

UNIVERSITY OF
ST. THOMAS

Annual **PRESIDENT'S TRIP**

In the Footsteps of ★ St. Thomas Aquinas

★ **Milan** ★ **Florence** ★ **Assisi** ★ **Rome** ★ **Orvieto** ★ **Roccasecca** ★
★ **Fossanova** ★ **Monte Cassino** ★ **Naples** ★ **Amalfi Coast** ★

Join UST President Dr. Sinda K. Vanderpool and First Gentleman Terry Vanderpool on their first-ever President's Trip, a spiritual and cultural journey exploring the life and legacy of St. Thomas Aquinas, our University's patron.

Walk where St. Thomas Aquinas lived, studied, and taught—and deepen your understanding of his profound influence on faith and reason. Joining us as our spiritual guide is Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB. Professor of Philosophy Dr. Brian Carl will serve as the scholarly expert on St. Thomas Aquinas.

MAY 14 - 26, 2026

For more information, please contact Cindy Viaud at 713-525-2162 or viaudc@stthom.edu



DAY 1 – FLIGHT TO MILAN

Your pilgrimage begins today, boarding your flight to Milan. Sit back and relax as you cross the Atlantic and prepare for this amazing spiritual adventure in Italy!

DAY 2 – ARRIVAL IN MILAN

Welcome to Italy! Upon arriving in Milan, your tour manager and driver will greet you. Enjoy some free time for breakfast or lunch before checking into your hotel. Spend the rest of the day exploring Milan's vibrant culture, from the elegant Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II to relaxing at a café. Mass will be celebrated, followed by a delightful dinner together.

DAY 3 – THE SPLENDOR OF MILAN

After breakfast, explore the treasures of Milan, beginning with the majestic Duomo, a stunning Gothic cathedral. Visit the Basilica of Saint Ambrose, a fourth-century church, followed by the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, home to Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper (availability permitting). Next, admire Castel Sforzesco, a fortress rich in history and art, and the beautiful façade of La Scala Opera House. Mass will be celebrated, followed by dinner at a riverside restaurant before returning to your hotel.

DAY 4 – FLORENCE: THE HEART OF THE RENAISSANCE

Today, we depart for Florence, the cradle of the Renaissance. First, visit the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with Brunelleschi's magnificent dome, then explore the Baptistry of San Giovanni and the Uffizi Gallery, featuring works by Botticelli, Michelangelo, and Raphael. Mass will be celebrated, and dinner will be served at our hotel, followed by a relaxing evening.

DAY 5 – ASSISI

This morning, you travel to Assisi, a serene medieval town. You visit the Basilica of St. Francis and reflect at his tomb, seeing the San Damiano crucifix that inspired Francis to "Rebuild My Church." Nearby, the Basilica of St. Clare honors the life of St. Clare. You also explore the Santuario della Spogliazione, where Saint Carlo Acutis is buried. After Mass, enjoy free time for prayer, shopping, or strolling through Assisi's stone streets before returning to your hotel for dinner.

DAY 6 – ASSISI TO ORVIETO

Your day begins at St. Mary of the Angels Basilica, home of the Porziuncola chapel, where St. Francis and his early brothers prayed. Next, experience a warm Umbrian welcome at a local vineyard with wine tasting and a regional lunch. Then, visit the stunning Orvieto Cathedral, known for the Eucharistic Miracle of Bolsena, where Mass will be celebrated. Finally, travel to Rome for dinner and overnight accommodations at your hotel.

DAY 7 – PAPAL AUDIENCE & ST. PETER'S BASILICA

This morning, you join pilgrims for the Papal Audience with Pope Leo XIV. The atmosphere is filled with joy and hope. Then, visit St. Peter's Basilica, home to Michelangelo's Pietà and Bernini's altar canopy. The spiritual weight is unforgettable. Mass will be celebrated, followed by a leisurely afternoon. Dinner tonight is on a rooftop terrace with city views.

