



Rome-2

Mt. Etna, with possible volcanic ash plume on left



Stromboli, showing active volcano

On Friday, 4 November, we passed between the tip of Italy and the island of Sicily. On approach to Sicily we had a view

of Mt. Etna poking above the clouds. White snow appeared to cover its north-facing slopes. I could see a small cloud rising from its summit with a fuzzy volcanic ash plume descending down the south (left) side. After passing through the narrow channel by Messina, Sicily, we turned northwest to go to Rome. In the early afternoon we passed the island of Stromboli. Its volcano was active, showing steam clouds and a faint ash plume far downwind.



Trevi Fountain



Soon after dawn on Saturday, 5 November, our luggage was removed from our ship. We claimed our own and got on busses to go to Rome. Our lunch was near the famous Trevi Fountain. Then our busses took us across the Tiber River for an afternoon in the Vatican City, the home of the Roman Catholic Christian Church. The Vatican, with an area of only 109 acres (44 hectares), is the world's smallest sovereign country, with a minimal population size. We entered through the city wall into the huge museum that preserves thousands of artifacts.

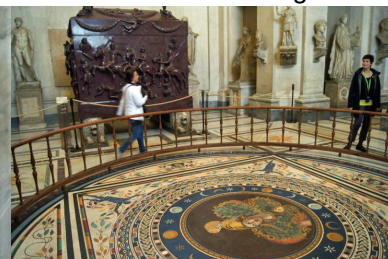
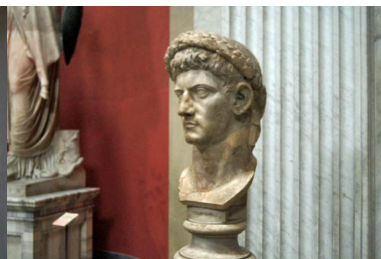


Vatican wall



First view of Saint Peter's Basilica

Including Asian visitors



Bust - Roman Emperor Claudius Brown sarcophagus of Helena

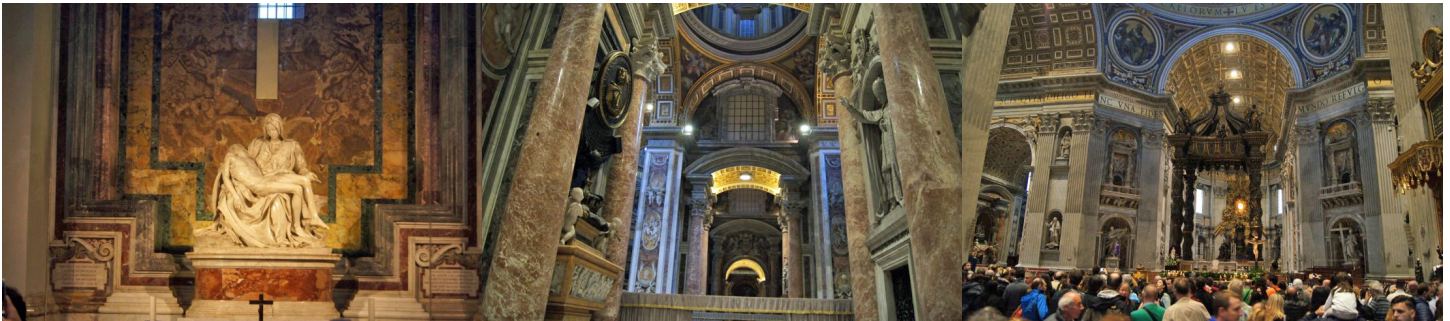


Tapestry example

Map example

Map with detailed Rome inset

Photos within the Sistine Chapel are not allowed. Guards scolded those visitors who operated their cameras. An abundance of photos are available on the Internet, including these two that follow, so I obeyed the rules.



Pieta showing Mary with body of Jesus Basilica interior

Basilica center, Pope's chair and canopy



Courtyard

Exterior features

The work on Saint Peter's Basilica began in 1506 and lasted more than a century. Its huge and elaborate features were obviously expensive. It is historically interesting that on 31 October 1517 the German priest, Martin Luther, began his public objections to the unethical and unbiblical methods of raising money for this construction. That triggered

the Protestant Reformation by which the leaders sought to bring the Church back to its original teachings about following Jesus. The Roman Church had strayed into behaving like a set of political kings and needed reform. Changes were made, but various interpretations split Christianity into numerous denominations and traditions.

Dr. Ed Holroyd
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Eurasian Blackbird



Great Cormorant



Common Chiffchaff



Black Redstart