**Emilia Romagna Religious Tour**

Duration: 4 days

**Day 1: Reggio Emilia - Bologna (Km. 84)**

Stop in Reggio Emilia to visit the Basilica della Beata Vergine della Ghiara. The construction of the Basilica is linked to the miracle that occurred on 29 April 1596 when the young Marchino, deaf and dumb from birth, miraculously obtained word and hearing while praying in front of an image of the Madonna painted by Bertone.

After the visit, continue to Bologna. The city tour starts from Piazza Maggiore, overlooked by the Basilica of San Petronio, patron saint of the city. Inside you can admire the Virgin and Child by Jacopo della Quercia. Through the ancient streets adjacent to the square, lively and picturesque, you will reach the Palace that hosted the Merchants' Forum, which has always been a place of trade, and Piazza di Porta Ravegnana, where the two towers stand out, the symbol of the city. Walking along Strada Maggiore, you reach the Benedictine Complex of Santo Stefano, the Jerusalem of Bologna, a place of great artistic value and intense devotion.

**Curiosity**

* In Bologna, there are 40 km of arcades! Their construction is linked to the birth of the university, which, being the oldest in the world, immediately attracted a large number of students, so many that there were not enough accommodation to accommodate them. Initially, therefore, the inhabitants closed their balconies with wooden verandas, which were later transformed into more stable structures: external rooms supported by scaffolding, the porches.
* Just outside the historical centre of Bologna stands the sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca, connected to the city by a 4 km long portico, the longest in the world.

**Day 2: Bologna - Pomposa Abbey - Ravenna - Rimini (Km. 209)**

Departure for Pomposa Abbey, the complex is one of the most important in northern Italy, welcoming guests such as Dante Alighieri and Pier Damiani. Noteworthy are the frescoes inside the basilica, inspired by Giotto, and the beautiful mosaic floor with marble inlays.

Continuation to Ravenna, where we begin with a visit to the Basilica of S.Vitale, one of the highest creations of Byzantine art: the dome is studded with mosaics, including portraits of Justinian and his court. We continue to the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, covered with mosaics; the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo, built by Teodorico, which houses the processions of Martyrs and Virgins in the nave; the church of S.Francesco, with the tomb of Dante, who died here in 1321 and remembered every evening by the tolling of the bell.

Transfer to hotel in Rimini area.

**Curiosity**

* In the abbey of Pomposa was born the modern musical notation, by the Benedictine monk Guido d'Arezzo, who invented the tetragrammaton, ancient relative of today's pentagram.
* Along the right side aisle of the Cathedral of Ravenna there is a small chapel dedicated to the so-called Madonna del Sudore, whose name originates in an ancient city legend. Tradition has it that the image was once found in a small niche inside a tavern in Ravenna. One night, a soldier stabbed it, prey to a burst of anger due to the loss of a large amount of money at the dice game, and the portrait of the Madonna "sweated" blood.

**Day 3: Rimini - Montepaolo Hermitage - Rimini (Km. 162)**

We will reach the hinterland of Forlì to visit the hermitage of Montepaolo, the most important sanctuary in Emilia Romagna dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua: it was here, in fact, that the saint had his first Italian residence, between 1221 and 1222. The sanctuary preserves an illustrious relic of St. Anthony, taken directly from the body kept in the basilica of Padua.

Back in Rimini, we will reach the old town centre: from Piazza Malatesta we will walk towards the central Piazza Cavour on which stands a statue of Paul V and a 16th century fountain. The square is overlooked on one side by the Palazzo dell'Arengo and the Gothic Palazzo del Podestà and in the background by the nineteenth-century Teatro Comunale. Walking along Corso Augusto, you arrive in Piazza Tre Martiri, which stands on the area of the ancient Roman Forum, where it is said that Julius Caesar harangued his soldiers after crossing the Rubicon. From here, you can visit the Malatesta Cathedral, the city's greatest monument and one of the highest creations of the early Renaissance. The majestic facade, inspired by the forms of the Roman triumphal arch, is the work of Leon Battista Alberti. On the right side, solemn arches enclose sarcophagi of famous people. The Gothic interior preserves the tomb of Sigismondo Malatesta. The visit continues towards the oldest of the surviving Roman arches and one of the most beautiful that of Augustus, erected in 27 B.C. in honour of Augustus, restorer of the Via Flaminia, who joined the Via Emilia at this point. In addition, worth a visit is Tiberius' 5-arched bridge over the Marecchia River started by Augustus and finished by Tiberius.

**Curiosity**

* Near the hermitage of Montepaolo, following the "path of hope", you reach the small chapel where Saint Anthony used to retire in prayer.

**Day 4: Rimini - San Marino - Sarsina - Return (Km. 60)**

San Marino, the oldest Republic and one of the smallest states in the world. The document that recognizes its autonomy dates back to 885. The visit of the Republic starts in Piazza della Libertà, which is overlooked by the Palazzo Pubblico, or Palazzo del Governo. Just above the square is the neoclassical basilica of San Marino, which houses the relics of the saint, a stonemason from Arbe, founder of the first Christian community living on Mount Titano. On the three spikes of the crest of Mount Titano, almost overlooking the plain, rise the three fortresses or Penne. The first, called La Rocca or Guaita, perhaps dates back to the 11th century and was rebuilt in the 15th century; the second, called Cesta, from the 13th century but rebuilt, houses the Museum of Ancient Weapons; the third, called Montale, is from the 13th century.

At the end of the visit departure for Sarsina, where the basilica of San Vicinio stands, which owes its name to the first bishop of Sarsina, a fundamental figure in the process of evangelization that invested this part of Romagna in the first centuries after Christ. Inside it is preserved the chain that tradition says Vicinio wore, tied to a stone, when he was praying. Even today, the faithful come here to receive the blessing, which consists in the imposition of the chain, believed to be able to drive evil from the soul.

Return to your place of origin.

**Curiosity**

* In the Republic of San Marino, in addition to the conventional date, official documents also indicate the "San Marino date", which is counted from 301 A.D., the year of the Republic's foundation. In fact, according to legend, in that year Marino died pronouncing these last words, symbol of his mission, "Relinquo vos liberos ab utroque homine" that means, "I leave you free of both men", understood Emperor and Pope.