

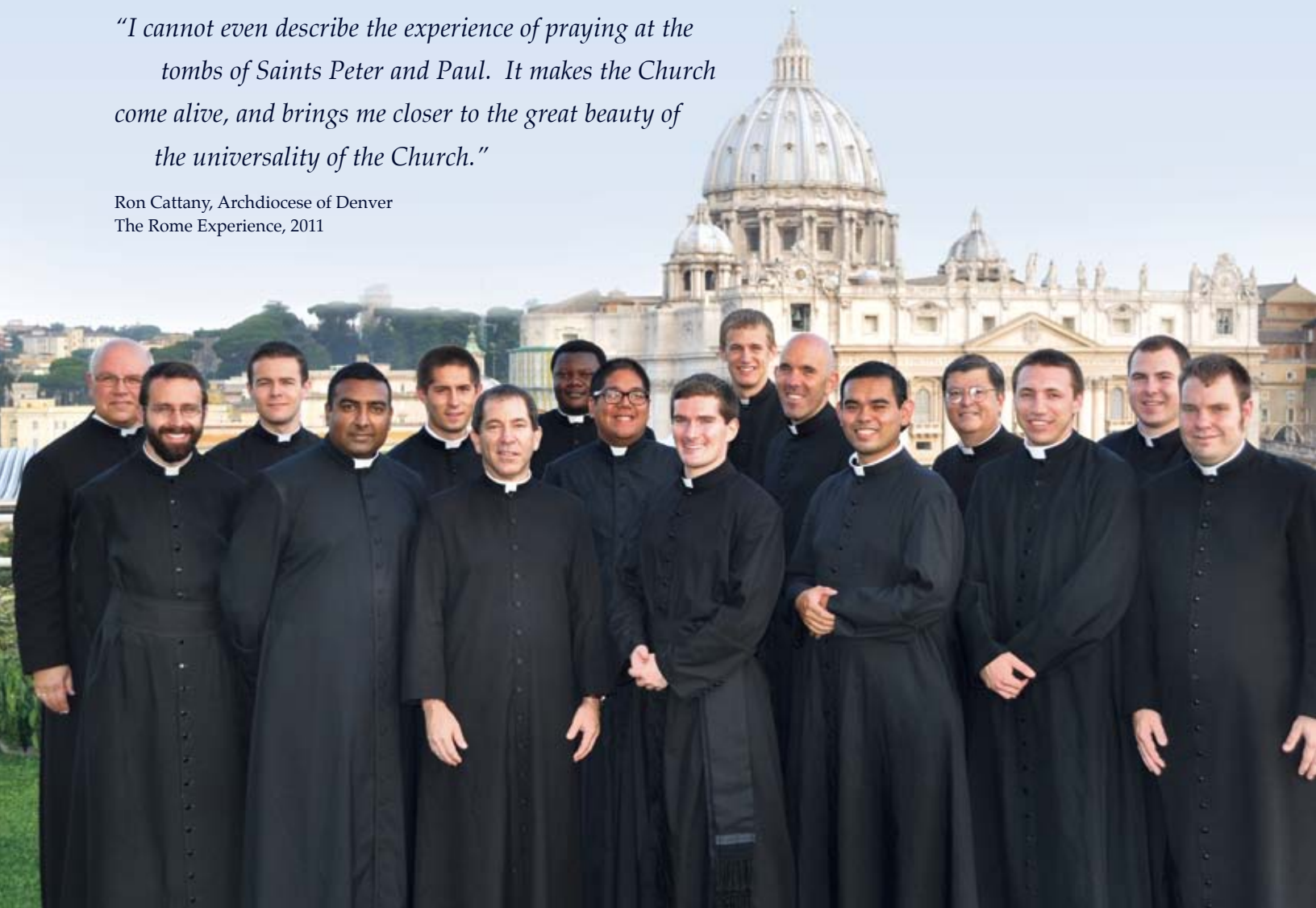


THE ROME EXPERIENCE

A SUMMER PROGRAM FOR DIOCESAN SEMINARIANS

"I cannot even describe the experience of praying at the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul. It makes the Church come alive, and brings me closer to the great beauty of the universality of the Church."

