



THE ROME EXPERIENCE

A SUMMER PROGRAM FOR DIOCESAN SEMINARIANS

2022

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MISSION & VISION

In 2007, several bishops joined efforts to establish a program for the formation of their seminarians that would animate their desire to serve the universal Church and impel a clear priestly identity. As a result, the Bishops Advisory Board with Midwest Theological Forum launched The Rome Experience in 2009.

Inspired by the priestly lives of its patron saints—Pope John Paul II, John Vianney, and Josemaria Escriva—this six-week summer experience in Rome seeks to complement diocesan seminary formation with the aim to:

- Deepen the real-life implications of the call to be “a priest forever”
- Grow in the ability to live an authentic, vibrant priesthood at work and at leisure
- Craft a plan of life with emphasis on God’s presence throughout the day
- Better grasp the art of contemplation and effective mental prayer, and how to practice it daily

The program begins with a five-day silent retreat in Ars, France, village of St. John Vianney, to reflect on the meaning of the priesthood. Following the retreat, the seminarians go to Rome for academic courses, tours, and visits that provide opportunity to deepen their friendship with Jesus Christ and priestly zeal for the New Evangelization.

Courses and activities are planned within a daily schedule centered on the celebration of the Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, and an hour of meditation before the Blessed Sacrament. The daily schedule also includes time for fostering fraternity and friendships among classmates which are vitally important to priestly life.

The program concludes with a day of recollection to assimilate the experience before returning home to the United States.

BISHOPS ADVISORY BOARD

His Eminence James Cardinal Stafford
Major Penitentiary Emeritus of the Apostolic Penitentiary

Most Rev. David R. Choby +
Former Bishop Diocese of Nashville

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Archdiocese of Los Angeles

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Former Bishop Diocese of Madison

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Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

Most Rev. Alexander K. Sample
Archdiocese of Portland

Most Rev. Dennis M. Schnurr
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Most Rev. Kevin W. Vann
Diocese of Orange

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the spirit of pilgrimage—*of prayer and sobriety*—the program offers:

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- 5-day silent retreat in Ars, France
- Daily schedule including Holy Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, mental prayer, and the Holy Rosary
- Sacrament of Penance, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and spiritual meditations
- Learning how to develop and commit to a plan of life
- Living in close proximity to the Holy Father
- Praying at the churches and tombs of the martyrs and saints

FRATERNITY

- Opportunity to meet seminarians from across the United States
- Daily prayers, meals, and classes
- Cultural activities
- Sports and hiking excursions
- Free-time

HUMAN & INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

- Immersion in the cultural history of the Church
- Experiencing the beauty of the Church’s art and architecture
- Academic courses taught by expert instructors from USA and Rome
- Guided tours and excursions to religious and cultural sites
- Papal liturgies and audiences
- Visits to Vatican Congregations

PASTORAL FORMATION

- Talks and discussions about challenges to the priesthood today
- Interchange of experiences with visiting bishops and priests
- Daily encounters with people of diverse needs and backgrounds on the streets of Rome

ACADEMIC COURSES

The academic courses follow the directives of Vatican Congregation for the Clergy's *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (1994) and *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation* (December 8, 2016).

PRIESTS IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION (1.00 credit)

Future priests need to have a physical and spiritual closeness to people that touches and moves their hearts, as Pope Francis has expressed, in response to the Church's summons to a New Evangelization. While on retreat in Ars, and in Rome, seminarians will contemplate what it means to be a priest forever and how the remedy for everything is personal holiness.

THE HUMAN VIRTUES FOR PRIESTLY FATHERHOOD, CHARACTER, STEADFASTNESS, & SELF-MASTERY (1.00 credit)

The *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* emphasizes the human virtues as cornerstones for the priest to be a well-rounded, resilient, and reliable man, who ministers with a supernatural outlook. Through a practical and anthropological approach, this course responds to the Church's need for men with a clear priestly identity who steadfastly exercise strength of character and promote the holiness of all men and women.

PASTORAL PRACTICE SEMINAR (.50 credit)

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

THE BASILICAS, CHURCHES, & CATACOMBS OF ROME (3.50 credits)

Rome presents an encyclopedia of Church history and theology taught not in words but in indelible images of architecture, sculpture, painting, and mosaic. One needs to learn the art of reading that encyclopedia, by understanding the meaning and context of the symbols used. Through readings, discussions, and a series of in-depth guided tours, seminarians will have the various volumes of this encyclopedia opened for them, to confirm them as followers of Christ and future evangelizers.

