



# 2026 ASSISI LEADERSHIP EXERCISES IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SAINT FRANCIS

A Silent & Joyful Pilgrimage-Retreat in Assisi and Franciscan Sites

## Overview of the program

- Location: Assisi, PG, Italy
- Dates: June 25th – July 1st, 2026
- Duration: 5-Days, Arrival: Sunday evening | Departure: Saturday morning
- Occasion: The 800th Anniversary of Saint Francis death (October 3–4, 1226–2026)
- Theme: Humanistic (Franciscan) Leadership with Social Justice (Jesuit) Perspectives
- Advised by Marco Tavanti, author and professor of leadership at University of San Francisco who grew up in the places of Saint Francis and the Franciscan tradition. See his book. ***We Are Francesco: The Seven Humanistic Leadership Lessons of Saint Francis of Assisi***. Bene Comune Press. (Forthcoming February 2026). <https://marcotavanti.com/>
- Cost: \$3,500 (single room); \$3,300 (shared room)
- Non-refundable deposit (\$1,000) Due: March 1<sup>st</sup>
- Final Payment Due: April 1<sup>st</sup>

## Methodology of the retreat

- This is an itinerant silent retreat with joyful convivial moments and educational opportunities to think about our own leadership journey and call in light of the humanistic leadership lessons of Saint Francis and utilizing a Jesuit (Ignatian) pedagogy.

- At the beginning of each day, participants will receive a short orientation by Dr. Marco Tavanti and author of the book with selected leadership lessons. The reflection will summarize some elements described in the book in relation to the 1) Historical context of Saint Francis (**context**); 2) The life examples of Saint Francis (**experience**); and the 3) Leadership Lessons from Saint Francis (**analysis**).
- During the day, participants will explore sites under the guidance of the book and accompanied by a tour bus. They preferably will have lunch together at a typical Tuscan restaurant.
- 4) During the evening or on the return trip by bus, participants can choose to reflect in their journal addressing the suggested book prompts and/or discussions during the day. The idea is that they should specifically think about the consequences and implications of these lessons for their lives and make plans of real action for their own leadership practice (**action**).
- 5) During the evening and dinner time participants are encouraged to dine in small groups and discuss their reflections and actionable plans (**evaluation**)
- After the 5 days immersion, participants can select additional sites to explore additional lessons.

### **Arrival in Assisi**

- Welcome at the hotel in Assisi (TBD)
- Kique: Welcome and logistics
- Marco: Welcome and entering in the mindsets of the leadership exercises
- Dinner together (TBA)
- Reflection: How do I arrive here, in this sacred landscape? What hopes and burdens do I carry into this journey?

### **DAY 1 ASSISI: San Francesco and Santa Chiara**

- Meditation after breakfast
- **Lesson: Servant Leadership** – From Privilege to Service
- Visits: Guided tour or walking on your own to explore in Assisi: The Basilica of Saint Francis (Inferiore, cripta e superiore), the birthplace of Francis (Piazza Chiesa Nuova) and the Basilica of Saint Claire (Santa Chiara). Optional walk to Santa Maria Maggiore (spogliazione), and Cathedral of San Rufino (Baptismal place)
- Lunch in Assisi with a view of the valley (Le Terrazze di Properzio or Il Frantoio (Fontebella Hotel) TBD
- Reflection: 1) Social and global leadership responsibility; 2) Transformational, servant, quantum, and conscious leadership; 3) See book for more

### **Day 2 CORTONA: Fra Elias and Santa Margherita**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Meditation in the bus to Cortona (about 1 hour)

- **Lesson: Inclusive Relationships** – Embracing Brotherhood & Sisterhood
- **Lesson: Responsible Economy** – For the Common Good
- Visits to: Eremo delle Celle, Chiesa di San Francesco, Basilica di Santa Margherita
- Lunch: Ristorante il Teatro (alternative Ristorante Tonino, Piazza Garibaldi)
- Reflection: 1) Inclusive relations today with diversity equity and migrant inclusion; 2) Economic jubilee in the bible and today's realities of inequities; 3) See book for more.