Ron Cattany, Archdiocese of Denver
The Rome Experience, 2011



THE ROME EXPERIENCE 2012

The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy:
An Aid for Confessors and
Spiritual Directors

May 21st - July 2nd, 2012



INSIDE:

- ✦ Mission of The Rome Experience
- ✦ 2012 Courses and Schedule
- ✦ How to Apply to The Rome Experience 2012

Letter from the Executive Program Director



Rev. Eric Nielsen

Dear Friends,

The Rome Experience program, which is in its fourth year, has hosted forty-eight seminarians from twenty United States and two Canadian dioceses at the annual summer program. In 2011, we were pleased to welcome sixteen seminarians from eleven dioceses.

Among them was David Keegan, seminarian for the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida, who said that he experienced “a renewed understanding of the universality of the Church, being able to get to know Rome, discover a hidden Church, or the bones of a great saint”, and that “the trip will be ranked as one of the most unforgettable and decisive of my journey to the priesthood.”

One of the goals of the program is to complement seminary training by focusing intellectual development on the most recent and pertinent teachings of the Magisterium within the context of a spiritual pilgrimage. The program consists of theme and core courses. In 2011, the theme focused on *History and Theology of the New English Translation of the Mass*. In 2012, the theme of the program will focus on the document *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: An Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors* (Congregation for the Clergy, 2011).

In this document, the Holy Father explains, “It is necessary to return to the confessional as a place in which “to dwell” more often, so that the faithful may find compassion, advice and comfort, feel that they are loved and understood by God and experience the presence of Divine Mercy beside the Real Presence in the Eucharist.” The theme was chosen for the 2012 program because Pope Benedict XVI has emphasized the need to rediscover the sacrament of reconciliation as “the spiritual rebirth which transforms the penitent into a new creature.”

On August 20, 2011, at the Mass with seminarians during World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged the seminarians to “approach the priesthood only if you are firmly convinced that God is calling you to be his ministers, and if you are completely determined to exercise it in obedience to the Church’s precepts.”

The seminarians who participate in The Rome Experience program have been appointed by their bishop. Many of these men receive full or partial scholarships from the St. Josemaria Institute; however, we also rely on the generosity of donors who feel called to help in the development and care of our future priests. Please contact us if you would like to assist us in making The Rome Experience possible for our seminarians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Eric H. Nielsen". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Rev. Eric Nielsen
Executive Program Director
The Rome Experience

THE ROME EXPERIENCE CLASS OF 2011



“I think the most valuable thing I’ve learned in my short time here is being able to see the Church in a new perspective. In Rome, the Church is brought to life. I’ve come to appreciate my studies more now that I’ve been able to experience the Church first hand.”

Jeremy Santos, Diocese of Sacramento
The Rome Experience, 2011



The Rome Experience

The Rome Experience was founded in 2009 at the request and under the guidance of the Bishops' Advisory Board. The program is designed for seminarians who have completed their first year of theology and the goal is to complement existing programs of formation in diocesan seminaries. As with the seminaries, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Program of Priestly Formation* (5th ed., 2005) and Pope John Paul II's *Pastores Dabo Vobis (I Will Give You Shepherds, 1992)* serve as the guiding documents of the program. The courses guide each seminarian to apply newly-acquired knowledge and insights to his own vocation.

The Rome Experience is an intensive six-week program during which each seminarian can reflect on and foster his original call to the priesthood as he prays and studies in the cradle of Christianity, beside the Chair of Peter and the saints. Additionally, each student will realize his true worth as a beloved son of the Church and develop confidence in his maturing spiritual and intellectual ability to live his vocation as a priest with complete dedication.

Following up the spiritual formation of the seminaries, the daily plan will encourage and support each seminarian's desire for intimacy with Jesus Christ. This intimacy will help him identify with Jesus Christ, prepare him to live his life as "*Alter Christus*", and understand how this intimacy benefits him, and his future flock, during his life as an active, working priest. The program will introduce the seminarians to the spirituality of St. Josemaria Escriva.

