

THE HOLY FACE OF ABRUZZO

Nature, spirituality and faith



DAY 1

Arrival at Rome or Ancona airport.

Transfer to **Campoli** and visit of the *Holy Stairs* that are preserved in the **Church of St. Paul**.

The privilege of permitting the absolution of sins and, on some days, plenary indulgence with the same value as in Rome was endorsed by Pope Clementine XIV in 1772. In the afternoon, visit of **Basilica of Saint Gabriel**, which nestles amid the stupendous scenery of the **Gran Sasso**, and contains the *Shrine of the Saint*. Dinner and overnight (Teramo area).

DAY 2

Located in the heart of the city of **Chieti** stands the *Cathedral of San Giustino*, one of the most important religious buildings of Abruzzo. Chieti is on top of a hill, only a few miles from the Adriatic Sea and the Majella mountain range with views of both, and the heart of a winegrowing region. See the Cathedral and the other minor, but wonderful, churches of the city centre.

In the afternoon visit of **Bucchianico**, a small town with very old origins, with its *convent* dedicated to Saint Camillo De Lellis, who dedicated his life to assisting and comforting the sick, revolutionizing the approach to care of the infirm, the *Church of S. Francesco* and the *Church of S. Urbano*. Dinner and overnight (Chieti area).

DAY 3

Departure for the **San Clemente Abbey** in **Casauria**, built in 871 for the Emperor Ludovico II.

At the foot of the Mount Majella northern slope, near the ancient village of **Manoppello**, the **Volto Santo Sanctuary** is home of a delicate veil bearing the image of a male face, said to be Christ. Recent studies suggest that this relic, alongside the Holy Shroud in Turin, are the only known examples of “acheropita” images of Christ, in other words, images not created by human hand.

A visit to Abruzzo hermitages is a memorable experience. Surrounded by vast mountain ranges,

lost in the hush of pure nature, the retreats appear from nowhere and are icons of the ideal fusion between divinity and nature. See the most famous of them: the ***Hermitage of Santo Spirito***. Dinner and overnight (Chieti area).



DAY 4

The ***Hermitage of Sant'Onofrio*** is located in **Serramonacesca**, in the Majella National Park. After about a 20-minutes walk, the small building rises at the top of the unyielding Sant'Onofrio gorge, protected by an enormous rock. Built up between XI-XIV centuries around a cave, it was almost certainly ruled by the nearby ***Benedictine Abbey of San Liberatore***, that we'll visit during the afternoon. Accommodation at the hotel and free time to relax. Dinner and overnight (Lanciano area).

DAY 5

In the centre of **Lanciano**, the ***Church of San Francesco*** is the location of the Catholic church's most ancient testimony of Eucharistic miracle. Some time in the 1700s, in the Church of San Legonziano, a Brazilian monk expressed his doubts about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. During the Mass the consecrated host and wine were transformed into real flesh and blood, still preserved in the Church of San Francesco.

The ***Madonna dei Miracoli*** at **Casalbordino** is a sanctuary whose origins are linked to the miraculous apparition of the Blessed Virgin during Pentecost 1576.

Vasto is deeply attached to the ***Madonna dell'Incoronata***, originating from a miraculous episode of 1738. The Church of Santa Maria Maggiore has its own precious relic, a thorn from Christ's crown, given by Pope Pius IV to Alfonso D'Avalos, and which is seen to sprout a white down on Good Friday.

The historical centre of **Montedorisio**, with its walls, majestic castle, the Church of San Giovanni Battista, the watch towers and the access doors to the city, evokes its medieval past at every corner. Whoever arrives in town is greeted also by the ***Madonna delle Grazie shrine***, built after a sequence of miraculous events started in 1886, and now a pilgrimage destination for the entire

region. Dinner and overnight (Lanciano area).



DAY 6

Ortona, ancient city of Roman origins, is located on the top of a hill that dominates the sea.

The *Basilica of Saint Thomas* is the second cathedral of the archdiocese of Lanciano-Ortona, where the relics of Saint Thomas Apostle have been kept into since 1258.

After the visit and some free time to explore the city on your own, transfer to the airport and end of the tour.