DAY 8 – DOMINICAN ROME

Today, we celebrate Dominican heritage in Rome. You start at Santa Sabina on Aventine Hill, an ancient church where St. Dominic prayed and St. Thomas Aquinas taught. Then, visit Santa

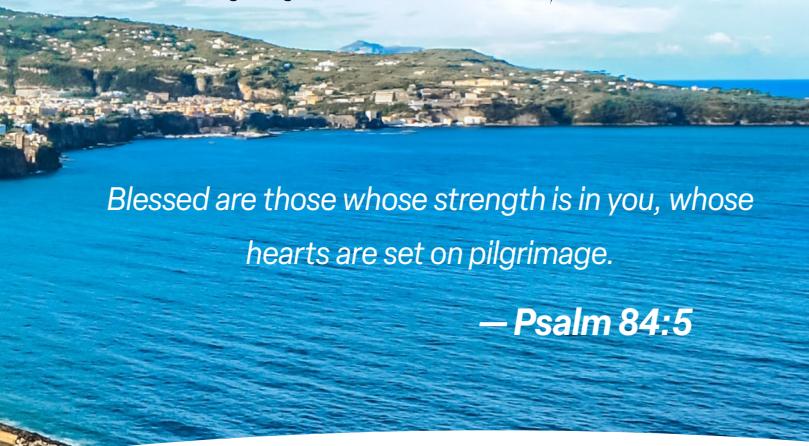
what's included

\$8,049

Round-Trip from Houston (IAH)

Price also includes a \$750 donation to the University of St. Thomas Scholarship Fund, which is tax deductible. Please consult your tax advisor.





Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

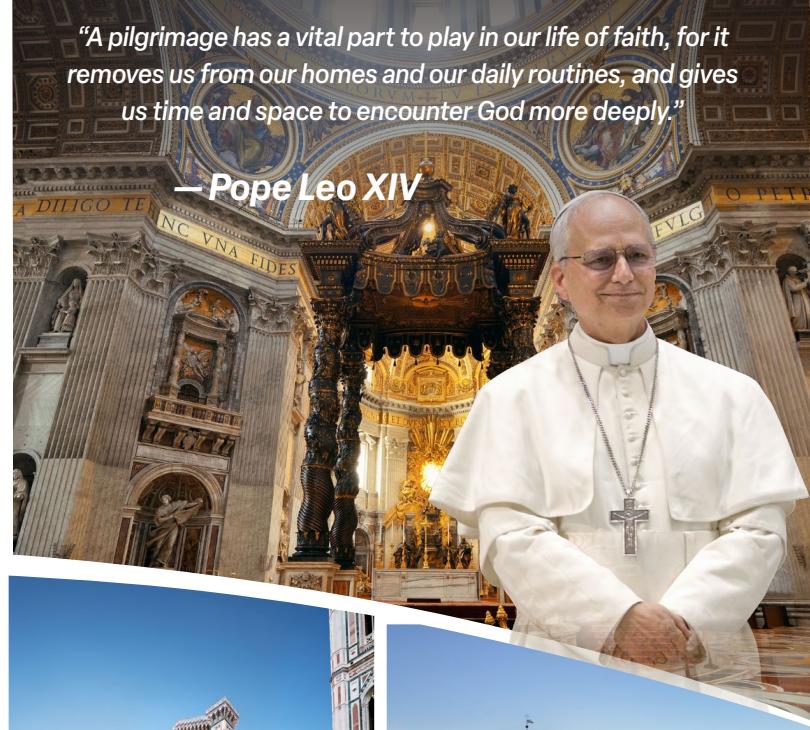
— Psalm 84:5



Duomo
Milan



Orvieto Cathedral
Orvieto

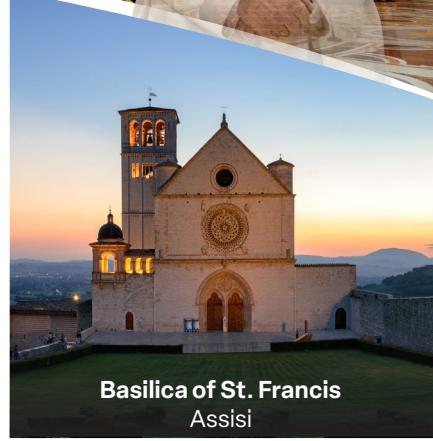


“A pilgrimage has a vital part to play in our life of faith, for it removes us from our homes and our daily routines, and gives us time and space to encounter God more deeply.”

— Pope Leo XIV



Santa Maria del Fiore
Florence



Basilica of St. Francis
Assisi

Maria sopra Minerva, a Gothic church located near the Pantheon, which is linked to Galileo. Your next stop will be the Basilica of St. Clemente. We will celebrate Mass and end our day with dinner and a restful night at your hotel.

