

Join a  
**Contemplative Pilgrimage to  
Italy**

**“The Vision of Beauty”**

~~~~~ 9 Days ~~~~~

***Highlights:***

Milan ■ Como ■ Lake Garda ■ Verona  
Venice ■ Ravenna ■ Arezzo ■ Sansepolcro  
Fiesole ■ Florence ■ Monte Oliveto Maggiore

*Date:* **September 26 - October 04, 2024**

*Led by:*

**FR. LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB**

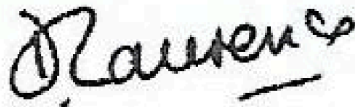
*Director*

*World Community for Christian Meditation*



### **Vision of Beauty: Healing the Soul of the World**

This year's Pilgrimage expresses the WCCM theme, the essential goodness and beauty of the world: 'And God saw that it was very good'. All pilgrimage involves moving from place to place with the enjoyment of good company. But the true destination is spiritual not physical, which means the whole person in harmony with others and their surroundings. Our goal is the 'vision of beauty'. Beauty heals us personally so we can heal the world. This pilgrimage has to have a significant financial cost, but I believe that if each of us truly sees beauty in new ways, we will be better healers of the world. We will be in beautiful places and contemplate beautiful art, not as tourists rushing from one thing to another, but as contemplatives, taking time to be truly present to the divine gift of beauty as part of God's own being. Each day will give priority to prayer, finding the beauty within, sharing our response to the gift of enrichment and peace. I look forward to being in this time of beauty and healing with you for the sake of the world.



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### **LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB**

*Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine monk and the spiritual successor of John Main OSB. He is the Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation. Author, retreat leader and international speaker,*

*Fr Laurence sees the contemplative as the essential dimension of all spirituality.*

## ITINERARY:

The spiritual frame of each day will be morning prayer and meditation, contemplative Eucharist and meditation, and evening prayer and meditation.

### **26SEP (Thu). MILAN.**

Arrive in **Milan Airport**. After immigration and customs formalities, board your coach and check in at your hotel for accommodation.

(D)

#### **Remarks:**

- > Standard hotel check in time is 2:00 p.m.
- > A coach will be arranged for the transfer of pilgrims to the hotel. Departure from Milan Malpensa Airport will be at 2:00pm. Those who are arriving earlier or later in the afternoon may take a taxi to the hotel or we can arrange for a private transfer.

### **27SEP (Fri). MILAN – COMO – VERONA.**

Check out of the hotel after breakfast. We visit the great Cathedral of Milan, the 5th largest Christian church in the world. There are many visible styles of spiritual and devotional beauty which we will have described to us. A famous example of this diversity is one of the nails of the Crucifixion. Depart for **Como**. On arrival, we go to the Old Town for some free time. After lunch, we meet with a guide for a walking tour of Como's historical centre including the Duomo and the Romanesque S. Abbondio Church. We leave for Tremezzo for a peaceful ride on the beautiful **Lake Como** after which we leave for Verona with time to pray, have dinner and for sharing together.

(B,D)

### **28SEP (Sat). VERONA – LAKE GARDA – VERONA.**

A full day's tour of Verona and Lake Garda beginning with a visit to the Cathedral complex. The Cathedral, which is dedicated to Sta. Maria Assunta, is the central structure of a complex of architectural buildings which include S. Giovanni in Fonte, S. Elena, the Canons' cloister, the Capitular library, the square in front of the church and the bishop's residence. Next, visit the Giardino Giusti Renaissance Italian Garden and a part of the palace called the 20th-century Apartment. There is a labyrinth which we walk together. Then, we go to one of the villages along the shore of **Lake Garda** for a leisurely lunch. Return to **Verona** and continue the tour. We visit the Casa di Giulietta, believed to be the inspiration for Juliet's famous balcony scene. Here, we will reflect on the beauty of language as well as of place. On to Piazza Bra, renowned for its first century Roman Arena, Verona's spectacular open air Opera House (a 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD Roman Arena). Dinner at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel.

