



# The Best Shrines of **FRANCE**

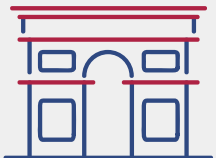
UNDER THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION OF

**FR. BRIAN BRIGOLI**

WITH THE DAILY MASS AT THE HOLY SITES

September 01- 16 2023 (16 Days)

**A 16-DAY TRIP TO THE  
WORLD-FAMOUS CITY  
FULL OF**



- Best Catholic Shrines in France;
- Iconic landmarks,
- Historic architectures,
- Authentic cuisines



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**CONTACT INFO:**

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Avignon, France

## YOUR FRANCE ITINERARY

Including Paris | Lisieux (St. Therese of the Little Flower) Mont St. Michel, Normandy Excursion | Lourdes, Carcassonne | Avignon | Ars (St. John Vianney) | Lyon Excursion | Paray Le Monial (St. Margaret Mary Alacoque), Nevers (St. Bernadette) | La Salette, Notre Dame | Sacre Coeur | Chartres Excursion | Rue De Bac (Our Lady of Miraculous Medal)



### DAY 1: SEPT. 01 – DEPART USA

We depart USA en-route to Paris, with complimentary meals and beverages served aloft.



### DAY 2: SEPT. 02 – PARIS/ ROUEN / LISIEUX

We arrive in Paris. Meet our fellow pilgrims. After every one is accounted for, we depart to Lisieux, stopping in the city of Rouen, the capital city of Normandy for lunch and a brief visit of the Church of St. Joan of Arc, at the square where she was burned at the stake. We will visit other recorded sites where St. Joan of Arc spent during he time in Rouen. Also visit the Joan of Arc chapel in the beautiful Gothic Rouen Cathedral. Then we drive to Lisieux, the home to St. Therese, the Carmelite nun known as “The Little Flower” and a Doctor of the Church. Here we will visit the site of the Lisieux family home, Les Buissonnets, and the Carmelite Convent Chapel which contains the remains of St. Therese. Next, we arrive at the Basilica of St. Therese and celebrate Mass in its Crypt, where St. Therese's parents are entombed. Time permitting, we will visit the Basilica of Lisieux other wise we will finish our visit tomorrow. Check in our hotel, dinner and overnight (D)



### DAY 3: SEPT. 03– LISIEUX: MT. ST. MICHEL EXCURSION

This morning we depart for a long drive to Mont St. Michel, a major place of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages.

It is the celebrated Benedictine abbey on a rocky, cone-shaped island in northwestern France, connected by a causeway with the mainland. Founded in 708, the abbey resisted the assaults of the English during the Hundred Years' War. Its small houses and shops of 13th century is considered outstanding examples of Gothic architecture. Legend has it that the Archangel Michael appeared to Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, inspiring him to build an oratory/a church on what was then called Mont Tombe.

During the Revolution the abbey was closed and converted into a prison, initially to hold clerical opponents of the republican régime. High-profile political prisoners followed, but by 1836 influential figures, including Victor Hugo, had launched a campaign to restore what was seen as a national architectural treasure. The prison was finally closed in 1863, and the mount was declared a historic monument in 1874. Mont Saint Michel and its bay were added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites in 1979. Upon our arrival, we transfer to the base of the mountain and ascend to the Mont St. Michel Abbey Church, for a visit and wonderful panoramic view. Following free time to explore some of Mont St. Michel's cafes and shops, we return to Lisieux and continue our visit to the rest of the sites of St. Therese incase we did not complete our visit the previous day.

Before returning to our hotel, we will have dinner in a restaurant then back to our hotel for a restful night. (B, D).



