

Week 7 Report of Our Virtual Walk from Poland to Rome 10-3 through 11-9

During this week we collectively walked 353 miles and had 16 participants. Sources for images are given in smaller font near the image. You can click on images to increase their size for a better view. The green line on map of Italy indicates places we visited this week. We started the week at Merano, the first green dot on the Italian map. A red line on the route map indicates general route for entire walk, image right.

PAT is free software. Copyright © 2010, 2013 by Ian Macky, both maps.



We arrived in Merano on the Sunday of the previous week but did not have time to explore the city, which is located in the in the South Tyrol region of northern Italy. Merano is surrounded by mountains as high as 10,942 feet above sea level. Fortunately, we did not have to climb them to reach the city. Rolf Kranz, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Panoramic view of Merano



Merano gained the status of a city in the 1200's and also was named the capital of Tyrol. As has happened all over this region, this city has been occupied or controlled by a variety of countries, including Rome, France, Austria, and Bavaria. The treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye granted the city and southern section of the Tyrol area to the Kingdom of Italy at the end of WW I. If you remember from past



walks collection of city states, we learned Italy was mostly a collection of city states until 1861 when it became the United Kingdom of Italy, but at that time South Tyrol still belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Our first stop was at the two Catholic Churches of the city: the Gothic St. Nicholas' Church and the St. Barbara's Chapel. User: Franco Visintainer, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons, St. Nicholas, left

St. Nicholas' Church is the Duomo and parish church of Merano. It was built in the 1200's. It was consecrated to the patron saint of the town, St. Nicholas. The church has three naves, a large rose window in the front of the church and several lovely stained-glass windows. It also contains some wooden sculptures of saints. The paintings inside are from various eras.

In the tower there is a sundial. Behind the church is St. Barbara's Chapel

Ymblanter, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, St Barbara's Chapel exterior view , right The best way to see these two places are to watch the video (link below). Watch from 1:00to 3:00 minutes for interior of St. Nicholas and from 5:40-to 6:24 minutes for interior of St. Barbar'a chapel but the whole video is only 7:12 minutes long. There is no naration but lovely instrumental music to accompany the video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjz5DfkAOml>



Gryffindor, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, St. Barbara's Chapel interior

St. Barbara's chapel in octagonal in shape. The building was completed in1450. Until 1848, the chapel served as a burial chapel. Then the cemetery was moved to a new location. Today the chapel has wooden pews and a Gothic wooden altar. On each side of the older wooden altar are two Baroque altars, with each altar taking up a side of the octagon. We spent some time in quite meditation there before leaving the city proper to visit Trauttmansdorff Castle and gardens. It is south of Merano

User:Darwinek, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons Trauttmansdorff castle, below left.

Over the centuries from its initial building in the 1300's, various generations of Trauttmansdorff family



added to the castle which means there are multiple styles of architecture used in the castle, as often happened in older cities. The castle has a lovely small chapel, below right.

Gerd Eichmann, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Chapel, right.

Today, the castle serves as a museum.

After this visit we headed south to the city of Brescia, in Lombardy. We are still



in the Italian alps. Brescia is one of the largest cities in the northwestern part of Italy. It has played an important role in this area since pre-Roman days. It also has some great examples of old Roman buildings in this northern section of Italy. Other well-preserved sites include a medieval castle, the Piazza della Loggia as well as the old and new Cathedrals. Today, Brescia is a major industrial center with a focus on metallurgy and production of various metal parts including automotive parts.

The new and old cathedrals are shown below They are right beside each other with the old Cathedral on the right. Ben Bender, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons.



The new Cathedral construction started in 1604 but the work was interrupted by the plague in 1630. while work was spoadically sttempted over the years , it wasn't until the 1800s that believed it could get completed. The Cathedral's dome reaching 262.5 feet in the sky and one of the tallest in Italy was completed in 1825. The New Cathedral dwarfs the old Cathedral, which is known as the Duomo Vecchio (Old Duomo), is rather rustic with a round tower. WW II bombings damaged that dome and it had to be restored after the war ended.

We enjoyed examining the lovely paintings of the Cathedral as well as the main Altar which shows the Assumption of Mary with the Apostles. We also found a monument to Pope Paul VI who was from this city and served as Pope from 1963 until 1978.



Next, we found the Santi Faustino e Giovita Church (Sts. Faustinus and Jovita), shown left. This church is sometimes referred to as the Church of San Faustino Maggiore.