DAY 9 — ROCCASECCA, FOSSANOVA, & PRIVERNO

Today, you trace the steps of St. Thomas Aquinas, starting in Roccasecca, his birthplace. Next, visit the Abbey of Fossanova, where he spent his final days in prayer. In Priverno, you'll see a chapel that houses what is believed to be his skull, a significant site for pilgrims. Mass will be celebrated here before returning to Rome for dinner and a restful night at your hotel.

DAY 10 — MONTECASSINO TO NAPLES

Today's journey takes you to Montecassino, founded by St. Benedict in 529. The Abbey stands as a symbol of prayer and resilience. You'll visit the basilica, the relics of Saints Benedict and Scholastica, and the serene cloisters. A Mass will be celebrated before you head to Naples. Tonight's dinner is hosted at a lovely Campania vineyard, showcasing the best of southern Italian hospitality.

DAY 11 — NAPLES

This morning, visit the University of Naples Chapel, where St. Thomas Aquinas once taught. Enjoy an authentic Neapolitan pizza lunch, then explore the historic Naples Cathedral, home to the relics of St. Januarius. Mass will be celebrated. Optional: Hike Mt. Vesuvius, the volcano overlooking the Bay of Naples. We'll return to your hotel for dinner afterward.

DAY 12 — THE AMALFI COAST

Today is a highlight of our journey. After morning Mass, we travel to Salerno and board a boat to explore the stunning Amalfi Coast. Enjoy views of Positano's colorful homes cascading down the cliffs and visit the historic town of Amalfi, where we'll see the impressive Cathedral of St. Andrew. We'll return to Naples for dinner at your hotel.

DAY 13 — FAREWELL TO ITALY

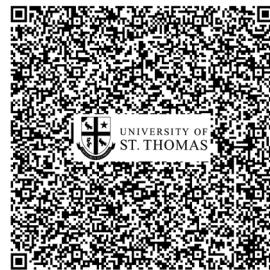
This morning, you head to the airport for your return flight home with hearts full of gratitude for the blessings of this journey.

register by mail or online

You may pay via the online “payment” link we set up exclusively for our travelers. Please click [here](#) to access the page or scan the QR code. To register by mail, send in completed registration form, copy of your passport picture page, and deposit to:

University of St. Thomas
Attn: Cindy Viaud
3800 Montrose Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77006

★ **Full Payment Due By 03/16/2026**



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

YOUR PACKAGE INCLUDES

Air Transportation: Economy class and round-trip airfares are based on the time of the reservation. Rates and times are subject to change without notice. Airfares, once issued, are non-refundable, non-transferable, and cannot be used towards future travel.

Land Transportation: All land transportation as described in the itinerary will be by Deluxe Motor Coach. Some may be equipped with Wi-Fi service.

Hotels: Your hotels will be first-class with double occupancy (2 people per room with a private bath). Neither Nativity Pilgrimage nor the trip coordinator are responsible for providing a roommate.

Meal Plan: The meal plan offers breakfast & dinner daily, unless otherwise stated.

Baggage: Most airlines limit passengers to one (1) piece of checked luggage and one (1) carry-on. All passengers should check with the airlines carriers for up to date baggage weight and dimensions.

Airport Fees: Airport Taxes, Porterage, Fuel Surcharges and Security Fees

Medical Insurance: Medical coverage for the duration of your trip.

YOUR PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE

Cancellation Insurance: We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance upon registration.

Passport Expenses: This includes any passports or additional travel documents that may be required. Passports must be valid until at least 6 months from your return date.

Personal Expenses: Laundry, beverages (including wine, liquor, mineral water, tea, coffee, etc.), meals or food items not listed on the included menu plan, and any excess or additional luggage.

Non-itinerary fees: Any sightseeing or service fees or personal items that are not specifically mentioned as being included in the itinerary.

Non-included meals: You are responsible for any meals not specified in your itinerary.

Tips/Gratuities: This includes tour guides, drivers, hotel service staff, and wait staff.

GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Group Air: Group Air differs from individually purchased airline tickets in that it is subject to the terms and conditions of the airlines. For this reason, we need to receive your registration and full payment by the payment deadline. After that date, registrations may be subject to a different air rate, ticketing method, or on a different airline. Additional fees and charges may apply. Group air flights are confirmed 60 - 90 days prior to departure.

Departure Cities: If your departure city is not listed on the brochure, indicate which airport you would like to depart from on the registration form. We will provide you with the best possible price and flight schedule in order to connect with the group. Additional fees and charges may apply.

Land-Only Option: If you would like to book your own air travel, indicate on your registration form that you want the "Land Only" option. This amount equals to the total tour price minus \$800 for all destinations except Mexico, which is minus \$350. By booking your own air, you may select your seat, airline, and travel schedule, use airline miles/points, provide airline reward program information, and make any special requests directly with the airline. No changes can be made after the final payment deadline. Land-only services begin and end at the hotels unless you are able to meet the group at the airport. Land-only travelers are responsible for their own airport transfers.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

The airline selects seat assignments for group air, not the tour operator. Seat upgrades are available for registered travelers, by request. Quoted rates for an upgrade are subject to change until payment is received. Some upgrades are not available until the group tickets are issued.

Single Room: Tour price is based on double occupancy. If you'd like a single room, there is an additional cost per person as specified on the registration form. Single rooms are limited and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Seat Upgrades: Once Nativity Pilgrimage receives an upgrade or seat location request, we will contact the airlines to finalize your request. We cannot guarantee the acceptance of this request as it is subject to availability and pricing (which changes daily).

Other Special Requests: Once Nativity Pilgrimage receives a special request, such as a wheelchair, food, etc., we will contact the airlines to finalize your request. We cannot guarantee acceptance of this request as it is subject to availability and pricing (which changes daily)

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Deposit: A non-refundable deposit of \$300.00 per person is required at the time of booking. No reservation will be processed without a deposit.

Payment Deadline: Full payment is due 03/16/2026 (60 Days before departure). Late registrations received after the deadline require an additional \$100 (subject to availability). If payment is not made in full 50 days prior to departure, your payments are non-refundable.

Payment Methods: We accept major credit cards, checks, and money orders.

LATE PAYMENT POLICY

Customers will receive Late Fees if they are not paid in full:

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE	FEES
60 - 30 days	\$300
30 days - day before departure	subject to cancellation

Customers are also responsible for any difference in fare due to late payment (subject to availability). Refusal to pay will be considered a cancellation.

CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICY

We hope that nothing will prevent you from taking your pilgrimage with Nativity Pilgrimage, however, should you need to cancel your trip, your cancellation must be in writing via email or letter. It will be effective on the date of receipt. The following cancellation fees will apply:

PRIOR TO DEPARTURE	PENALTY
100 + days	Lose deposit
59 - 50 days	50% of trip cost
49 days or less	100% of trip cost

Insurance premiums are non-refundable. We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance to avoid these cancellation fees.

PROTECT YOUR TRIP

Every pilgrim traveling with Nativity will receive complimentary medical insurance that provides coverage for the full duration of your trip.

We also strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation insurance (available at an additional cost) to safeguard your travel investment in case unforeseen circumstances require you to cancel. Please contact our office for details about trip cancellation insurance options.

Important: If you plan to purchase Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) coverage, it must be purchased at the time of registration.

RESPONSIBILITY

Nativity Pilgrimage, Inc. and their agents assume no liability or responsibility in regards to travel in any form for any injuries or loss of property, accidents, delays, changes in schedule or itinerary, incidental damages or any irregular circumstances. This would include, but not limited to, default or omission by any third party providing services or facilities related to and/or included in the tour or any part thereof.

The IATA carriers, steamship firms and other transportation companies, whose services are featured in these tours, are not to be held responsible or accountable for any act, omission or event during the time the passengers are not on board their respective conveyance. The passage contract in use by these companies, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the companies and the purchaser of these tours and/or passengers and Nativity Pilgrimage, Inc. does not assume any liability or responsibility in connection therewith. They are not responsible for any losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, guarantees, or other causes. All such losses or expenses shall be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar quality to those specified in the itinerary. Nativity Pilgrimage reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure. Refund details vary upon each trip. No refund will be made for any used portion of the tour unless arrangements are made prior to departure from the United States. Prices and itineraries are subject to change without notice if booking conditions are not complied with.