group. The final payment will be due in July, but I will contact pilgrims to confirm this and advise of any needed adjustments to the overall price.

Alison (Kennedy)

Watermead Apostolate

www.watermead-apostolate.co.uk