Emilino, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, left; RobyBS89, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, Sepulchral ark of Saints Faustino and Giovita, right

Because it is the church of the Patron of the city, it is considered the third most important religious building in the city after the two cathedrals. This church is adjacent to and connected with a monastery which was begun in the 9th century. The original church probably dated back to the 8th century but has



received numerous revisions over the years. In addition to the tomb of Sts. Faustinus and Jovita, two other saints, St. Honorius and St. Antigiugus are entombed there. The original name of the church was Santa Maria in Silva but when the two saints' remains were transferred to the Church of Santa Maria in Silva, on May 9, 806, the name was changed in their honor. The picture left shows the church and monastery. Public Domain I, the copyright holder of this work, releases it into the public domain. If you look at the bell tower, you can see the changes that occurred in various renovations of the church.

The church has six side altars in addition to the main altar. The altar on the right-hand side, nearest the main altar serves as the baptistery.

We discovered a Saint new to most of us, here on Brescia, St.

Gaudentius of Brescia was the Bishop of Brescia starting in 387 until his death in 410. He was a theologian and published many of his sermons and letters. He studied under, Philastrius, who was the bishop at that time and then was elected Bishop upon Philastrius's death in 389. It seems, however, that Gaudentius was not happy with his election as Bishop. He was away in Jerusalem on a pilgrimage at the time of his election. When he refused to return, the people of Brescia took an oath that they would not accept any other Bishop and the nearby prelates insisted that he had to return. Even the Bishops of the Holy Land were insisting upon his return, saying they would not give him Communion if Gaudentius stayed in Jerusalem.

Gaudentius was a prolific writer and many of his pastoral letters, sermons and twenty-one tractates (the equivalent of a small pamphlet used to teach people about Christianity) have survived and can be found even today in religious libraries. What is striking about these materials is the strong sense of true belief Gaudentius had in the Holy Eucharist.

Leaving Brescia, we headed for Milan, which is not only Italy's fashion and financial capital, but has a strong Catholic history as well. Among the major draws for Catholics are the tombs of St. Ambrose and St. Charles Borromeo, as well as Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper."

Our first stop there was at the Basilica of St. Ambrose. Zairon, CC



By-SA4.0 via Wikimedia.com, façade left and interior right.

Born in 340, Aurelius Ambrosius was Archbishop of Milan. Archbishop Ambrosius was just 57 years of age when died in 397. He was named one of the first four Doctors of the Church named by the Pope for his contributions to understanding and



interpreting the Sacred Scriptures and in developing Christen Doctrine. Ambrosius was renowned for his speaking abilities and was nicknamed the “Honey-Tongued Doctor”. St. Ambrose is the patron saint of Milan.

Next, we visited the Cathedral of Milan, below, and went to mass. ©K.Scharer, 2010, left Il Duomo di



Milano is and impressive building and the second-largest Cathedral in the world after St. Peter’s in Rome. The inside is a bit less impressive but it does contain some great artwork.

Ludvig14, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons interior, right.



In the crypt is the tomb

of Saint Charles Borromeo (1538-1584), a of Cardinal

Archbishop Milan from 1564-1584, a prominent leader of the counter-reformation and a great reformer of the church in both Rome and Milan. St. Borromeo founded the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Some of his reforms included the founding of seminaries for priests to ensure adequate educational preparation for the priesthood. Painting of St. Borromeo, left. Attributed to Giovanni

Ambrogio Figino, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



St. Borromeo also was directly involved in organizing sessions three and twenty-five of the Council of Trent. The Saint contributed significantly to the development of the Tridentine Catechism. In his role as Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, he made similar reforms in Milan, re-energizing the clergy and requiring them to be more invested in their roles as priests.

Daniel Case, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Cathedral rooftop, left



We then climbed to the top of the roof for an outstanding view of the city. The cathedral is massive and took about 6 centuries to complete. While the exterior is international Gothic, many other architectural styles grace the interior. There are over 3,400 statues around the church, some of which are seen in the roof-top images, some in the interior and some on the ground, There are also thousands of spires on the building. The front view of the church does not give any clue to how large this building is! There is one spire

that has a statue of the Virgin Mary (la Madonnina) standing 354 feet tall. By tradition, la Madonnina must be the highest human made object in Milan. In the early 2000’s, when a high-rise new building surpassed the height of the Duomo, a replica of the statue of la Madonnina was placed upon the rooftop of the new building.

