

# JOURNEY TO PLACES OF THE HIGHER SELF

FIVE DAYS IN THE GREEN HEART OF ITALY

SEPTEMBER 17-23, 2018



In our everyday lives we are often too busy, distracted, or caught in the mundane to be open to the places of the Higher Self. Throughout history and across cultures, our ancestors have always created ritual space and time for the transpersonal to enter into the ordinary. Such holy places are often located on

mountaintops and deep inside caves, in silent havens and in nature. Churches, temples, and mosques have been built to hold the polar tensions of spirit and matter, inner and outer space and light, as well as the community that shares the transcendent experience. As an expression of beauty, awe, and awakening, art has also always played a great part along this journey to our Higher Self.

Building on the insights experienced during the [8th International Meeting at Casa Assagioli](#), we embark on a *Journey to Places of the Higher Self*. Starting from Florence, we travel east to visit medieval churches and mountain hermitages, allow our souls to soar from mystical mountains, discover beautiful villages and, of course, enjoy the *cucina locale*. During this five-day journey, you will have a chance to discover places of transcendence in the green heart of Italy – the Umbrian Apennines –home to many generations of seekers and saints of the transpersonal.

The journey is especially meant to be an open voyage of discovery and a direct personal experience of all that presents itself during its various stages. We will go slowly and quietly, allowing you the time and space necessary to directly experience the reality of the Higher Self, the key part of you that connects the personal with the transpersonal and, hence, the personal with the universal.

This journey promises to be a *fonte* of inspiration for anyone seeking the Higher Self in the natural beauty and surroundings of Italy. We hope to provide you with a journey that might help transform and strengthen you when you ultimately return to your daily life.

The trip is explicitly small-scale and non-touristic. We stay in a family farmhouse and dine in local restaurants. We travel only short distances and avoid hasty visits. The sole focus of the journey is to calmly and peacefully allow for encounters of the Higher Self in majestic forests and sacred places found in a beautiful area of Umbria.

# STAGES OF THE JOURNEY

## DAY 1. ARRIVAL

On September 17, those of us in Florence who have participated in the [8th International Meeting at Casa Assagioli](#) will gather in the morning at Santa Maria Novella train station to travel together to Gualdo Tadino. Those who are arriving from other destinations will also plan to arrive on September 17 to Gualdo Tadino train station, which is a stop on the direct train from Rome to Ancona. Upon arrival, you are welcomed and transported to the nearby [Agriturismo Casalino](#). That evening we enjoy a festive *cena* together.

## DAY 2. GUALDO TADINO AND SERRA SANTA



*Path to the Eremo Serra Santa*

On our first day together, we spend the morning exploring the historic center of Gualdo Tadino, an ancient Umbrian and then Roman city strategically placed along the via Flaminia which traverses Italy from Rome to Ancona. The city is presently known for its abundant spring waters, medieval artwork, sacred hermitages, and 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics. In the morning you will enjoy time in the [Rocca Flea Castle and Museum](#), renovated by Frederick II in 1242, who said it was architectonically the most perfect castle he ever built. Inside is

a wonderful overview of the history of the city, along with captivating 14-15<sup>th</sup> century paintings mostly by Matteo da Gualdo.

After a stroll through the city center, we drive up to Valsorda for our picnic lunch. Afterwards, we make a visit to the Eremo Serra Santa (1348 mt.). This hilltop medieval chapel is a small jewel surrounded by stunning views of the surrounding mountainsides, in which you can find a moment of contemplative peace.

During the rest of the afternoon, you are free to wander along the many hiking paths as you enjoy the pure air and panoramic views. We return to Casalino for another delicious supper.

### DAY 3. THE APENNINES AND FONTE AVELLANA



*Monastery of the Holy Cross of Fonte Avellana*

On this second full day of our trip, we travel into the Apennines to [Fonte Avellana](#). Situated on Mount Catria at 1700 m, this 10<sup>th</sup> century monastery retains its original beauty through the simplicity of its architecture and its harmony with the surrounding nature. We will have a tour of the monastery and its ancient scriptorium. After we enjoy a picnic lunch, you will have time to quietly explore the grounds, bookshop, and hiking paths for yourself.

We return to our *agriturismo* for dinner and take some time to share our experiences.