### LISIEUX



#### DAY 4: SEPT. 04 – LISIEUX / NORMANDY EXCURSION / PARIS

This morning we make our way north to the Normandy Beaches, recalling the D-Day Invasion. On D-Day, 6 June 1944, Allied forces launched a combined naval, air and land assault on Nazi-occupied France. Codenamed Operation 'Overlord', the Allied landings on the Normandy beaches marked the start of a long and costly campaign to liberate north-west Europe from German occupation during World War II. So, what actually happened on D-Day? It is the Invasion of Normandy. The major D-Day Landings began in the early morning of June 6, 1944 when the Allied Forces of Britain, America, Canada, and France attacked German forces on the coast of Normandy, France. They had divided the 60-mile coastal stretch chosen for the invasion into five sectors, codenamed Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah. On the eastern side, British forces were predominant at Sword and Gold, while Canadians led at Juno. With a huge force of over 150,000 soldiers, the Allies attacked and gained a victory that became the turning point for World War II in Europe. Over 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or went missing during the Battle of Normandy. This figure includes over 209,000 Allied casualties, with nearly 37,000 dead amongst the ground forces and a further 16,714 deaths amongst the Allied air forces. Surrounded by steep cliffs and heavily defended, Omaha was the bloodiest of the D-Day beaches, with roughly 2,400 U.S. troops turning up dead, wounded or missing. The troubles for the Americans began early on, when Army intelligence underestimated the number of German soldiers in the area.

We will also visit the museum and the memorial. In honor of those soldiers who died here, we will celebrate Mass at the American cemetery.

After the tour, we drive to Paris for overnight bringing with us the memories of D-Day and praying for the souls who sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom. Dinner and overnight in our hotel near the train station of Montparnasse. Get a restful night in preparation for an early rise. (B, D)



#### DAY 5: SEPT. 05 – PARIS / LOURDES

We will leave very early in the morning to catch our TGV train at 6:48 AM. We leave the hotel at 5:30 AM. Transfer to board our high-speed TGV train to Lourdes. Train ride is about 4 hrs., arriving Lourdes at 11:30 AM. Upon arrival in Lourdes, transfer to our hotel. Today is at your own leisure. Mass will be at the Lourdes Chapel at 4:30 PM. After 9PM, you have the opportunity to join the nightly Rosary procession. Dinner at the hotel. (B, D)



#### DAY 6: SEPT. 06– LOURDES: HEALING BATHS & WALKING TOUR

During your time in Lourdes, you will pray and meditate in yet another site of Our Lady's apparitions. Our Lady first appeared to Bernadette in 1858, and announced herself as "The Immaculate Conception", near the Grotto of Massabielle. At the first two apparitions, little Bernadette prayed the Rosary with Our Lady and left without any exchange of words. During the following apparitions, Our Lady emphasized God's love for us, penance and the necessity of performing acts of penance for sinners. Throughout your time in Lourdes, you will have the opportunity to go to the healing baths early in the morning (8:00AM) before the line gets long; Lunch on your own. After lunch, meet the tour guide at 1:00 PM outside the Tourist Office by the entrance. We will have a 3-hour walking tour: to see Boly Mill, the birthplace of St. Bernadette; and the "Cachot," an abandoned prison where Bernadette's impoverished family lived.



***Our Lady of Lourdes***



Also, while in Lourdes, you will walk in and meditate upon the footsteps of St. Bernadette.

This afternoon, we will have our group Mass at 4:00PM. Also, you are welcome to participate in the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessing of the Sick at 4:30 PM. In the evening following dinner, you will have an opportunity to attend the candle light procession again and the Rosary before a restful overnight. (B, D)



### **DAY 7: SEPT. 07 – LOURDES / CARCASSONNE / AVIGNON**

Ready for an early Mass at the grotto at 7:30 AM. After breakfast, we depart Lourdes this morning by motor coach and make our way across southern France, stopping in the walled city of Carcassonne for lunch. We continue our journey and arrive in Avignon at about 3:00 PM and we will meet our guide for a city tour. Avignon is known throughout France as a city of art and history. Considered the gateway to Provence, the city is most famous for the papal palace that stands within its borders. Palais de Papes served as the seat of the Catholic popes throughout most of the 14th century, and has since been designated a World Heritage Site of the UNESCO. From 1309 to 1377, this legacy can be seen in the massive Palais des Papes (Popes' Palace) in the city center, which is surrounded by medieval stone ramparts which will be part of our visit. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site of equal prominence in Avignon is Petit Palais. The former residence of episcopal bishops, this smaller structure has since been converted into a museum. Another notable attraction in town is Pont Saint Bénézet, Avignon's most fabled bridge of the 12th century that once spanned across the Rhône River. After the city tour, we check in to our hotel, for dinner and overnight.



**CARCASSONNE**



### **DAY 8: SEPT. 08 – AVIGNON / FREE DAY (OPTIONAL DAY TOUR TO MARSEILLE & CASSIS)**

We will celebrate Mass in the morning at 9:30 AM. After Mass, this is free day at your own leisure.

