



MYSTAKIDIS TOURS
ORTHODOX PILGRIMAGES SINCE 1959

Italy of the Orthodox Saints

*Nine days at the relics the West still keeps for the East:
Nicholas of Myra, the Apostles Peter and Paul, and the
mosaics of Ravenna.*

DURATION

9 Days · 8 Nights

ROUTE

Bari · Rome · Ravenna · Venice

SEASON

Year-round departures

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WHY THIS PILGRIMAGE

The West that the East still claims

Italy holds more relics of the undivided Church than any land outside the Holy Land itself, and this pilgrimage gathers its four essential cities: Bari of Saint Nicholas, Rome of the Apostles Peter and Paul, Ravenna of the Byzantine mosaics, and Venice of Saint Mark. Four cities, four sets of relics, one journey through the West that the East still claims as its own.

You will venerate the myrrh-giving relics of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker in the crypt at Bari, where an Orthodox chapel stands beside his tomb by long agreement and the Divine Liturgy is served over the relics themselves. In Rome you will descend into the catacombs where the persecuted Church prayed, stand at the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and venerate the relics of Saint Cyril, equal to the apostles and enlightener of the Slavs, at San Clemente. Ravenna opens the purest Byzantine interiors in the world, Justinian and Theodora processing forever at San Vitale, and Venice ends the road at the tomb of the Evangelist Mark beneath the golden mosaics of his basilica.

It is the itinerary we recommend to pilgrims who think of Italy as belonging to another Christianity: nine days that quietly return a shared millennium to its rightful owners.

WHO THIS PILGRIMAGE IS FOR

Orthodox pilgrims of every jurisdiction curious about the first millennium of the undivided Church, lovers of Saint Nicholas, and travellers pairing pilgrimage with the civilised comforts of Italy. Walking is steady but urban; every night is in a 4-star city hotel.

THE JOURNEY

- **BARI**
2 nights: the relics of Saint Nicholas
- **MONTE SANT'ANGELO**
The cave of the Archangel, en route
- **ROME**
3 nights: the tombs of the Apostles
- **RAVENNA**
2 nights: the Byzantine mosaics
- **VENICE**
1 night: Saint Mark the Evangelist

One road north through Italy, Adriatic to lagoon, with the relics of the undivided Church as its stations.

THE PILGRIMAGE, DAY BY DAY

Italy of the Saints: the days

DAY 1 Arrival in Bari

Arrival at Bari's airport on the Adriatic, where our pilgrimage director meets the group; connections run conveniently through Rome or Munich. The coach skirts the harbour into the city, and after check-in and time to rest we walk into Bari Vecchia, the old town, a labyrinth of white lanes where women still roll orecchiette pasta in their doorways and the smell of the sea reaches every corner. The walk ends in the square before the Basilica of Saint Nicholas, so that the goal of tomorrow's veneration is before your eyes on the first evening; the church is floodlit, plain and strong as a fortress, built within nine years of the relics' arrival in 1087. Dinner at the hotel, with the introduction to the week ahead.

OVERNIGHT **Bari**

MEALS D · 4-star hotel

DAY 2 Bari: the Relics of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker

The day pilgrims cross the world for. In the morning we enter the Basilica of Saint Nicholas and descend to the crypt, where the relics of the Wonderworker of Myra have rested beneath the altar since Barese sailors carried them out of Lycia in 1087; the tomb still yields the clear myrrh the Church calls manna, gathered each year on his feast. By long agreement an Orthodox chapel stands in the crypt, and where arrangements allow, the Divine Liturgy is served directly over the tomb, with our groups given generous time for veneration and the akathist to the saint. In the afternoon we visit the Cathedral of Saint Sabinus with its icon of the Hodegitria, and the swallow-tailed castle of Frederick II, before free time in the old town's lanes. Dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT **Bari**

MEALS B, D · 4-star hotel

DAY 3 Monte Sant'Angelo and the Road to Rome

North along the Adriatic and up the limestone shoulder of the Gargano to Monte Sant'Angelo, where the Archangel Michael appeared in a mountain cave at the end of the fifth century, the oldest shrine of the Commander of the Heavenly Hosts in the West. We descend the long pilgrim stair into the grotto sanctuary, where emperors and saints have knelt for fifteen centuries, and venerate in the cave church the angel is said to have consecrated himself. From the mountain the coach turns inland across the Apennines toward Rome, a long afternoon of Italian hill country softening into the Roman Campagna, arriving in the capital by early evening. Check-in near the historic center; dinner at the hotel and rest before two full Roman days.