### **Day 3 GUBBIO: Frate Lupo and Sultan al-Malik**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Meditation in the bus (about 45 minutes)
- **Lesson: Fostering Peace** – Courage Across Boundaries
- Visit: Chiesa di San Francesco (meaning of hospitality and community); Chiesa della Vittorina (Encounter with fear, reconciliation, transforming the "other"); San Francesco della Pace (Peace, humility, preaching in modest contexts).
- Lunch in Gubbio: TBD
- Reflection: 1) The Franciscan meaning of Pax et Bonum, a Latin phrase meaning "Peace and All Good," a traditional motto of the Franciscan Order, popularized by St. Francis of Assisi. Today, it serves as a greeting and farewell, a call to live a life of peacemaking, charity, humility, and compassion, caring for all creation and fostering a "Civilization of Love". 2) The Catholic Church's theme for the 2026 World Day of Peace is "Peace be with you all: Towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace," with the full message emphasizing the rejection of violence and the embrace of a peace built on love and justice. This theme invites humanity to move beyond fear and weapons towards a peace that resolves conflicts, opens hearts, and generates trust and empathy; 3) See book for more.

### **Day 4 LA VERNA – Fra Leone and Michelangelo**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Meditation on the bus (about 2 hrs)
- **Lesson: Healing Mindset** – The Power of Community
- **Lesson: Ecological Dialogue** – The Kinship of Ecosystems
- Visit to: Santuario della Verna, Cella di San Francesco, Cappella Delle stimmati; gift shop
- Lunch at: Ristorante il Cerro (Caprese Michelangelo); Visit to birthplace of Michelangelo Museum
- Reflection: 1) Laudato sì and integral ecology messages today; 2) The ecological responsibility toward future generations and the global sustainability agenda; 3) See book for more

### **Day 5 PORZIUNCOLA – Fra Jacopa and Sorella Morte**

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Meditation on the bus (short ride)

- Lesson: Innovative Spirituality – Practices for a Better World
- Logistics: Bus to Visit to the Papal Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli (Porziuncola), San Damiano and Carceri di Assisi.
- Lunch at a restaurant near Assisi (TBD)
- Reflection: 1) Spirituality for our leadership; 2) Ethics of making the world a better place through vision, decision, humility and empowerment; 3) See book for more

### Departure Day

Optional additional Franciscan visits:

- **Foligno (Umbria):** Where Francis sold cloth for San Damiano; birthplace of Angela of Foligno. Lesson link: Servant Leadership & Mystical Economy.
- **Spoleto (Umbria):** Site of Francis’ vocational vision (dream to “serve the Master”).  
Lesson link: Discernment in Leadership.
- **Siena (Tuscany):** Basilica of San Francesco with Eucharistic Miracle; home of Catherine of Siena. Lesson link: Healing Mindset & Civic Mysticism.
- **Florence (Tuscany):** Basilica of Santa Croce (largest Franciscan church, Giotto frescoes, tombs of great Renaissance figures). Lesson link: Innovative Spirituality & Cultural Humanism.
- **Arezzo (Tuscany):** Francis reconciled civic factions here; Basilica of San Francesco with Piero della Francesca frescoes. Visit the house of Francesco Petrarca, the father of humanism. Lesson link: Fostering Peace & Civic Leadership.
- **Montecasale (Tuscany):** Hermitage and hospice for the poor and sick established by Francis. Lesson link: Healing Mindset & Servant Leadership.
- **Greccio (Rieti Valley, Lazio):** Site of the first living Nativity (1223). Sanctuary with chapels carved into rock, and museum of Nativity scenes. Lesson link: Ecological Dialogue & Pedagogy through Symbols.
- **Poggio Bustone (Rieti Valley, Lazio):** Place of Francis’ forgiveness vision – “Your sins are forgiven.” Lesson link: Inclusive Relationships & Spiritual Renewal.
- **Rome (Lazio):** St. Peter’s Basilica & Square (Vatican) – global Catholic witness; Santa Maria in Aracoeli (Capitoline Hill) – Francis’ Roman connection; San Giovanni in Laterano – papal cathedral, authority and reform. Lesson link: institutional recognition and transformational impact