**Optional Tour:** Day tour to Marseille & the beautiful Cassis at your own expense: 100€/pp (min. 12 persons) for 7 hours includes tour guide, van and driver, tours of Marseille & Cassis per itinerary, 45-minute cruise fare. (This was not in the original itinerary)

- In Marseille, admire the gorgeous *Notre-Dame de la Garde*, a Neo-Byzantine Catholic basilica that rises from Marseille's highest point; see the Virgin Mary and Her Child
- Stop by for photo opp at Abbey of St. Victor (11th century Abbey), Port of Marseille, Chateau d'If Fortress, the island featured in the Count of Monte Cristo
- Travel along the beautiful Route des Crêtes for panoramic views over the Côte d'Azur
- Drive to Cassis along the most breathtaking route of the Calanques road
- Enjoy a 45-minute scenic cruise to view the 3 Calanques of Cassis
- Explore the beautiful coastal fishing village of Cassis



### **DAY 9: SEPT. 09 – AVIGNON / LYON**

This morning we drive to Lyon, where we celebrate Mass and visit the Basilica of Our Lady of Mt. Fourviere, overlooking the city. This monumental church is lined with intricate mosaics. It is not only the jewel of Lyon but also among the most popular tourist sites in the city. Built on the site of an ancient Roman forum, Notre-Dame Basilica which dates back to 1896, can be seen from almost anywhere in the city. It features a blend of both Byzantine and Romanesque architecture. Marvel at the breathtaking interior décor featuring stained glass, marble, and colorful frescoes. Also visit the magnificent Cathedrale St Jean Baptiste in Lyon. It is indeed a fine example of French Medieval architecture. Its impressive architecture and dwarfing nave which stands at 32.5 m (106.6 ft) are a sight to marvel at. The structure took about 300 years to construct, from about 1165 to 1480. The cathedral's interior features 13th-century stained glass windows as well as magnificent window tracery and vaulting.



## **DAY 10: SEPT. 10 – ARS / PARAY LE MONIAL / NEVERS / LA SALETTE**

After breakfast, we depart early to Ars, site of the Shrine of St. John Vianney of Ars, Patron Saint of Parish Priests. We will visit the museum in honor of St. John Vianney. Pope John Paul II was a pilgrim here in 1986. We visit the basilica that houses the Saint's incorrupt body, and then continue to the Chapel of Our Lady of Ars, one of the favorite devotions of St. John. In Ars, we will celebrate Mass and offer special prayers for the priests of our Diocese.

We depart Ars and continue on to the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Paray Le Monial, where St. Margaret Mary Alacoque received her visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Spend some free time for prayer and reflection. Visit the Chapel of the Visitation, of where Jesus exposed His Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the seventeenth century. These apparitions allowed St. Margaret to rest herself upon Jesus' Sacred Heart and to experience the unconditional love for humanity.



**La Salette**

During your visit to this Holy place, you will have the opportunity to view relics of the beloved Saint that are located beneath a wax figure of her. Following free time for lunch in Paray Le Monial, we will drive to Nevers via the picturesque Loire Valle. Nevers is the site of where St. Bernadette lived for twelve years as a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Nevers. The Saint suffered from a number of illnesses such as asthma, tuberculosis of the lungs, and a tubercular tumor in her right knee. For this reason, St. Bernadette received "The Last Sacraments" three times and eventually passed away in 1879, at the age of thirty-five.

Visit of the Convent of Saint Gildard, also here we remember Father Thomas Frederick Price of Wilmington, the first native-born North Carolinian to be ordained a priest. Fr. Price asked that his heart be buried at Nevers near the tomb of St. Bernadette to whom he had a great devotion. We continue driving high up into the French Alps until we reach La Salette, where we will spend the night in the quaint village. Dinner and overnight in La Salette. (B.D.)



## **DAY 11 SEPT. 11 – LA SALETTE**

This morning we visit the beautiful Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette, located high in the French Alps. In 1846, a weeping Blessed Mother appeared to two shepherd children. She brought them a dire warning asking for repentance, prayer, and penance. We celebrate Mass at the Basilica followed by Eucharistic Adoration (TBC), and drink of the spring water that sprang forth from where Our Lady appeared. Dinner and overnight in the nearby quaint French village of La Salette. (B.D.)



