

# A Pastor's Perspective

July 13, 2025 Bulletin



*Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,*

Here is a recap of our last few days in the Eternal City of Rome and the surrounding region:

**Tuesday, July 1** - Today, we celebrated Holy Mass at the stunning St. Ignatius of Loyola Church. As Deacon Luis noted, in addition to the magnificent major basilicas, Rome has many other churches that glorify God by architectural and artistic beauty. Afterwards, we ventured on foot into the heart of the city to see many historic sites like the Trevi Fountain, government buildings, and the Pantheon (a second-century pagan temple dedicated to many Roman gods); since the early seventh century, it has been “converted” into a Christian church (photo) dedicated to Saint Mary and the Martyrs. Following lunch, we traveled by bus to the Catacombs of Saint Sebastian. What an incredible experience to see the burial sites of Saints Peter and Paul (prior to being relocated to their respective basilicas) as well as Saint Sebastian – clear evidence that all three, among many other martyrs, were venerated by the early Christian community for their fidelity to the faith.

**Wednesday, July 2** - Typically, this would have been the day to attend a papal audience; however, we learned that the Holy Father’s audiences for July were being cancelled (which was the customary practice before Pope Francis). Our pilgrims made good use of the extra time to revisit the Basilica of Saint Peter and to pray, to shop for a few souvenirs, and to relax before we went to tour:

- The ancient ruins of the Forum (which was the heart and center of Rome’s economic, political, legal, religious, social, and cultural life),
- The Colosseum (an amphitheater which held more than 50,000 people for sporting events, gladiator contests, and other spectacles such as battleship maneuvers and most notably the martyrdom of early Christians; in our day, the Holy Father leads the traditional, torchlit Way of the Cross on Good Friday, beginning at the Colosseum).

Then our day concluded with Holy Mass at the Minor Basilica of Saint Clement (“San Clemente” ...*hmmm...I wonder who chose this church as part of our pilgrimage*).

**Thursday, July 3** - Our last day in Rome allowed for some flexibility. Given the extreme temperatures we experienced during our time there (94-100 degrees every day), some pilgrims journeyed to the beach; others visited the well-preserved archaeological site of Ostia Antica (a port of Rome that was built on the mouth of the Tiber River); and others continued to enjoy the

sites around the Basilica of Saint Peter. We concluded our final day with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at Saint Mary of Victory Church and a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

**Friday, July 4** - We said goodbye to the Eternal City (Ciao, Roma!), mindful that you were celebrating the 249th anniversary of our nation's independence (July 4). During our bus ride from Boston to Bangor, we did witness some stellar fireworks in the greater Portland area. Our pilgrimage was a time of grace, but it was good to get home and be with our parish family again.

*Peace and blessings,  
Msgr. Andrew Dubois*