Then we went to the Convent Santa Maria delle Grazie to see Leonardo da Vinci’s “Last Supper”



Leonardo da Vinci, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons (shown left), It took Di Vinci two years to complete, beginning sometime in 1495 and finishing sometime in 1498, to complete the painting on the dining room wall of the convent. It was touched up and cleaned last in the 1990’s.

That it has survived all of these years in this setting and on a wall of plaster is amazing. During the 1800’s the convent served as housing for solders for three years. During WW II, a bomb landed on the

convent but sandbags were protecting the dining room wall so it survived. While it survived, it has not

well been well-protected and though there have been efforts to restore the painting, some of the colors are faded. After visiting these sights, we did a little sightseeing and shopping. We also saw some other famous places in Milan, including La Scala Opera House below left; Sforzesco Castle, center; the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, an enclosed shopping mall, right. ©K. Scharer, 2010, all three photos, below.



La Scala as it is commonly known but officially called the Teatro alla Scala is a well-known opera house which opened in August of 1778. The opera, *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella), with music composed by Gioachino Rossini and the libretto written by Jacopo Ferretti, was being performed while we were there. La Scala is famous for having had the world's greatest opera singers perform there. However, we felt squashed by the seats. Apparently there hasn't been a change in the seating since it was built; people were significantly shorter in 1778 and many of us had our knees pressed hard against the seats in front of us, which made the performance a little difficult to enjoy.

The Sforza Castle is a fortification built in the 1400's by Francesco Sforza who was the Duke of Milan. It was later renovated and enlarged and in the 1500' and 1600's, it was one of the largest fortifications in Europe. It was rebuilt from 1891-1905. Currently it houses several of Milan's museums and art collections, including The Museum of Musical Instruments, The Antique Furniture & Wooden Sculpture Museum, Biblioteca Trivulziana (library), the Art Gallery of Castello Sforzesco (which has masterpieces by Tintoretto, Andrea Mantegna, Foppa, Titian and Canaletto, and others), The Egyptian Museum and an Applied Arts Museum. The Castello Sforzesco has something for almost everyone among its museums!

Our final stop was for shopping. Whether window shopping or actually buying something, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is worth a visit. It is the oldest shopping center in Milan and a landmark. The building is four-story high with two arcades, covered by glass with cast iron supports, as the picture above shows. The Arcades enclose high-end shops featuring everything from clothing to house wares as well as some well-known exclusive restaurants.

After enjoying Milan, we headed almost due south to Genoa. For many of us, Genoa is known to us as the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. This port city is located on a Gulf in the Ligurian Sea. Historically and today, Genoa has been one of the most important and busiest Mediterranean ports. It also has a rich history of great cuisine, art and music and in 2004 was named the European Capital of Culture. It is also one of Italy's major economic centers. A bank in Genoa, founded in 1407, is one of the world's oldest financial institutions. And, of course, its seafaring played a major role in the history of Italy and in the world, including the Americas. Christopher Columbus may have sailed for Spain but he was from Genoa. Painting of St. Catherine by Giovanni Agostino Ratti, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, left



Genoa was also the home of one of the great saints, Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510). Catherine was born into a noble family of Genoa. She felt an early calling to become a nun but she was refused admission to the convent at age 13. At age 17, despite her calling to the religious life, her family married her off to someone who was not very nice, probably to end an inter-family feud. Her marriage was miserable for her for 10 years and she remained childless. Her husband was not faithful to his marriage vows. Then, at age 26, she experienced a mystical event while in the confessional at church during which she comprehended how much God loved her. She became much more devout receiving communion almost daily. She began

caring for the ill and poor, especially during the plague. Later, her husband changed and began to help her in her endeavors to care for the sick and the poor.



©k. Scharer, 2010, convent, left Although the exterior of the Capuchin Convent of St. Catherine seemed austere when we approached it, we found the interior beautiful as shown in the picture at right of the interior. Zairon, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, image right When St. Catherine died at age 63, her remains were placed in a wooden coffin and kept in a chapel of the hospital where she had care for so many sick people. Unfortunately, her wooden casket was damaged by water so it needed to be replaced.



When her body was removed from the wooden casket her body had not deteriorated in any way and was declared incorrupt. At some point, her body was placed in a glass casket and transferred to the Capuchin Convent. The glass casket containing St. Catherine's body can be found here:

<https://share.google/images/3UzUB62gTk2k8jqx7>

Our next visit was to the Cathedral of Saint Lawrence (shown below, left) dedicated to Saint Lawrence, was built between the 1100's and 1300's. While it is essentially a medieval church, it has had alterations over the centuries. A bell tower was added in the 1500's and a dome was also added during this period.