## **DAY 12 SEPT. 12: LA SALETTE – PARIS**

Following Mass, at the Shrine, we continue driving to Paris for about 6 hrs. Arrive Paris for dinner & overnight.



## **DAY 13: SEPT. 13 – PARIS: LOUVRE / NOTRE DAME / MIRACULOUS MEDAL**

This morning, we will visit Louvre, one of the finest museums in the world and contains a number of pieces that truly emanate not only French art but also, European culture. Spend 2-3 hrs. in Louvre with our guide. After Louvre, we visit one of the great churches in Paris, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, possibly the most famous cathedral in the world devoted to the Blessed Mother; Then we head to Rue de Bac to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal and celebrate Mass at 4:45 PM. We will view the incorrupt body of St. Catherine Laboure. The Saint's guardian angel led her to the chapel where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to her. During apparitions, Our Lady repeatedly instructed the making and purpose of the Miraculous Medal as well as, the green scapular. According to the Blessed Virgin Mary, those who wear the Miraculous Medal and scapular will receive special protection and abundant graces. Following your prayerful and reflective experience at this elegant chapel, you will walk to the nearby sights of the repose of St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul.

We will have a panoramic sightseeing tour via motor coach to the most recognizable symbol of the city of Paris, the Eiffel Tower. Historically, the Tower's original intent was to commemorate the centenary of the French Revolution but, later assisted in meteorology, telegraphy of World War I, radio, and television. Pass by the L'Arch de Triomphe, a monument that symbolizes gratitude for those who fought for France. This monument stands at the West end of the Champ-Elysees, one of the world's most famous boulevards and another one of our stops on the sightseeing tour. We will also pass by the ever famous, Louvre Museum (\*\*\* Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, Champs Elysées, Arch de Triomphe, Louvre Museum— no entrances included). Return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.



#### DAY 14: SEPT. 14 – PARIS: CHARTRES EXCURSION

Today we make an excursion to Chartres, home to Our Lady of Chartres Cathedral, long a place of pilgrimage and housing the most remarkable collection of stained glass in the entire world, illustrating the Bible and lives of the Saints. Besides being one of the most magnificent Catholic cathedrals in the world, the Cathedral of Chartres holds one of the greatest treasures of the church. The Sancta Camisia, **the Holy Veil of the Blessed Mother**, believed to be the same veil Mary wore when she gave birth to Christ, is now kept in a golden reliquary inside the cathedral. Unfortunately, as of December 2010, the Holy Veil is no longer available for public display.



#### CHARTRES EXCURSION

After a visit and Mass here, we return to Paris for the evening and dinner. After dinner this evening we enjoy a motor coach tour of the "City of Lights" during the night, where we will see many of Paris' landmarks including the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs Elysees and Palais Garnier; Paris' beautiful opera house at night. During our tour, we will stop at the Trocadero terrace for a wonderful view of the Eiffel Tower at night. Overnight in Paris.



#### DAY 15: SEPT. 15 – PARIS: RUE DE BAC

After breakfast, we will visit and celebrate Mass at the Sacre Coeur (Basilica of the Sacred Heart). The Sacred Heart Basilica sits atop the hill of Montmartre. From here you have a breathtaking view of Paris from one of the city's most unique neighborhoods. It claims to rest on the place where the first Bishop of Paris, Saint Denis, is said to have been beheaded.

Tradition tells the story that after beheading he carried his head to the nearby suburb of St. Denis where the Abbey Church of St. Denis now stands. Explore Monte Marte, free time for shopping. Farewell Dinner on a River Cruise in Paris with wine & drinks.



#### DAY 16: SEPT. 16 – DEPART / JOURNEY HOME

**NOTES: These dates are temporary, pending approval from the priest's availability.**

### INCLUSIVES

- Hotel accommodations in 4\* & Superior first class hotels
- Dinner and Breakfast Buffet daily
- Tour escort from the arrival until departure
- Entrance/Admission fees per itinerary
- Experienced & English-Speaking Local guides and expert Tour Director
- Luxury class air-conditioned tourist motor-coach / Certified for Sanitary Protocols
- Transfers from and to international Airports
- Free Wi-Fi at hotels
- Whispers for entire tour
- Porterage/ luggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person in/out hotels
- Daily Mass at Holy Sites

### FOR REGISTRATION & MORE INFO



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