

Walking with Sacred Purpose

A Guideline for the Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi (CHA Ecclesiology and Spiritual Renew Program)

What Is a Pilgrimage?

A **pilgrimage** is an intentional journey of the heart and soul—a movement toward something sacred, often taken to deepen one’s relationship with the divine, to seek healing, or to reconnect with the deeper purpose of one’s life. Pilgrimage is rooted in many spiritual traditions. In the Catholic faith, it is a living prayer, an embodied path through history, symbol, and sacred space. To go on pilgrimage is to step out of ordinary time and enter sacred time—to walk with reverence through places saturated with centuries of prayer, where saints lived and died, where the faithful gathered, and where God is sought with hope and longing. In this formation pilgrimage, you will enter into the rhythm of stillness and movement, encounter beauty that speaks to the soul, and experience the invitation to align your own leadership with the healing mission of Catholic health care.

Whether you are Catholic, from another tradition, or not religious at all, you are welcome here. Pilgrimage honors the seeker in each of us. It is not about uniformity of belief, but unity of spirit, humility, and curiosity.

Common Customs at Holy Sites

- **Quiet Reverence:** Churches and basilicas are sacred spaces for prayer. Speak softly, move gently.
- **Dress Modestly:** Shoulders and knees should be covered inside churches and at Mass.
- **Photos:** Ask before taking photos – some spaces prohibit photography.
- **Silence Phones:** Keep phones off or silent, especially during liturgies or while visiting sacred spaces.

Key Sacred Sites You’ll Visit

- **St. Peter’s Basilica (Rome)** – The heart of global Catholicism, where art, theology, and tradition converge.
- **Basilica of St. Francis (Assisi)** – Home of St. Francis, patron of peace, simplicity, and care for the poor.
- **Basilica of St. Clare (Assisi)** – Honoring the courage and contemplative strength of one of Francis’s closest companions.
- **Sistine Chapel and Vatican Museum (Rome)** – A sacred place of worship and home to iconic treasures of art and history.

Attending Catholic Mass

During this pilgrimage, we will celebrate Eucharistic liturgy. Participation is always welcome but never required. Here's what to expect:

Mass Basics: If You're Not Catholic:

Mass is the central act of Catholic worship, recalling the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples.

It includes:

- Readings from Scripture
- A homily (reflection by the priest)
- Prayers for the world and those in need
- The Eucharist (Communion)—bread and wine Catholics believe become the Body and Blood of Christ
- You are warmly welcome to attend and participate as you feel comfortable.
- During Communion, you may remain seated or come forward with arms crossed over your chest to receive a blessing instead of the Eucharist.

For more information on the Mass, review [“A Walk Through the Mass: A Step-by-Step Explanation.”](#)

A Spirit of Pilgrimage

- Curiosity is Welcome: Ask questions—your guides and companions will gladly share insights.
- Silence is Sacred: Embrace moments of quiet reflection; they are essential to the soul's unfolding.
- Community is Key: You are part of a tradition that values compassion, dignity, and the common good. This is a journey to connect—not just to the past—but to one another.



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