(B,D)

### **29SEP (Sun). VERONA – VENICE – VERONA.**

A full day trip to Venice, one of the world's greatest sources of artistic inspiration, renowned for the unique quality of its light. After a boat ride, we begin a tour starting at the Piazza San Marco, the famous marble square at the heart of Venice. We visit the Doge's Palace; Bridge of Sighs, and the magnificent Basilica of St. Mark with the mixtures of Byzantine, Romanesque, Gothic styles which reflect the history of Venice. The Basilica was built to honor the body of St. Mark brought from Alexandria in Egypt. In the late afternoon, we take the boat back to the mainland and return to the hotel for meditation and dinner.

(B,D)

### **30SEP (Mon). VERONA – LENDINARA – RAVENNA – AREZZO.**

Depart for Lendinara to visit the Sanctuary of Nostra Signora del Pilastrello (Our Lady of the Pilaster). Built in the 16th century, it is Fr Laurence's official monastery in the Olivetan Benedictine congregation. There, we will spend time with the great works of art and also meet with the abbot who will speak about the spiritual value of art. Its miraculous spring has long been a pilgrimage destination. We continue to **Ravenna** and after lunch, explore this magical city of art and history, famous for its mosaics dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Visit the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia where we will contemplate the ancient mosaic of the two birds on a chalice which is the inspiration for the symbol of the WCCM. A few steps away is the Basilica of San Vitale, one of the most important monuments of early Christian art in Italy and in the world. Walk at leisure through the historical centre of Ravenna stopping at the tomb of Dante where we will reflect on the timeless beauty of his Divine Comedy. On to visit the Neonian Baptistery, and see its rich, astonishing mosaics dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Nearby is the Archiepiscopal Chapel or St. Andrew Chapel located on the first floor of the Archiepiscopal Museum of Ravenna, the smallest of the famous mosaic sites of the city. The sacellum is the only example of an early Christian archbishop's chapel and the only building of Orthodox worship built during Theodorician Arianism. It's most notable for the striking mosaics that were created at the time of its construction. Then to Arezzo for evening prayer, dinner and the first of our four nights in this beautiful city of Tuscany.

(B,D)

### **01OCT (Tue). AREZZO – FIESOLE – FLORENCE – AREZZO.**

We begin with a full, peaceful day visiting beauties of Fiesole and Florence. In **Fiesole**, the hillside village above Florence, we visit the Roman ruins, the museum, and the 11<sup>th</sup> c. Romanesque Cathedral of St. Romulo. Before lunch, we visit the especially beautiful and peaceful Franciscan convent for midday prayer. After lunch, we leave for **Florence**. Our first stop is the church of San Miniato Al Monte, also an Olivetan Benedictine monastery and one of the great religious spaces of the world. It stands above the Piazzale Michelangelo, the highest point of Florence and one of the world's greatest views. We have a guided walk through the city of Florence which includes the Basilica di Santa Croce; Museum of Dante's House; the small Church of Dante and Beatrice (the real name of this holy place is "Chiesa di Santa Margherita de' Cerchi"); and the Florence Cathedral and Baptistry with its famous bell tower. We return to Arezzo for meditation, dinner and a quiet evening.

