

Loreto Pilgrims in Rome



From Sunday 8th February until Thursday 12th February 2026, Deacon Davie (School Chaplain) accompanied by Mrs Shahidi (2nd in RE); led 16 students on a Pilgrimage to Rome.

Students witnessed, first hand; the heart of the Church through their visits to the Vatican and being part of an audience with Pope Leo. As Pilgrims, they also followed in the Footsteps of our Foundress Mary Ward by visiting places that inspired her including the English College in Rome, St Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel. Deacon Davie stated that ***"while we set out to nature and develop student's faith, helping them to experience a Catholic pilgrimage and its importance brought with it a deeper understanding of most of the young people's own faith. Hopefully, this will further ignite the fire of faith to be lived out in their daily lives"***.

Below as some thoughts from the young people who attended the Pilgrimage:

"Before I went on the Rome trip my experiences with my religion were not great, but after going into Rome and coming back to the UK I felt like a whole other person. I applied to go to Rome because I thought it would have been a good experience for me and it would have helped me to get closer with god, and it did exactly that. On my first day in Rome I was nervous, not because I didn't like, because didn't know what was to come. In Rome we visited St peters basilica, the Colosseum, and we also saw the pope speak and it all was just a wonderful experience. I want to thank my mum for paying for everything because I know how expensive everything was and I also want to thank Davie for

taking us on the trip and Miss Shahidi. In the end, Rome benefited me by making my love for god grow stronger. When we landed back in the UK, I wanted to back to Rome immediately, but it felt good to be back at home. If someone wanted to go to Rome, I would suggest they go for it because it is such a good experience and they would get a lot out of it."

Annamae Year 9

"I went to Rome from 8-12 feb 2026. I chose to go on this pilgrimage to get closer to God and my religion. This pilgrimage was the most incredible thing ever. We visited the colosseum, St Peters Basilica where we did the dome climb. We also went and sat in a Pope audience, we went to St Maria Maggiore, the Trevi fountain, The Spanish steps. We also had mass at the English College.

My favourite activity was definitely the Dome climb because it was so challenging but when you got to the top the feeling was genuinely like no other. When I applied for Rome I didn't think I was going to be able to do it but I did and I'm so glad I managed. What stood out to me was the beautiful architecture all around Rome, even on side streets. I feel I have gained so much more knowledge on my religion and feel a lot closer to God. I was someone who was struggling in school before Rome and Rome was so nice to get away from everything and have an amazing time. I had an amazing time with all my friends and I'm so thankful for them without them I don't think I would have had half as much fun.

We all made so many memories that I think will last forever and we can always look back on. I want to thank you my mum and dad for making this once in a lifetime trip possible to me and I also want to thank Davie and Miss Shahidi for taking us. Rome was one of the best things I've ever done and I am so so beyond grateful for this opportunity."

Ava Year 10

"Our school organised a pilgrimage to Rome. The visit combined spiritual reflection with historical learning and was an enriching experience for me and all the students.

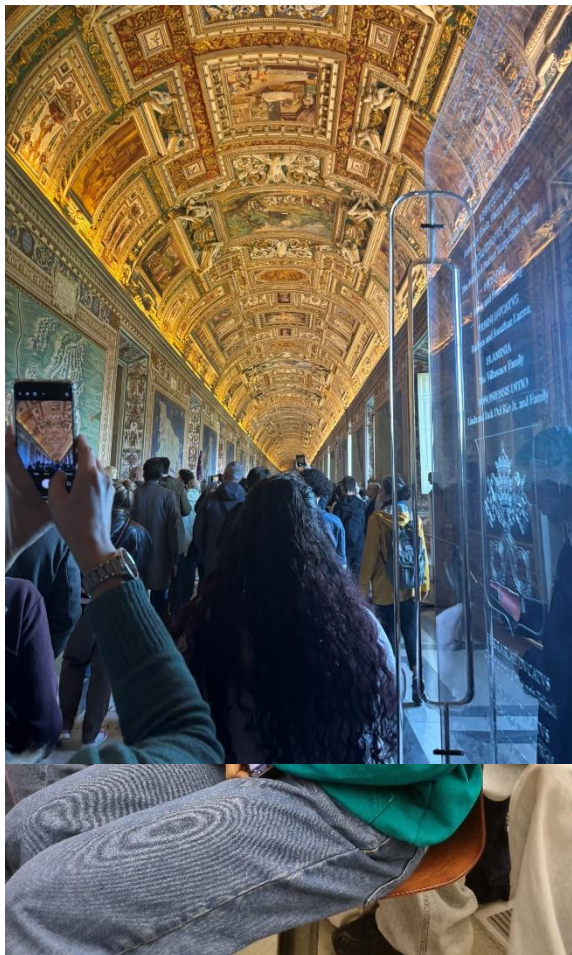
We went to St Peter's Basilica where we spent time in quiet prayer and admired its remarkable architecture. The visit encouraged reflection and deepened my understanding of its religious importance. We also visited the Spanish steps, observing the cultural life of the city, and we explored the colosseum, where we learned about ancient roman history. This pilgrimage was very important to me because it created a bond with God and it also made me more close to my religion. This pilgrimage gave me time away from my daily distractions to reflect and pray sincerely. Being in a sacred place helped me feel deeper sense of peace and gratitude. I became more aware of my faith, more thankful for my blessings and more committed to living according to Gods teachings. This experience brought me closer to God and strengthened my spiritual understanding. I really