COURSE ACCREDITATION

The Rome Experience courses are accredited by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
Piazza Sant'Apollinare, 49
00186, Rome, Italy
www.pusc.it/eng

TENTATIVE DAILY SCHEDULE

"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

The Rome Experience's daily schedule* is designed to help the participants benefit the most from all the offerings of the program, to foster fraternity, and to remain intimately united to Christ through prayer and study. Seminarians will be encouraged to remember that they have come to Rome as future priests to pray and study next to the Chair of St. Peter and the saints, while providing a witness to the Faith.

WEEKDAYS:

8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Class
10:00 AM	Class
11:00 AM	Break
12:00 PM	Angelus/Class
1:00 PM	Lunch

The daily schedule also includes:

- Morning Prayer
- Holy Mass
- Afternoon Tours/Classes
- Evening Prayer
- Dinner
- Holy Rosary
- Examination of Conscience and Night Prayer

WEEKLY SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

- Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction
- Confessions and Spiritual Direction
- Papal Liturgies
- Visits to Vatican Congregations
- Tours and Excursions

Students have free time every Saturday from noon until Sunday evening prayer. Visits with family, friends, brother seminarians, and priests are only permitted during scheduled free time. Family and friends visiting Rome should be informed of this policy. Visits from vocation directors, rectors, or bishops may occur at any time that is convenient.

*PLEASE NOTE: The daily schedule is subject to change. A final schedule will be given to each seminarian at orientation.

2022 TENTATIVE ITINERARY

MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022 (CHICAGO):

Arrive in Chicago
Orientation
Accommodations – University of St. Mary of the Lake (Mundelein, IL)

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022 (CHICAGO/LYON):

Afternoon Flight Departing for Lyon, France

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022 (LYON/ARS):

Arrive in Lyon
Accommodations – Foyer Sacerdotal Jean-Paul II

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2022 (ARS):

Begin Spiritual Retreat

TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2022 (ARS):

Retreat Ends

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022 (ARS/ROME):

Arrive in Rome
Accommodations - Casa di Santa Brigida

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2022 (ROME):

Academic Program Begins
Courses at Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

MONDAY, JULY 4, 2022 (ROME/CHICAGO):

Return to the USA

THE ROME EXPERIENCE

Monday, May 23 – Monday, July 4, 2022

ELIGIBILITY

The Rome Experience is designed for seminarians who have completed their first year of theology. Seminarians interested in applying must be recommended by their bishops and vocation directors.

APPLICATIONS

Download the application at
www.theromeexperience.org/apply

DEADLINE

Applications for the program and scholarship must be received (or postmarked) by:

Monday, January 10, 2022

SCHOLARSHIPS

Midwest Theological Forum has established a scholarship fund to assist those seminarians who are in need of financial assistance. Limited partial scholarships are available based on merit and need. See the program application for more information.

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Due to the limited number of openings, incomplete or late applications for the program and the scholarship cannot be considered.

Applications may be submitted by email, mail, or fax to:

info@theromeexperience.org

The Rome Experience
4340 Cross Street, Suite 1
Downers Grove, IL 60515

Tel 630-541-8519 x 28

Fax 331-777-5819

www.theromeexperience.org

*PLEASE NOTE: The itinerary is tentative.
A final schedule will be given to each seminarian at orientation.

“The Rome Experience allows seminarians to experience the Church in its full life. It gives them a personal connection, so that the Church is no longer an institution — for a seminarian and a priest, it is part of who you are.”



FR. RON CATTANY '11
Associate Program Director
Archdiocese of Denver

“We have the opportunity to strive not just to be good priests but to be holy priests. And that entails a lot of work and prayer, which is what The Rome Experience has provided for me.”



FR. GERARDO OLIVERA '16
Archdiocese of San Juan, Puerto Rico

“The Rome Experience gives substance to the reality that our faith is 2,000 years old. Rome tells the stories of priests, artists, and saints and the substantial sacrifices they made to bring the Good News to the world.”



FR. ANDREW SMITH '14
Archdiocese of Cincinnati

“I did not know what the Lord had planned for me in Rome, and had I attempted to guess, my guesses would have fallen far short.”



STEVEN CHABARRIA '21
Diocese of Tyler

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