It is believed to have been built on the same site as an earlier cathedral. There are signs of the spot



having been used during both the Roman era as well as a pre-Christian burial site.

Julian Lupyan, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons, church exterior, left and interior, center; DonPaolo, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, fresco right



The Cathedral contains many frescos and one example, the *Martyrdom of St*



Lawrence, is shown above right. After exploring the

cathedral, we visited the Museum of the Treasury, beneath the cathedral which displays among other things, a chalice believed to have been used by Jesus on Holy Thursday at the last supper. There is also a collection of jewelry and silverware from the 800's and later. Maurizio Beatrici, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons Palazzo Tursi, interior



While in Genoa we did a bit of sightseeing, visiting the Maritime Museum, and seeing some palaces, like the Palazzo Tursi, interior shown left. Then we visited the former Doge's Palace, right which is now an exhibition hall. Jensens, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, Doge's Palace, right

A doge was an elected lord and head of state in several Italian city-



states, notably Venice and Genoa, during the medieval and renaissance periods. We also saw the famous Piazza De Ferrari, seen below.



Hpschaefer www.reserv-a-rt.de, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Piazza De Ferrari, left .We ended our time in Genoa by taking a harbor cruise which gave us a sense of the enormity and activity of the harbor We saw the harbor full of commercial ships as well as the smaller harbor for pleasure craft.

Then we headed down the west coast of Italy to the Cinque Terre which means five lands. This area is in the west of La Spezia Province. The “five lands” refers to five villages that line the coast: Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. These villages along with the hillsides and the coast in between them comprise the Cinque Terre National Park which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Corniglia is the only village not directly on the coast. Over time, the area from the ocean's edge to the cliffs above was terraced, with vibrant residences now situated along these terraces. For many years, they could only be reached by walking trails, boats, and train; even today cars are rare because the mountain roads are narrow and not terribly safe and parking is very limited. We used the walking trails between the villages. The villages have been in existence since at least the 11th century since reference was made to them then in written documents. Fortifications were built in the 16th century to fight off Turkish invaders.



The first village we came to was Monterosso al Mare.

Davide Papalini, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons This village is the westernmost of five villages. The beach of the village runs along most of the coastline. Monterosso al Mare and it is the only large sandy beach among the five villages. The village is known for its many lemon trees, white wines, grapes, and olives.



At right is the Castle, partially ruined, built by the Genoese for fortification. Frans-Banja Mulder, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, castle



The parish church of St. John the Baptist (1282–1307) is shown left and interior at right. Its façade has four marble columns and the doors above which is a fresco of the baptism of Christ. The square medieval bell tower is crowned by merlons. Catarella, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, church façade, and interior. The Monastery, shown below left and center, is a major tourist attraction. The Monastery can be seen from all of the five villages because it is situated on a hillside. The monastery is a 1600's Capuchin monastery. It has wooden altar and choir stalls. Art works include the Crucifixion by Van Dyck.





monastery and the picture of the monastery below, center. The location and view seem to invite meditation. We spent time here in quiet prayer.

Next on our list of sites was the Monterosso Giant. The Monterosso giant is a statue of Neptune, who seems to be holding up the village from falling into the sea. It is almost 46 feet high. The



sculpture was part of the decoration of a sumptuous villa from the early 1900's. Initially Neptune had a large shell on his head which served as a terrace for the villa. But, during WW II the statue was damaged in bombing in the area and then further damaged by high seas in the 1960's. The terrace and shell are now gone. giomodica, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, the giant , left. Vald0506, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right



Port at Vernazza is shown at right. The church pictured center left is the Church of Santa Margherita d'Antiochia, built around 1318. It sits in the village's main square known as Piazza Marconi. Because of its location, the church is laid out a bit differently than most Catholic churches. The entrance of the church faces east. The bell tower is octagonal in shape and arises from the apse of the church. There is one nave and two aisles.

Cs.adri, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Corniglia coastal view



Next, we walked through Corniglia. We stopped briefly at the Church of San Pietro; the interior was beautiful although the outside was plain. Chabe01, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons



This village is the one that is not directly on the coast. Instead, it is on the headland about 328 feet above the sea and is surrounded by vineyards and terraces on three sides while the fourth side is a steep drop off to the ocean below. To get here we had to walk up 383 steps but they were at least made of brick, not just rocks or sod steps. After exploring a bit, we headed back down the steps and back along the walking path heading to Manarola.

