

Sophia Services presents ...

In Search of **F**rancis of **A**ssisi

July 20—29, 2017

with **Jeff Feldman** and **Sarnia Guiton**

In order to penetrate still more deeply into the question from whence do moral impulses come, we must inquire in the case of such an exceptional personality as Francis of Assisi as to ... what had really happened in his case.

We shall have to look more deeply if we want to understand what was active in the soul of this outstanding human being.
—Rudolf Steiner

Francis of **A**ssisi continues to be one of the most loved and revered people in the history of humanity. He was pronounced a saint by the Roman Catholic Church as long ago as 1228 and is regarded as the patron saint of animals and the environment as well as one of the great peacemakers of all time. This impulse was so profound that he sought out a private meeting with a prominent Muslim political and military leader and Sultan, Malik al Kamila, nephew of Saladin, with hopes of bringing about an end to the Fifth Crusade. The current Pope has chosen to name himself after this beloved patron saint of Italy. St. Francis is loved and respected by members of various religious traditions. What is it that continues to be so endearing about this simple mendicant from a small town in Italy? What can we learn from the life of St. Francis that can help us become more fully human?

Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher and spiritual teacher, held St. Francis in great esteem. During our visit to Francis' home, the Umbrian hillside town of Assisi, we will spend time exploring why he felt the life of Francis was so important to human development while, at the same time, we will examine the works of others who have also had particular insights into the life of Francis.

We will visit various sites where this remarkable human being lived while initiating and developing a life of brotherhood and sisterhood with others who shared his vision. Together, we will get a sense of the love of all creation that Francis and his followers experienced and spread, that continues to reverberate through the human heart and soul more than eight hundred years later.



*'I have been all things unholy.
If God can work through me,
He can work through anyone.'*
—Francis of Assisi

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Each day will have presentations, study, discussion, singing, quiet time as well as siesta and free time.

We will visit various sites of the known events and life of St Francis including: San Francesco Piccolino, birthplace – Chiesa Nuova, family home – San Ruffino, place of baptism – San Damiano – Rivotorto – St Francis' hermitage (Eremo delle Carceri) – Site of the Sermon to the Birds – Santa Chiara Basilica, dedicated to Saint Clare – Greccio, first crèche of the Nativity – Basilica di San Francesco, dedicated to St Francis, site of a famous series of frescoes by the artist Giotto – La Verna, site where Francis received the stigmata – Porziuncula in Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli – where the life on earth of Saint Francis came to an end.

Accommodation in Assisi will be at St Anthony's Guest House of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement.

Arrive Fiumicino airport (Rome) July 20. Many flights arrive in Rome around mid-day and at an appropriate time a bus will take us to Assisi.

Depart Assisi late afternoon July 29 by bus for Fiumicino airport (Rome) to be ready for flights home the following morning.

Price includes: all local transport in Italy, accommodation in single or shared rooms and all breakfasts. Discount for sharing twin bed or double bed rooms when available; book early - \$175 pp.

Price does not include: international flights, travel insurance (medical is mandatory), lunches and dinners, items of a personal nature or any services other than those listed.

Land only: US \$1800. This may be subject to fluctuation of currencies and unexpected fuel surcharges.

Booking deadline February 28, 2017. Non-refundable deposit of US \$360 will hold your place in the group. Minimum is 16. Maximum is limited to 20. Full payment due 8 weeks before departure: May 20, 2017.

For further information please contact:

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Jeff Feldman has been inspired by the life of St. Francis for 35 years, viewing Francis as a profound example of morality, ecological awareness and open-heartedness who embodies and challenges each one of us to embrace and express the Gospel words of Jesus, "Whatsoever you do to the least of these my brothers and sisters, that you do unto me". Jeff has made two pilgrimages to Assisi in the past five years and is a member of the Affiliates program of the Secular Franciscan Order, a program offered through the Catholic Church, open to members of all backgrounds. Jeff has been a Waldorf Class Teacher for 23 years in Canada and the USA, is a member of the Anthroposophical Societies in both countries and the international Christian Community Movement for Religious Renewal. He is currently working as the Pedagogical Administrator of the Waldorf School of New Orleans.