

2023 Northside Christian Church Israel Trip extension to Italy

Israel March 3-13 2023

Italy Extension March 13-18/19

ROME-FLORENCE-ROME

Travel Day Monday March 13

- Israel to Kansas City MCI = For those NCC members who do not want to extend
- Israel to Rome

Monday March 13, 2023 — Arrive in Rome

We arrive at the Rome airport and transfer to our lodging for the next three nights. (*Check in starts between 14.00-16.00 – We suggest to start the visits once arrived in Rome airport and then check in at the hotel*) This afternoon we will take an afternoon tour of the **Catacombs** where thousands of Christians were buried in a remarkable tiered series of galleries. *Important note: the program of the day may change according to your flight arrival time.*

Tuesday March 14, 2023 — Forum, Mamertine, Coliseum, Ostia Antica

We begin our walking tour at the ancient **Roman Forum**, where our guide will divulge its secrets. We will visit the **Arch of Titus** that commemorated the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70, the **Coliseum**, where thousands of people and animals perished during gladiatorial games. The Coliseum first opened in AD 80 and within 100 days of its opening, 5000 wild beasts perished here. The slaughter of both humans and animals continued for three more centuries. Historians believe the Coliseum could hold between 40,000 and 80,000 people depending on how close the seating was. The floor has recently had a plank placed over the middle making it accessible for people to walk over the labyrinth of brick cells, ramps, and elevators used to transport animals and gladiators into the arena. Hear the stories of the games that have fascinated people for hundreds of years. Next, we visit the **Mamertine Prison exterior**, where tradition says the Apostle Paul was imprisoned. The Roman church would say that Peter was imprisoned here as well, but there is no imperial evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. We conclude our day at the ruins of **Ostia Antica**, which provides an excellent example of city life in classical times and the **Ostian Gate**, today called the Gate of St. Paul. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Wednesday March 15, 2023 — Vatican Museums, St. Peter's, Scala Santa, Abbey of Three Fountains, St. Paul Outside the Wall

After breakfast we shall begin our tour with a visit of the **Vatican City** where we will see the **Basilica of St. Peter**, the **Sistine Chapel** and the **Vatican Museums** with stunning works of art at every turn. After some free time for lunch, you will stop at **The Abbey of the Three Fountains**, the traditional site of Paul's martyrdom and the ancient street that he walked on. Next, visit the 4th century **Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls**, the site of Paul's tomb, and the **Scala Santa**, where Martin Luther made his stand against the practice of indulgences. This fascinating museum houses the Steps from Pilot's Judgment Hall in Jerusalem brought to Rome by Helena, the mother of Constantine. We also view (from the bus) the **Circus Maximus** and the beautiful marble monument called the **Wedding Cake**. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Thursday March 16, 2023 — Frescoes, Assisi, Florence

After breakfast you will say "Arrivederci Roma" and board your coach and travel through scenic Umbria to the ancient walled hillside village of **Assisi**. After free time for lunch on your own, we will enjoy a guided tour of this beautiful, medieval town, which will include the **Basilica San Francesco**, decorated with some of the most renowned frescoes in the world. The stories of the sacrificial life of St. Francis will be an encouragement to us all. Our home for the next two evenings is in the beautiful city of Florence, the heart of charming Tuscany. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Friday March 17, 2023 — Beautiful Florence, Michelangelo's David - Rome

You will spend the morning enjoying a guided tour of **Florence**, one of the world's greatest artistic capitals, which will include the **Piazza della Signoria**, **Duomo**, **Baptistry** and a visit to the **Academia Galley**, home of Michelangelo's David. We will also stop on the hillside overlooking across the river from Florence where we will enjoy a panoramic view of the beautiful, red-tiled roof cityscape. This afternoon is at your leisure to enjoy shopping, visiting more galleries or strolling on the famous Pont Vecchio, the old bridge that spans the Arno River. Remember that Florence leather shops are the best in the world and bargains on excellent quality goods are abundant. It may be the time to purchase those special Christmas gifts. In the afternoon we leave Florence and travel to Rome (approx. 4 hours' drive). Check-in at the hotel for dinner and overnight.

Saturday, March 18 (Morning): DEPARTURE

After breakfast you will be transferred to Rome Fiumicino Airport for your flight back home.