appreciate getting picked for this trip I really enjoyed it and I learned a lot. What stood out to me was Being able to go to the churches and pray and reflect to yourself without any distractions. I would also like to say thank to my parents who paid for my trip and thank you to the teachers who brought me on this trip."

Danielle Year 9

"Over the course of the 5 days, I really enjoyed this trip for many reasons. We got to visit many basilicas and explore the beautiful city of Rome itself. We visited the basilica; Santa Maria Maggiore,



arch basilica of San John Laterano, St Peters and Sistine chapel. We also visited the Foro Romano, the colosseum, the Vatican museum. We also ate out at authentic restaurants where we had a variety of very delicious food.

I really enjoyed visiting all the basilicas and feeling more connected with my religion. I also really enjoyed becoming more confident and making new friends with others on the trip. My favourite basilica was Santa Maria Maggiore because I got to see where Pope Francis was buried and it remains very special to me. I also really enjoyed seeing the Pope and hearing his blessing. I think other people should go on this pilgrimage because it's a very special, once in a lifetime experience where you can learn more about the catholic religion and get closer to it if you are catholic and you'll make unforgettable memories.

Overall, I really enjoyed this trip as there were many amazing things that we did that I enjoyed. Despite being from here I went to places I had never been to and I have gotten closer to my religion."

Elisa Year 10

"I went to Rome, Italy; on a pilgrimage ready to explore, learn and expand my knowledge on my religion. We went with two teachers: Deacon Davie, Mrs Shahidi and my classmates.

In the beginning, I was nervous because it was my first time flying without my parents which did give me some anxiety but when we really got into it, I started speaking with other classmates which really helped me feel more comfortable and welcomed. We visited many Holy sites but one of the key places which stood out to me was the St Peter's Basilica. It was such a unreal experience. Walking to the top of the Dome was hard work but it payed off, the view was so breath-taking. The inside of the Basilica was so unbelievable, I have never seen anything more holy. I felt so special as we luckily got to experience a Mass in one of the holiest countries.

Visiting the Vatican was very nice as I got to learn new information about the Vatican, my faith and the different Popes, their hobbies and more!

Overall, this pilgrimage was very meaningful to me because it helped me expand my knowledge of my religion and I was able to visit very holy places. It was such a once in a lifetime experience seeing these spiritual places.

One thing I will always remember from this time, was being able to be at an audience of the Pope: it is an opportunity not everyone gets to see in their life time, it was such a blessing!

This experience has made me feel closer to God and helped me reflect on how to strengthen my relationship with him.

I am very grateful to Deacon Davie for making this pilgrimage possible and I can't wait to see other opportunities in the future."

Ivana Year 9

A Parent had this to say about the Pilgrimage: *"I just wanted to say a very heartfelt thank you for giving ...the wonderful opportunity to take part in the pilgrimage to Rome. She had such an amazing time and has been talking about it ever since she returned. It was clearly a very special experience for her, she learned so much, had lots of fun, and made some lovely memories along the way. We both really appreciate the time, effort, and care that went into organising the trip and supporting the students throughout. Opportunities like this mean so much to them, and it's clear how much dedication you and the staff put into making it such a positive experience."*

At his audience with Loreto students and other Pilgrims, Pope Leo Had this to say: ***"I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's audience, in particular the groups from England, the Netherlands, Sweden, Israel and the United States of America, Next Wednesday, the season of Lent begins. It is a time for deepening our knowledge and love of the Lord, for examining our hearts and our lives, as well as refocusing our gaze on Jesus and his love for us. May these coming days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving be a source of strength as we daily strive to take up our own crosses and follow Christ. Upon you and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!"*** And so, as we continue our Lenten journey, let us not be afraid to embrace the Change that we need to make in order to deepen our own faith and make our lives and our world a little better in the process. Deacon Davie (School Chaplain)



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