"If you use your time well, Rome will leave a mark on your soul, a deep, lasting imprint. And, you will be able to be a more faithful son of the Church." ST. JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA

Program Overview

Spiritual Retreat at Ars, France

The Rome Experience begins with a silent, directed retreat in Ars, France at the Shrine of St. John Vianney, patron saint of parish priests. The retreat focuses on Christ's presence in the Eucharist as the source and summit of the priestly life and emphasizes a personal, loving relationship with God through personal prayer, the *lectio divina*, and the celebration of the liturgy. The retreat provides time for reflection and rest for the body and mind to prepare the seminarians to fully absorb their spiritual pilgrimage to Rome, the cradle of Christianity.

Intellectual Formation

The Rome Experience offers a variety of courses accredited by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. These courses are oriented toward a greater understanding of the Holy Mass, its early history, the foundations of the Roman Liturgy, and the early history of the Church in Rome. They are designed to help the future priests develop a strong theological foundation for their own spiritual lives and to understand their pastoral mission: to help them be holy so as to be leaven in the world.

Cultural Formation

The best way to understand how Christianity has shaped the past 2000 years of Western culture is to live and study in the City of Rome. Each week the seminarians will go to key artistic, architectural, and historical sites that show the development and traditions of Catholicism. Seminarians receive preparation for these visits so the sites can be more deeply understood and appreciated, and opportunity is available at each site for prayer, meditation, and reflection.



The Rome Experience * May 21st-July 2nd, 2012



The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: An Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors

In a message to the participants of the 2009 course on the Internal Forum promoted by the Tribunal of the Apostolic Penitentiary, Pope Benedict XVI explained, **“Every priest is called to administer divine mercy in the sacrament of penance... To be able to accomplish this indispensable ministry, every presbyter must nourish his own spiritual life and take care to be theologically and pastorally up to date.”**

With this in mind, the document *The Priest, Minister of Divine Mercy: An Aid for Confessors and Spiritual Directors* published by the Congregation for the Clergy has been selected as an academic component and provides the theme for the 2012 Rome Experience program.

2012 Theme Courses

Reflections on Priestly Identity: Communion and Mission in the New Evangelization (.5 credit)

Focusing on the “identity-mission” of the priesthood, through a study of the spiritual and intellectual formation of the Church envisioned by Vatican II, this course aims at demonstrating the requirement that every priest “see the need for a progressive identification with Christ that will guarantee him fidelity and fruitfulness in the evangelical testimony”. (Pope Benedict XVI) Concrete examples will be drawn from the lives and writings of Pope Benedict XVI, Pope John Paul II, St. John the Vianney, and St. Josemaria Escriva.

INSTRUCTOR: Rev. David W. Kime, Diocese of Gary; Pastor, St. Joseph Church, La Porte, Indiana

Priest as Minister of Divine Mercy after the Sacred Heart of Christ (1 credit)

The priest, as the minister Divine Mercy, is called in a special way to be a priest “after the heart of Christ.” To deepen the awareness of this essential dimension of priestly identity, this course will seek to convey the following: familiarize the student with the doctrinal foundation for the devotion to the Sacred Heart; examine the historical development of the devotion, beginning with the revelation given us by St. Margaret Mary; rigorously explore magisterial teaching concerning the importance and role of the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the life of the church in the life of the priest; and, present the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a gift of the merciful Heart of Christ for both priest and penitent.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Timothy T. O'Donnell, STD, KGCHS, President, Christendom College, Front Royal, Virginia

2012 Core Courses

The Word of God and the New Evangelization (1 credit)

The course is designed to develop and understand theology through the Bible and will be coordinated with the theme of the program each year.

INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Pablo Gadenz, Diocese of Trenton; Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, Immaculate Conception Seminary, South Orange, New Jersey

Vatican II: Historical Context and the Hermeneutic of Reform (1 credit)

The course is designed to develop an understanding of the Second Vatican Council from a historical perspective. Additionally, *Hermeneutic of Reform* will be reviewed as presented by Pope John XXIII in his speech inaugurating the Council; by Pope Paul VI in his discourse at the conclusion of the Council; and, Pope Benedict XVI in his address to the Roman Curia December 2005. This hermeneutic will then be applied to specific passages of *Dei Verbum* in relation to the Council of Trent and *Dei Filius* of Vatican I.

INSTRUCTOR: Rev. John Heisler, Diocese of Arlington; Vice Rector, Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio

Pastoral Practice Seminar (.5 credit)

The seminar will help the seminarian bridge the gap between the theological and spiritual principles learned on The Rome Experience with the lived experience of a parish priest. The goal is to assist the seminarian to understand his future responsibility as a priest to imitate and live out Christ's own pastoral charity. A pastoral charity that, in essence, requires a total gift of self to the Church and that makes special demands on the parish priest. (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992)

INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Eric Nielsen, Diocese of Madison; Director, St. Paul University Catholic Center, Madison, Wisconsin

Historical and Cultural Roots of the Roman Catholic Church (1 credit)

Over a series of lectures (listed below), this course explores the development of the early Christian church in the context of Rome and its monuments. From the earliest meeting houses of the persecuted Christian community, this class studies the development of the worship space after the Edict of Constantine to the fourth and fifth century Basilicas. A special focus highlights the use of architecture to define Christianity and its unique vision of the relationship between God and man.

- **Kingdoms of this World: Form and Meaning in Ancient Architecture**
- **From Marble to Brick: The First Christian Churches**
- **Art in the Age of Heresy: Art and Architecture in 5th Century Rome**
- **Roots of Iconoclasm**
- **Iconoclasm in the Modern Era**
- **What Makes the City Eternal?**
- **Renewal and Regeneration in the History of Rome**
- **The Role of the Religious**
- **Rise of Renaissance Rome**
- **The Glory of the See of Peter: The Renaissance in Rome**
- **The Paradigm of the Sistine Chapel**

INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth Lev, Art Historian; Instructor, University of St. Thomas-Catholic Studies Rome Program, Italy

Pilgrimages and Tours of the Churches, Art and Architecture of Ancient Rome (.5 credit)

In the General Audience on August 30, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI explained that, "Some artistic expressions are real highways to God, the supreme Beauty; indeed, they help us grow in our relationship with him, in prayer. These are works that were born from faith and express faith." Through a series of church and site tours, this course provides an understanding of the art and architecture of the churches and other early Christian sites not only intellectually, but also spiritually and emotionally. Sacred art is intended to turn men's minds devoutly toward God, and provides a devotional philosophy and theological understanding of the Catholic Church. Sites that will be visited include:

- **St. Frances of Rome and the Mamertine Prison**
- **Basilica of St. Peter**
- **Basilica of St. Mary Major**
- **Basilica of St. Praxedes**
- **Basilica of St. Pudentiana**
- **Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, Three Fountains Abbey**
- **Basilica of St. John Lateran, Holy Stairs and Holy Cross**
- **Basilica of St. Clement**
- **Basilica of Our Lady in Trastevere and Church of St. Cecilia**

INSTRUCTOR AND GUIDE: Dony Mac Manus, Artist and Founder of the Sacred Art School, Florence, Italy





The Rome Experience 2012 * Itinerary

MONDAY, MAY 21, 2012 (CHICAGO):

Mass and Orientation
Lunch
Afternoon flight departing for Lyon/ Ars

TUESDAY, MAY 22, 2012 (ARS):

Arrive in Lyon/ Ars
Accommodations – Foyer Sacerdotal Jean-Paul II

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2012 (ARS):

Pilgrimages to Paray Le Monial and Cluny

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2012 (ARS):

Pilgrimage to Basilica of St. Francis de Sales and Lyon Cathedral
Visit with Most Rev. Guy Claude Bagnard,
Bishop of the Diocese of Belley-Ars, France
Retreat begins

TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2012 (ARS/ROME):

Retreat ends
Arrive in Rome
Accommodations - CIAM
(Centro Internazionale Animazione Missionaria)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2012 (ROME):