(B,D)

### **02OCT (Wed). AREZZO – SANSEPOLCRO – AREZZO.**

We visit the beautiful 11<sup>th</sup> c. town of **Sansepolcro**, birthplace of Piero della Francesca (a pupil of Raphael), one of the luminary artists of the Renaissance. In the museum we will spend time in contemplation of the powerful painting of the Resurrection which is one of the great works of Christian art. We also visit the polyptych of the Madonna della Misericordia; the fresco of St. Julian; and the fresco depicting St. Ludovico. The museum collection in this small town is one of the great treasures of Italian art. After midday meditation and lunch, we return to **Arezzo** to visit this beautiful historic city with its 1000-year-old Parish Church; Gothic Cathedral; its medieval Dominican and Franciscan churches (the former houses a crucifix painted by the young Cimabue and the astounding frescoes by Piero della Francesca). Evening prayer, dinner and quiet time in **Arezzo**. (B,D)

### **03OCT (Thu). AREZZO – ASSISI – AREZZO.**

A full day visit to Assisi, one of the most sacred places in the world, birthplace of St Francis, the patron of the environmental movement. Here, we will reflect on the link between contemplation and the change of consciousness needed to save our planet. We visit the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli with the Porzuincola; Church of St. Clare; Church of Santa Maria Maggiore with the tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the inspiring 15-year-old example of contemporary Christian holiness; Chiesa Nuovo, home of St. Francis' family; and the Old Town. End your tour with a visit to the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi (Lower and Upper Church) and see the famous frescos of Giotto. Return to **Arezzo**. (B,D)

### **04OCT (Fri). AREZZO – MONTE OLIVETO MAGGIORE – ROME FCO AIRPORT.**

In the morning, we leave for **Monte Oliveto Maggiore**, the 14<sup>th</sup> century mother house of the Olivetan congregation. It was founded by S. Bernardo Tolomei who began his solitary life here and was soon joined by others when they adopted the Rule of Benedict as their guide. We will be shown the amazing frescos of the life of St Benedict by one of the monks and join the community for mass. After lunch, those who are not staying on for the WCCM Intensive Silent Retreat beginning on 6 October will transfer to **Rome** for their departure flights or the additional 3-night visit to Rome. (B)

### **TOUR INCLUSIONS:**

- ➔ Roundtrip airport transfers as specifically scheduled
- ➔ Hotel accommodation on twin sharing
- ➔ Meals as specified in the itinerary (B – Breakfast / D – Dinner)
- ➔ Transportation by deluxe air-conditioned motor coach
- ➔ Guided tours with entrances as specified in the itinerary
- ➔ Services of a Tour Leader and Pilgrimage Chaplain all throughout the pilgrimage
- ➔ Tip Fund (for guides, coach drivers, restaurants, etc.)
- ➔ Porterage of one (1) piece of luggage at hotels (subject to availability)

### **TOUR COST: (LAND TOUR ONLY)**

Per Person based on Twin Sharing:

|                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Minimum 20 passengers</b> | <b>US\$ 4,250.00</b> |
| Additional for Single Room   | <b>US\$ 795.00</b>   |

**NOTE:** For passengers originating from Manila, airfare is available upon request.

### **PAYMENT & CANCELLATION POLICY:**

- 1) US\$ 1,000.00 deposit is required upon reservations together with a recent passport-size photo, a signed photocopy of passport (valid for 6 months from date of departure) and Pilgrim's Profile. Deposits and full payment may be remitted via bank transfer to:

Account Name: **EXECUTIVE RESOURCES, INC.**

Bank: **BANCO DE ORO**

Address: **BDO - Roxas Blvd - Coast Residences Branch**  
**Roxas Blvd. corner Dapitan St., Brgy. 7**

**Pasay City, Manila, Philippines**

Savings Account No.: **10447-006129-0**

Swift Code: **BNORPHMM**

**Note:** Please arrange with your bank to remit in full and email us a copy of the bank transaction.

- 2) Full payment in U.S. dollars is required before ticketing but in no case shall it be later than 60 days before departure date.
- 3) All cancellations must be done in writing. The following charges will apply:
  - > 90 days before departure date - US\$1,000.00 deposit is forfeited.
  - > 60 days before departure date - 50% of the Tour Cost
  - > 45 days prior to departure date - Full tour cost will be forfeited.

#### **CONDITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**BASIC TOUR COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:** Visa fees and documentation expenses, insurance, hospitalization and other medical expenses, tours and transportation during free periods, hotel portorage of extra pieces of luggage in excess of maximum allocation of one (1) pc of luggage, drinks and beverages taken during meals, items of personal nature such as laundry, telephone, room service, extra airline baggage allowance, and other expenses not mentioned in the itinerary terms and conditions.

**EXECUTIVE RESOURCES, INC.** has arranged for the various tour services to be performed under the responsibility of various contractors. Executive Resources, Inc., its employees or its sub-agents therefore only act as agents for the contractors providing the various services described in the tour and accept no responsibility or liability in connection with losses or accidental expenses due to delays of schedule, overbooking, defaults or "*force majeure*." All tours and arrangements are subject to the general conditions specified by each contractor. Tour itineraries and prices are subject to change without prior notice. When making a tour booking, the passenger acknowledges and accepts the foregoing conditions. ***When making a tour booking, the passenger acknowledges and accepts the foregoing conditions.***

**\*\*\* RATES AND ITINERARY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE! \*\*\***

**For reservations and more details, please contact:**

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