

St Joseph's Upminster Jubilee Year Pilgrimage October 2025



Every 25 years the church holds a Jubilee year, traditionally associated with pilgrimage to Rome, the city of the apostles Peter and Paul.

We are hoping to take a parish group to Rome in October 2025. Bookings will open later in the autumn, but here is a provisional outline of what we are offering. At the moment there are two possible versions under consideration: a final decision will be made before booking opens later in the year, based on feedback from those interested.

<p>Option 1: Assisi and Rome (Palazzola) Sunday 26th – Friday 31st October £1299</p> <p>Day 1 Flight Stansted – Rome; coach to Chianciano Terme nr Assisi (2 nights)</p> <p>Day 2 Full day Assisi</p> <p>Day 3 Coach to Palazzola via Orvieto; free time at Palazzola</p> <p>Day 4 Papal Audience – free time Rome</p> <p>Day 5 Vatican Museum & St Peters</p> <p>Day 6 St Pauls outside walls – St John Lateran Church – St Maria Maggiore Return flight</p>	<p>Option 2: Rome (Palazzola) Tuesday 28th – Friday 31st October £999</p> <p>Day 1 Flight Stansted – Rome; coach to Palazzola; free time at Palazzola</p> <p>Day 2 Papal Audience – free time Rome</p> <p>Day 3 Vatican Museum & St Peters</p> <p>Day 4 St Pauls outside walls – St John Lateran Church – St Maria Maggiore Return flight</p>
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Where are we staying?

We have decided to stay in the Villa Palazzola, overlooking Lake Albano a little way out from Rome. Palazzola faces the town of Castel Gondolfo across the lake, the location of the papal summer retreat. Palazzola is owned by the Venerable English College, our seminary in Rome, and used as a summer retreat for the seminarians. It is set in beautiful grounds including its own swimming pool and tennis court (the pool may not be available at this time of year however) and the rooms are best described as rustic but decent. Meals at Palazzola are eaten at a communal table and consist of good Italian home cooking. Find out more at palazzola.net



What will we be doing?

It is a pilgrimage, not a holiday. This is not to say it won't be enjoyable and relaxing – of course we hope it will! But we will be making the most of our days in Rome and the emphasis will be on churches and other places associated with the martyrs of Rome, rather than the other things Rome has to offer. There will be Mass every day, either in the chapel at Palazzola or in a church or chapel in the city. It is of course impossible to 'do' all of Rome in a few days and there is always going to be more to come back for. Subject to the Pope's schedule we will aim to go to the Wednesday audience, though this does take up a whole morning.

Who is this for?

Anyone is welcome to book a place. It is a *parish* pilgrimage, but we are likely to need to advertise in other local parishes to make a viable group, and you are welcome to bring other friends and relatives. You don't need to be Catholic, but (see above) the programme will likely be of greater interest to those who are at least sympathetic to Catholicism. No one will be forced to stay with the group every day, of course, but since we are travelling together as a parish group on pilgrimage, our fellowship during the day and in the evening are an important part and hopefully we will enjoy getting to know one another better, including those who aren't current St Joseph's parishioners.

Why can't we stay in central Rome?

Due to the Jubilee year Rome will be even busier than usual and accommodation in the city is already pretty well booked up. No doubt there are some spaces available but it is harder accommodating a large group and we don't want to be scrapping the bottom of the barrel in terms of accommodation. We have decided to go for somewhere reliable in a beautiful setting, and accept this will mean travelling by coach into Rome. The journey time is under an hour on a good day.

What does the cost include and not include?

Included: Flights, half-board accommodation (with wine usually on the table at supper in Palazzola), transport in Rome and admission to anywhere we go as a group that charges an admission fee.

Not included: Personal shopping, lunches and snacks, donations in churches, drinks at the bar, travel insurance (a policy will be offered by the agent, and some form of insurance strongly advised), transport to and from our departure airport in the UK (though we will organise a coach), potentially a single room supplement.

Is this suitable for families and children?

All ages are welcome. There won't be child-specific activities planned, but we would hope children would get something out of the visits and enjoy the overall experience. In terms of cost, the price is already based on sharing rooms and the transport costs are per person, so it is unlikely that we would be able to offer a significant reduction for children or families. Obviously until we know who has booked we can't say if there will be other children or teenagers of a similar age to your own. We have chosen to go in half term to make it easier for families with children at school, as well as school staff.

We are also aware that there is traditionally a trip from Campion School to Rome over the first weekend of the October half term, also based in Palazzola. As things stand, we will arrive at Palazzola on the day they leave.

Is this suitable for people with limited mobility / high personal care needs?

Generally the places we visit will not involve a lot of steps, but older buildings may not be quite up to full modern accessibility standards. There will be a fair amount of walking: if you can manage a full day of sightseeing in London you will probably be fine in Rome. If you use a wheelchair or mobility scooter then it should be possible to transport it, and we can arrange assistance at the airport, but if you need assistance more generally then you would need to book a place for a travelling companion. It is not safe to assume someone from the group will be able to provide that assistance for the whole trip. As this is not a pilgrimage specifically intended for the sick (as for example Lourdes is), we will not be accompanied by a medical support team and would need to use local services where necessary, with assistance from the tour operator and staff at Palazzola.

Are single rooms available?

Palazzola has a mix of single, shared and family rooms, some en-suite and some with shared facilities close by. Palazzola would endeavour to accommodate individual preferences, and there may be a supplement or discount depending on the specific room provided.

Why is it so expensive?

Unfortunately travel is increasingly expensive and whilst individuals could probably organise a few days in Rome for considerably less, using a group travel agency

(providing greater confidence and reassurance) and providing local transport for a group as well as a guide/fixer all adds to the cost but makes for a better pilgrimage for all. Hopefully having more than a year's notice will aid budgeting, but we recognise this will not be for everyone.

How will we decide which option to go for?

Originally this was conceived as a six day trip starting with Assisi. This is still a possibility, but to see if more people would be interested in a shorter (and therefore cheaper) trip, Fr Matthew asked the travel company to give us two options. It is not the case that some of us can do the longer one and some the shorter, because the Assisi part (including coach to and from Rome) is costed for the whole group. Fr Matthew will therefore be canvassing opinion from those who have expressed interest in the trip – if we can get the numbers we need for the longer trip we will probably go for that one. There is a small possibility that provided we have the minimum numbers for Assisi, we could work with Palazzola and the tour operator to accommodate a small additional number of people for the days in Rome, probably making your own flight bookings – this is not a given however.

To register your interest, if you haven't done so yet, please visit tinyurl.com/stjrome25

Please note that all the information in this flyer is provisional and does not constitute an offer of a specific travel package. Bookings will be subject to the terms and conditions of the travel agent we use, and information from the travel agent takes precedence over the above. Information about how to book, payment schedules, and the terms you need to agree to will be provided in due course.