Academic Program begins
Classes at CIAM and Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

FRIDAY, JUNE 29, 2012 (ROME/NORCIA):

Pallium Mass
Arrive in Norcia
Accommodations – Monastero Sant' Antonio

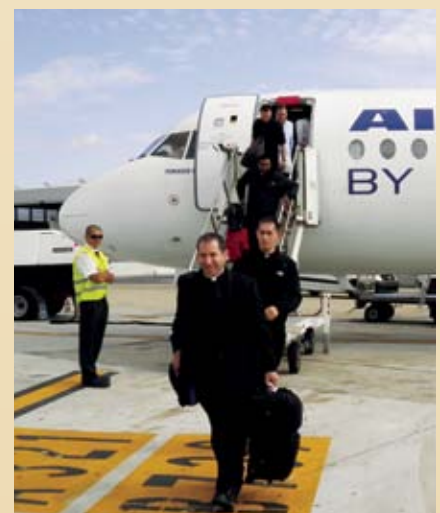
SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2012 (ASSISI/FLORENCE):

Visit Assisi
Arrive in Florence
Accommodations – Hotel Mediterreaneo

MONDAY, JULY 2, 2012 (ROME/CHICAGO):

Return to the US

*A detailed and final itinerary will be sent to each seminarian upon acceptance into the program.



Daily Schedule

Rome, "The Eternal City," attracts millions of visitors each year. While several tours of Rome and its environs are part of The Rome Experience program, you are on a pilgrimage as a future priest who has come to Rome to pray and study next to the Chair of St. Peter and the saints, while providing a witness of your faith. The program has been designed to provide you with spiritual, intellectual, and cultural formation.

WEEKDAYS:

6:45 am	Morning Prayer
7:00 am	Meditation and Holy Mass
8:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Class
10:00 am	Class
11:00 am	Class
12:00 pm	Confession and Spiritual Direction
1:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 pm	Tours/Free Time
6:45 pm	Evening Prayer and Mental Prayer
7:30 pm	Dinner
9:00 pm	Rosary, Examination of Conscience, Night Prayer

WEEKLY SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

- * Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction
- * Confessions and Spiritual Direction
- * Papal Liturgies
- * Visits to Congregations
- * Tours and Excursions
- * Students have free time every Saturday from noon until Sunday dinner time.

The Rome Experience has a set schedule designed to maximize the participants' benefit from the program and to help each seminarian form a healthy relationship with the group. We have established a policy to reduce outside distractions to the program. Visits with family, friends, diocesan brother seminarians and priests will only be permitted during regularly scheduled free time. Please inform any family or friends visiting Rome of this policy. Visits from your Vocation Director, Rector, or Bishop may occur at any time convenient to them.

"Today there is a greater need than in the past for wise and holy 'spiritual teachers': an important ecclesial service...To be able to carry out this indispensable ministry, every priest must tend to his own spiritual life and take care to keep himself pastorally and theologically up to date."

POPE BENEDICT XVI





THE ROME EXPERIENCE

A SUMMER PROGRAM FOR DIOCESAN SEMINARIANS

"The Rome Experience helped me to connect with my spiritual heritage. Learning about the history of the saints in the classroom is important but to experience their legacy in the Basilicas and shrines erected in their name leaves a lasting impression."

Christopher Micale, Diocese of Burlington
The Rome Experience 2011

Applications for the program and scholarship are available online at www.theromeexperience.org. The application deadline is January 16, 2012. For more information, please contact:

Mrs. Charmaine Roth, Program Director
The Rome Experience
1420 Davey Road
Woodridge, IL 60517

(630) 739-9750 ext. 28
(630) 739-9758 fax
croth@mwtf.org
www.theromeexperience.org

"I am personally very excited about offering my seminarians such an opportunity. Not all of them are candidates for theological studies in Rome, but all of them could benefit greatly in being able to go to the heart of the Church, if only for a few weeks."

MOST REV. DAVID R. CHOBY
BISHOP OF NASHVILLE

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