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***In the Footsteps of Paul & the Masters of the Renaissance:  
Greece-Italy Tour  
Mount Vernon Nazarene University  
Hosted by Dr. C. Jeanne Serrão & Prof. John Donnelly  
February 25-March 11, 2023***

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**February 25, Saturday: U.S.A. to Athens**

- Departure from U.S. gateway city to be announced to our destination, the cradle of Western Civilization, Athens, Greece. Meals will be served on board. We'll be met by our guide at the airport. Depending on arrival time, we could bus tour the city.

**February 26, Sunday: Athens - Acropolis, Parthenon, Mars Hill, Agora, Agora Museum**

- Our day begins at the Acropolis where we will visit the Propylaea, the Parthenon, and the Erechtheion.
- From there we arrive at Mars Hill (site of the Aeropagus) where the apostle Paul stood before the city council and preached his famous sermon recorded in Acts 17:22-31.
- We walk the Agora, the marketplace of Athens where Socrates, among many, strolled the narrow streets.
- Finally, we visit the Agora Museum, which houses art dating all the way back to the Stone Age, plus everyday life objects, and artifacts directly related to the Athenian democratic functions during the Classical period.
- We drive to Syntagma (or Constitution) Square and maybe see the change of the guard in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier if it can be arranged.
- Breakfast and dinner at our hotel, lunch on our own. Hotel TBA

**February 27, Monday: Athens - Acropolis Museum, Athens Archaeological Museum**

- Visit the Acropolis Museum, an archaeological museum focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens. The museum was built to house every artifact found on the rock and on the surrounding slopes, from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece. It also lies over the ruins of a part of Roman and early Byzantine Athens.
- We stroll the Plaka, known as the neighborhood of the Gods given its proximity to the Acropolis. This historical neighborhood is dotted with restaurants, shops, and coffee houses for shopping and lunch.
- We visit the world-famous Athens Archaeological Museum which houses some of the most important artifacts from a variety of archaeological locations around Greece from

prehistory to late antiquity. It is considered one of the greatest museums in the world and contains the richest collection of artifacts from Greek antiquity worldwide.

- We will gather back at the hotel for dinner and overnight.

### **February 28, Tuesday: Distomo - Delphi**

- On the way to Delphi, we stop south of the town of Distomo where the Hosios Loukas monastery is. Founded in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by the hermit, Venerable (Greek: Hosios) Luke of Steiris, whose relics are kept in the monastery to this day. There we will see the best-preserved complex of mosaics from the Macedonian Renaissance Period (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.) and the burial crypt to see the frescoes painted in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century.
- We then make the beautiful drive northwest to Delphi the center of the ancient world, the “omphalos” (navel) of the earth whose prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenic world. Located on the slopes of Mt. Parnassos in a landscape of natural beauty and majesty, we will walk the Sacred Way (Via Sacra) to the Treasury of the Athenians, the Theater, and the Temple of Apollo where the Oracle or Pythia, performed her prophetic rituals.
- Time permitting, we will also visit the nearby Tholos, the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia.
- Shopping and lunchtime in Delphi. We return to Athens for dinner and overnight.

### **March 1, Wednesday: Corinth, Mycenae, Athens**

- We begin our day with a drive to ancient Corinth. In route, we will visit the Corinthian Canal which is a 4 mile man-made cut across the narrow Isthmus of Corinth.
- Before arriving in the ancient city, we will drive up the hill to Acrocorinth, the acropolis of Corinth. The city's ancient acropolis, already an easily defensible position due to its location, was further heavily fortified during the Byzantine Empire. It was defended against the Crusaders for three years.
- We arrive in ancient Corinth, where Silas and Timothy rejoined Paul and where the Apostle lived and preached for a year and a half. While in ministry at Corinth, Paul wrote First and Second Thessalonians to the newly established church in Thessalonica. Later, the church at Corinth would receive two letters from Paul (First and Second Corinthians). Paul met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth who came to Corinth from Rome due to persecution during the reign of Claudius. We will see Corinth's Greek and Roman sites associated with Paul's ministry: the Agora, the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Odeon, the Bema, and Gallio's Seat.
- From Corinth, we proceed west for a short drive west to Mycenae. Mycenae is one of the most important archaeological sites of Greece. The fortified citadel is nested over the fertile plain of Argolis near the seashore in the northeast Peloponnese. Mycenae is the largest and most important center of the civilization that was named "Mycenaean" after this citadel. Mycenaean is the culture that dominated mainland Greece, the Aegean islands, and the shores of Asia Minor during the late Bronze Age era (circa 1600-1100 B.C.).

- We return to Athens for dinner and overnight.

### **March 2, Thursday: Cape Sounion, Athens**

- We drive south to Cape Sounion to enjoy the breathtaking view and visit the archaeological site and the Temple of Poseidon built in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. on the cliffs facing the gulf.
- Early afternoon, we return to Athens and visit the Monastery of Kaisariani. In antiquity, it was probably a site dedicated to Aphrodite, before being taken over by Christians in the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> centuries. This monastery, built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was an important Orthodox religious enclave even during Ottoman times. It features a sophisticated Roman plan bathhouse with hot and cold baths and a warm water heating system for their cells and refectory. The original 11<sup>th</sup> century church houses some beautiful frescoes, most of which date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- We return to Athens for dinner and overnight.

