



# THE ROME EXPERIENCE

A SUMMER PROGRAM FOR DIOCESAN SEMINARIANS

## 2025

Mission & Vision  
Program Courses & Itinerary  
How to Apply



# MISSION & VISION

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 the formation of diocesan seminarians with the aim to:

- Broaden their experience of the Universal Church
- Animate their sense of fidelity to the Holy Father
- Craft a plan of life with emphasis on God's presence throughout the day
- Enrich understanding of contemplation and effective mental prayer, and how to practice it daily

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In a spirit of pilgrimage, the program offers:

### SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- 5-day silent retreat
- Daily schedule including Holy Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, mental prayer, and the 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 history of the Church
- Experiencing the beauty of the Church's art and architecture
- Academic courses taught by expert instructors from the United States and Rome
- Guided tours and excursions to religious and cultural sites
- Papal liturgies and audiences
- Visits to Vatican Dicasteries

### 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

### PRIESTS IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION (1.00 credit)

While on retreat, in Rome, and in Ars, 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)

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)

Bridging the gap between principles and lived experience, the seminarian will understand his responsibility as a priest to live out Christ's own pastoral charity in total gift of self to the Church.

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

Through readings, discussions, and a series of in-depth guided tours, seminarians will have the various volumes of Church history and theology opened for them, to confirm them as followers of Christ and future evangelizers.

*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](http://www.pusc.it/eng)*





# TENTATIVE ITINERARY\*

## MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025 (USA):

- Arrival at Orientation

## TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025 (USA/FLORENCE):

- Orientation
- Depart for Florence

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025 (FLORENCE):

- Arrival to Florence
- Accommodations – Istituto Santa Elisabetta

## FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025 (FLORENCE/BRACCIANO):

- Begin Spiritual Retreat
- Accommodations – Villaggio Betania

## TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025 (BRACCIANO):

- Retreat Ends

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025 (BRACCIANO/ROME):

- Arrival to Rome
- Accommodations – Casa di Santa Brigida

## THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025 (ROME):

- Academic Program Begins
- Courses at Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

## THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 (ROME/LYON):

- Afternoon Flight to Lyon, France
- Arrival to Ars
- Accommodations – Foyer Sacerdotal Jean-Paul II

## MONDAY, JUNE 30, 2025 (LYON/USA):

- Return to the United States

# DAILY SCHEDULE\*

## SAMPLE WEEKDAY SCHEDULE:

6:40 AM	Prayer
7:30 AM	Mass
8:30 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Class/Tour
11:00 AM	Break
12:00 PM	Angelus, Class/Tour
1:00 PM	Lunch
2:00 PM	Free Time
6:45 PM	Prayer
7:30 PM	Dinner
8:15 PM	Get-together
9:00 PM	Rosary & Night Prayer

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

- Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction
- Confessions and Spiritual Direction
- Papal Liturgies
- Visits to Vatican Dicasteries

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 and itinerary are subject to change. A final daily schedule and itinerary will be given to each seminarian at orientation.*



## BISHOPS ADVISORY BOARD

*The Bishops Advisory Board with Midwest Theological Forum launched The Rome Experience in 2009.*

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

Most Rev. James D. Conley  
Diocese of Lincoln

Most Rev. Robert W. Finn  
Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Most Rev. Jose H. Gomez  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda  
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Most Rev. Thomas J. Paprocki  
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

# HOW TO APPLY

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## THE ROME EXPERIENCE

Monday, May 19 – Monday, June 30, 2025

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### ELIGIBILITY

The Rome Experience is designed for seminarians entering, in, or beyond theological studies of the Configuration Stage. Seminarians interested in applying must be recommended by their bishops and vocation directors.

### APPLICATIONS

Download the form at  
[www.theromeexperience.org/apply](http://www.theromeexperience.org/apply)

### SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Applications may be submitted by email or mail to:

[info@theromeexperience.org](mailto:info@theromeexperience.org)

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

### 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.

### DEADLINE

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

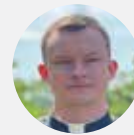
**Wednesday, January 8, 2025**

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

### QUESTIONS?

Email: [info@theromeexperience.org](mailto:info@theromeexperience.org)  
Phone: 630.541.8519 x 28

“It was an invaluable opportunity to explore the richness of the city and see the universality of the Church.”



**NATHAN FOLZ '24**  
Diocese of Evansville

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“I leave this program strengthened for the journey ahead, that is, to imitate Christ in all I do and to sanctify my home diocese.”



**MICHAEL PEDERSEN '23**  
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

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“The Rome Experience is the best seminarian program to fully immerse a man into the totality of being human: faith, learning, culture, formation, and true communion.”



**REV. STEPHEN GRAEVE '13**  
Diocese of Lincoln

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