OVERNIGHT **Rome**

MEALS B, D · 4-star hotel

DAY BY DAY, CONTINUED

DAY 4 Rome: the Catacombs and the Tombs of the Apostles

Underground Rome first: in the catacombs of Saint Callixtus on the Appian Way we walk the tufa galleries where the persecuted Church buried its dead and prayed at the tombs of the martyrs, past the crypt of nine third-century popes and the earliest images of the Good Shepherd. We then stand at the two poles of apostolic Rome: the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, rebuilt over the Apostle's tomb, where his sarcophagus is visible beneath the altar with the chains of his imprisonment beside it, and Saint Peter's, where we descend toward the confessio above the Apostle's grave. At the Mamertine prison, where tradition holds both apostles were held, the day's readings from Romans and Second Timothy find their floor and walls. Dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT Rome**MEALS** B, D · 4-star hotel**DAY 5** Rome: San Clemente and the Byzantine City

The Rome most tours never show: the city of the undivided millennium. At San Clemente we venerate the relics of Saint Cyril, equal to the apostles and enlightener of the Slavs, who died in Rome in 869, and descend through the fourth-century lower basilica to the first-century lanes beneath, three Christian centuries stacked like strata. At Santa Maria Maggiore we stand before the Salus Populi Romani, the icon of the Theotokos that tradition gives to the hand of Saint Luke, and at Santa Prassede the Zeno chapel glows with ninth-century mosaic gold and keeps a portion of the column of the flagellation. The apse of Saints Cosmas and Damian closes the circuit with the sixth century's Christ in glory. The evening is free for Rome itself. Dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT Rome**MEALS** B, D · 4-star hotel**DAY 6** The Road North: Classe and Arrival in Ravenna

We leave Rome northward through Umbria and over the Apennines, the landscape tightening into hill towns and oak forest before opening onto the Romagna plain. At Classe, the vanished port of imperial Ravenna, we stop at Sant'Apollinare in Classe, the great sixth-century basilica standing alone in the fields: in its apse the Transfiguration is rendered as a jewelled cross in a paradise of green and gold, with Saint Apollinaris, first bishop of Ravenna and disciple of Peter, praying among his sheep. It is the gentlest possible introduction to what Ravenna holds. We continue the few minutes into the city, check in for two nights, and walk to Dante's tomb in the quiet evening streets, the exile buried among the mosaics he called too bright for words. Dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT Ravenna**MEALS** B, D · 4-star hotel

DAY BY DAY, CONTINUED

DAY 7 Ravenna: the Mosaics of the Undivided Church

The full day among the most complete Byzantine interiors on earth, the capital of the West in the age of Justinian. At San Vitale the emperor and the empress Theodora process forever in mosaic toward the altar, and the sanctuary vault holds the Lamb amid a turning heaven of green and gold; everything the iconoclasts later destroyed in the East survives here intact. Across the lawn the little Mausoleum of Galla Placidia keeps the oldest night sky in art, eight hundred gold stars over the Good Shepherd. We continue to the Neonian Baptistery, whose dome shows the Baptism of Christ above the circle of the Twelve, and to Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, where processions of martyrs and virgins carry their crowns down both walls of the nave. An afternoon pause for the city's famous piadina, then time for a second look at whichever interior would not let you go. Dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT Ravenna
MEALS B, D · 4-star hotel

DAY 8 Venice: the Tomb of Saint Mark the Evangelist

A morning drive up the Adriatic flatlands and across the lagoon causeway, then by water taxi into the city that floats. At the Basilica of Saint Mark we venerate at the tomb of the Evangelist beneath the high altar, brought from Alexandria in 828, and stand under four acres of golden mosaic while your guide reads the church as a Byzantine building through and through, from the Pala d'Oro's Constantinopolitan enamels to the four bronze horses carried from the City in 1204, a history told honestly. We then walk to San Giorgio dei Greci, the Greek Orthodox cathedral of Venice since 1539, its leaning campanile above the canal, and visit the Hellenic Institute's museum of post-Byzantine icons brought west by the refugees of 1453. The last evening is Venice's own: the lagoon at dusk, and a farewell dinner near the hotel.

