



October 2017

Notes from Assisi pilgrims...

As many of you know — we moved in with two of our other sisters—Colleen and Jo in August... and after about a week and a half, we had a visit from Hurricane Irma. We got many tree branches down which took us two days to clean up but we were very fortunate not to have had any damage. We were without power for about 1 week.. At one point we cancelled our scheduled trip to Assisi as we did not want to leave the sisters with all the work as well as checking to see if others were in need of any help. After checking we found that we could still make the trip to Assisi... We had several days in Rome with wonderful accommodations and many places to visit. Before we continue, I forgot to mention that we were truly blest to have three excellent guides.... All three are so very well versed in Franciscan Spirituality... we got the cream of the crop.. Murray Bodo, Andre Cirino and Sr. Frances Teresa — a Poor Clare. We had a wonderful group of 19 participating and we bonded so quickly...The presenters were so down to earth and really had us in stitches... Once we got to the Umbrian area — we began our visits to the various places that Francis travelled and prayed, etc. Many of the places were way up in the hills and many of us wondered how did Francis do it... such distances with no place to stay but in caves. We held our breath as the bus wound up the hills... The scenery was spectacular and the visits with the explanations of Francis' presence was so enlightening... all through out our visit we felt like we were walking on holy ground..... Assisi was all up and down streets with steep steps to various places we were visiting. With the expert guidance of our three directors... we saw and learned so much of Francis and Clare... they took us places that we never knew about. Our Eucharistic celebrations were powerful with homilies that were soul searching and nourishing. We had some wonderful rituals with themes around our various visits for that day. Celebrating the Feast of Francis in Assisi was more than one can imagine. Our group had a very meaningful Transitus in our chapel and then some of the group went to the Portuncula for the big celebrations with much pomp and circumstance...on the feast itself there were great parades from the piazza with dignitaries from all the various parts of Italy present. The school children beginning with the three years old led the procession.. Each grade chose a peace maker and made a hugh banner and marched behind it — each grade with olive branches with various color ribbons all marched from the piazza to St. Francis Basilica... such a powerful witness. We really cannot put into words such a tremendous experience. We would highly recommend the study program to everyone. Everything is so well planned and executed... we really had nothing to worry about except to be present and be open to all God was doing for us.

We remembered you in Assisi and ask you to pray for all the people of Assisi as well as the poor and struggling throughout the world. We are so very grateful to our community for making this opportunity available.... We have been putting our names in for the Assisi lottery for about 20 years and so very surprised and grateful that we finally got picked. This experience has deepened our knowledge of Francis and Clare and it has also changed us — transformed us... and with God's help we can share this with others. Thank you for your prayers and support as we travelled to Assisi. It meant so much.. It is good to be home but we think we left a little piece of our hearts in Assisi....

With much love and prayers,