Vald0506, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, right, Manarola. The picture at right shows the village of Manarola, with its the colorful houses. One of the most interesting things about this village is the Presepe di Manarola, photo left below. Of



course, we were too early to see it lit up but the display was being erected while we were there.

Francesco Crippa, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons , The Presepe di Manarola, shown left.

Beginning in 1961, from 12/8 through the end of the Christmas season, a lighted nativity scene has been displayed on the hill above the village. Mario Andreoli, a retired railway man, made the display by hand. There are thousands of lights installed on

cutouts that were made of recycled materials. It is one of the largest nativity scenes in the world.



The last of the 5 villages was Riomaggiore. Kevin Gabbert - User: (WT-shared) Kevin

James at wts wikivoyage, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons, left. This village begins at sea level and climbs up the hillside of a small valley. It is the last of the 5 villages heading south along the west coast of Italy. It is known for the wine that is made from the village's grapes. CCCP, CC BY-SA 2.5 CA, via Wikimedia Commons, Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista a Riomaggiore, right



The church of San Giovanni Battista is in the upper portion of the village. On the north side the church appears to be leaning on the hill. The original building took place in 1340 but in 1870 it had a major renovation in neo-Gothic style.

Chabe01, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior, left. After a bit

of exploration in this village we headed further south to Livorno. When we reached this port city we were now in Tuscany. Since we were in Italy last spring, on this trip we are finding new sights and places to visit so we bypassed Pisa and will not be going to Florence.

Livorno was designed as an ideal town or what we often refer to in the US as a planned city. It developed significantly during the Renaissance and was a free port with much foreign trading and was the main port of the Tuscany Grand Duchy. Its stature as a great port remained until the latter half of the 1800's when some other ports gained dominance. Like many other places, the city changed hands multiple times. Remember at this time Italy was still a collection of city states and at different times it belonged to Pisa, Florence, and Genoa. And in earlier times, it was part of Rome.

Being a port city, it required fortification during Roman times and later. The Romans left behind the old fortress which slowly deteriorated. In the 1600's a new fortification was built and is still in existence today. The new fortress is separated by a canal from the remaining two towers of the old fortress which you can see in the picture at right. Ingo Mehling, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Common



New Fortress

Santa Caterina da Siena is one of the churches we visited in



Livorno. It is of Baroque architecture. An interesting feature of this church is its tall octagonal dome which rises above an unfinished-looking base. Lucarelli, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, Santa Caterina The Dominican church is dedicated to St. Catherine of Siena. The original design for the church was based on the Pantheon of Rome but after numerous interruptions in building which begun in 1720, a new design was used. It was consecrated in 1753 but the tower wasn't finished until 1869 and the facade still has not been completed.

This city, like much of Italy has suffered from various wars. When Italy became a United Kingdom in 1861, the city lost its status as a free post and began to decline. It also had significant damage during WW II.

An interesting note about Livorno is that Elizabeth Ann Seton came to the city to visit friends and while she was there converted from being Protestant and became Catholic. As we know, she later became the first American-born saint. After returning to the US, she established a Catholic Girls School and founded the religious order of the Sisters of Charity.

While we were here, we visited the Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi. It is also known as the Duomo of Livorno. It is dedicated to St. Francis, to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and to Julia of Corsica. It is pictured below. Construction of the Church started in 1581. The church had a single nave and a gilded

wooden ceiling with seven paintings. Three of these paintings depicted the three Saints to whom the church was dedicated. The church was consecrated in 1606. There have been modifications over time.

Piergiuliano Chesi, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons



The Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi and *Piazza Grande* restored; Lucarelli, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons, interior of Cathedral

In the early 1700'two lateral chapels were added changing the design to a Christian cross. In 1806, the church was elevated to cathedral; 1817 saw the addition of the bell tower which is at the left rear of the picture of the church.



Bombing during WW II completely destroyed the Cathedral. It was rebuilt following the plan of the destroyed cathedral except two marble porches were added. After visiting the cathedral and exploring the fortifications, we visited a few other sights but then had to head south to Grosseto we arrived there Sunday evening but will begin exploring it on Monday, our final week of this pilgrimage. Thanks for participating

Your Tour Director,
Kathy Scharer