OVERNIGHT Venice
MEALS B, D · 4-star hotel

DAY 9 Departure from Venice

After breakfast, water taxi and coach to Marco Polo Airport, your pilgrimage director with the group through check-in; morning departures connect to the United States the same day. In nine days you will have venerated the Wonderworker of Myra at his tomb, the Archangel in his mountain cave, the Apostles Peter and Paul at theirs, the enlightener of the Slavs at San Clemente, and the Evangelist Mark beneath his golden dome, and you will have seen at Ravenna what the liturgy looked like to the eyes of the undivided Church. Pilgrims who wish to linger can add nights in Venice or Rome at booking; many do, and December groups time the journey to the feast of Saint Nicholas at Bari itself. Group air from your nearest US gateway is quoted on request.

OVERNIGHT None, departure day
MEALS B

YOUR PILGRIMAGE, PLAINLY STATED

What is included, and what is not

INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- ◆ Eight nights in 4-star hotels: two in Bari, three in Rome, two in Ravenna, one in Venice
- ◆ Half-board throughout: breakfast and dinner at the hotel daily
- ◆ All land transportation in a modern air-conditioned coach, with water taxi transfers in Venice
- ◆ Licensed English-speaking guide, briefed in the Orthodox tradition, throughout
- ◆ Entry fees to every basilica, catacomb, and museum named in the itinerary, including the Ravenna monuments pass
- ◆ Veneration arrangements at the crypt of Saint Nicholas and at San Giorgio dei Greci
- ◆ Airport transfers on the group arrival and departure days

NOT INCLUDED

- ◆ International airfare to and from Italy; group air quoted separately on request
- ◆ Single room supplement, quoted on request
- ◆ Travel insurance, strongly advised
- ◆ Tips to guides and drivers; we suggest \$8 to \$10 per day for the guide and \$4 to \$5 per day for the driver
- ◆ City tourist taxes, payable at each hotel, a few euros per night
- ◆ Lunches, taken at leisure in the towns
- ◆ Alcoholic beverages with dinner
- ◆ Optional excursions, including the evening gondola circuit in Venice
- ◆ Passport fees; US citizens do not require a visa for Italy for stays under 90 days

Hotels are 4-star houses within walking reach of each historic center; in Venice we stay on the main island, not the mainland. Prices are per person, twin share, land only, in US dollars.

BOOKING YOUR PILGRIMAGE

Terms, plainly stated

RESERVING YOUR PLACE

A deposit of \$400 per pilgrim confirms your reservation. Places are assigned in the order deposits are received, and each departure is limited to forty pilgrims.

BALANCE OF PAYMENT

The balance of the pilgrimage price is due 90 days before departure. Prices are per person in US dollars, sharing a twin or double room. A single room is available for a supplement, quoted on request.

CANCELLATION

More than 90 days before departure	Deposit only
89 to 60 days before departure	50% of the price
59 to 30 days before departure	75% of the price
Inside 30 days of departure	No refund

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is not included and is strongly advised. We recommend a policy covering trip cancellation, medical care abroad, and baggage, purchased within days of paying your deposit.

GROUP SIZE

A minimum of 15 pilgrims is required for the pilgrimage to operate. Maximum 40 pilgrims per departure, so that veneration at the holy places is never rushed.

A FAMILY COMPANY

Mystakidis Tours has led pilgrims to the holy places since 1959, a family company in its third generation. Your group travels with one experienced pilgrimage director from arrival to departure.



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Every itinerary can be adjusted for your parish. Ask us about preferred dates, group air from your nearest gateway, and a visit from our team to present the pilgrimage to your community.