### **March 3, Friday: Fly from Athens to Venice, Italy**

- We say goodbye to Greece and our great guide and fly northwest to the Queen city of the Adriatic, Venice where we will be met by our tour director.
- Depending on arrival time, we will do a walking tour of Venice, some of which could be after dark.
- The city of Venice stretches across 118 small islands along the Adriatic Sea.
- Dinner and overnight in Venice. Hotel TBA

### **March 4, Saturday: Venice**

- We start with guided sightseeing of Venice this morning in the Piazza San Marco with its magnificent cathedral, the fascinating Bridge of Sighs, the 14th-century Doges' Palace, and the Byzantine Basilica.
- We will then visit the Murano Glass Factory for a glass-blowing demonstration for an art form Venice has been known since the 1200s.
- After lunch enjoy a Gondola ride through the romantic canals of Venice.
- The balance of the day is at your leisure. Ask your tour director and professors for options of what to see.
- Dinner and overnight at our hotel.

### **March 5, Sunday: Venice, Bologna, Florence**

- After breakfast at the hotel, we drive to Bologna, the food capital of Italy. Originally an Etruscan city, Bologna has had traces of civilization since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., with significant settlements from about the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
- In Bologna, we'll do a walking tour of the city seeing some of the most important historic sites.

- Visit the Basilica of San Petronio and the city center.
- After lunch, we drive to Florence, "the Cradle of the Renaissance."
- Our tour director will take us on a walking tour of some of the most important sites of Renaissance Florence. Florence was a center of medieval European trade and finance and one of the wealthiest cities of that era. It has been called "the Athens of the Middle Ages."
- Dinner and overnight in Florence. Hotel TBA

### **March 6, Monday: Florence**

- After breakfast, we meet an expert local guide for a full day walking tour.
- Among many sites, we'll visit Giotto's Bell Tower, the Baptistry of Saint John's bronze doors, the Piazza della Signoria, and the Basilica of Santa Croce where, among others, Michelangelo, Machiavelli, and Galileo are buried.
- We'll also visit the Gothic Duomo with its extraordinary dome and the Galleria dell'Accademia to see Michelangelo's "David."
- Later in the day, you'll observe local craftsmen at work during a visit to a Florentine leather factory.
- At the end of the tour, stroll across the Ponte Vecchio for views of the Arno River. Once the shops housed butchers, tanners, and farmers but presently its tenants are jewelers, art dealers, and souvenir sellers (and there's a great gelato shop too).
- This evening, you will enjoy regional cuisine at a special dinner at a local restaurant.
- Overnight in Florence.

### **March 7, Tuesday: Florence**

- After breakfast, we meet our local guide for a visit to the Uffizi Gallery, one of the world's first museums which houses Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" among many other treasures of the Renaissance.
- The afternoon is free for individual exploration and shopping. Talk to your professors and tour director about some options for your afternoon.
- Dinner and overnight in Florence.

### **March 8, Wednesday: Florence, Assisi, Rome**

- After breakfast, we check out of our hotel and start the journey through the rolling hills of Tuscany to the spiritual town of Assisi.
- Your sightseeing in Assisi includes a visit to the Basilica of St. Francis to see its remarkable collection of frescoes by Giotto depicting 28 scenes in the life of the Saint as well as the resting place of St. Francis of Assisi.
- After lunch at a local eatery, we continue our drive southwest to Rome, the Eternal City.
- Dinner and overnight in Rome. Hotel TBA

### **March 9, Thursday: Rome**

- We spend the day exploring the ancient and modern city of Rome. Among the sites in our tour, we'll see the Arch of Constantine, the Circus Maximus, Capitoline Hill, and the sprawling ruins of the Roman Forum. Included are visits to the Colosseum, the world's most glorious surviving Roman amphitheater where gladiators and beasts once allegedly fought, and the Church of St. Peter in Chains where Michelangelo's imposing statue of Moses is housed.
- The afternoon is free to explore other churches, museums, sites, and shopping. Ask your tour director and professors for options of what to see.
- Dinner and overnight in Rome.

### **March 10, Friday: Rome, Vatican City**

- On this morning's guided sightseeing tour, we explore Vatican City, the center of Roman Catholicism. Included are visits to St. Peter's Basilica the world's largest church, the Sistine Chapel, where you can admire Michelangelo's superbly painted ceiling, as well his Pieta and the incomparable Vatican Museums.
- Your afternoon is free for sightseeing or last-minute souvenir shopping. Talk to your professors and tour director about some options for your afternoon.
- We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight (and... packing).

### **March 11, Saturday: Return to the U.S.A.**

- After an early pick up from the hotel, we are transferred to Rome's Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci airport to fly back to the U.S.A.
- Meals will be served on board.

*\*Itinerary sequence and days may be altered to adjust to religious holidays, special closings of sites, air schedules, etc.*