### DAY 4. WALKING THE SAINT FRANCIS WAY



*Eremo delle Carceri, Assisi*

This day brings us to Assisi, the home of St. Francis. If you enjoy walking, you will have the opportunity to follow his footsteps. We will all leave in the morning and those walking will be dropped off in [Valfabbrica to begin the 14.5 km \(approximately 5 hour\) hike to Assisi](#). Along the way, you will experience the silence of forests, the shimmer of olive groves and views of grape-laden vineyards. A picnic lunch will fortify you. As you make your final descent into the city, the prominent view of the beautiful Basilica of St. Francis will carry you forward one step at a time. Upon arrival, you can visit the Saint's tomb and quietly meditate.

For those who prefer not to walk, you will continue by car to Assisi. You will then have time on your own in the city, with the option of a picnic lunch for your own private enjoyment. In the early afternoon, we will all meet at the Basilica of St. Francis and then travel by car (5 km) to the Eremo delle Carceri, a sacred place full of caves where St. Francis and his followers prayed and meditated. This incredibly peaceful sanctuary sits at the foot of Mount Subasio and requires all visitors to pass their time there in silence.

After another full day, we return to Casalino for dinner.

## DAY 5. THE FOUNTAIN AND TEMPLE OF CLITUNNO AND EREMO OF CAMPELLO



*View of Campello above Clitunno*

Another special day as we travel together to the [Fountain and Temple of Clitunno](#), recently included in the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage list. A place of quite beauty, Clitunno has inspired poets over the centuries from Pliny to Byron., Byron was struck by its “gentle waters,” which he described as “most serene of aspect, and most clear.”

The [classical temple](#) was probably once dedicated to a deity called Clitumnus (identified with Jupiter), which, 1500 years ago, was rebuilt as a church, dedicated to

the “God of the Angels”. For lunch we indulge at the [Fonti di Clitunno Restaurant](#).

In the afternoon we visit the Eremo di Campello, founded by the Franciscan Sister Maria during the last century. A courageous modernist who pioneered ecumenism, Sister Maria exchanged letters with Gandhi for decades and met with him when he visited Rome in 1931. The Eremo di Campello is one of the two remaining hermitages founded in the 1900s that remains active, and we will be welcomed by its small yet vital female community.

Afterwards, we return to Casalino for a light supper.

## DAY 6. FABRIANO



*Women hanging newly made paper to dry (Fabriano)*

This last day full day together in Fabriano promises something for everyone. Shoppers can wander past the many stalls at the Saturday market, art lovers can enjoy the Pinacoteca gallery, and those interested in history can visit the city’s Paper Museum. Since the 1200s, Fabriano has been famous for its paper making, and inside the museum you can see a demonstration of how paper has been made through the centuries.

Lunch is on your own, but we promise to point out the best biological gelato shop in town. In the afternoon, we will meet again for a special surprise finale to our *Journey to Places of the Higher Self*. We return to Casalino for a celebratory dinner.

## DAY 7. DEPARTURE

The next morning, we say our goodbyes after breakfast and transport you to the train station at Gualdo Tadino, where you can catch a direct train to Rome or other destinations in Italy.

## EXTRA: A VISIT TO CASA ASSAGIOLI, FLORENCE

After our week together, you have the opportunity to visit Casa Assagioli, the former home of Roberto Assagioli and the current location of his archives and the Istituto di Psicosintesi in Florence. You will travel on your own to Florence and find your own accommodation. On Monday 24 September and/or Tuesday 25 September, you can visit Casa Assagioli where you will be given a tour of the house and then be able to work with archive material in the library. Casa Assagioli is open from 10:00-13:00 and 14:00-17:00. Additional cost is a donation, based on your financial ability, to Casa Assagioli. We suggest € 25.00-50.00 per person, per day.

## YOUR GUIDES

**Catherine Ann Lombard, M.A.** is a psychosynthesis psychologist, writer, and researcher.



Her publications include both popular and academic articles on psychosynthesis, as well as first-person essays on life in Italy. Most recently, she has edited *Freedom in Jail*, by Roberto Assagioli, published by the Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence. You can learn more about her at [LoveAndWill.com](http://LoveAndWill.com).

**Dr. Kees den Biesen** is a literary scholar, philosopher and theologian. Having specialized in early Christian literature, architectural theory and symbolic theology, he is fascinated by the interactions between art, intellect and religion.



Catherine and Kees met, fell in love, and married in Ireland twenty years ago. They spent six years in Italy renovating a 13th century home in Umbria while learning to search for mushrooms and prune olive trees. After a period of intense study and teaching in the Netherlands, Germany and England, they have recently returned to live in Umbria. Together they enjoy leading unique trips in Italy. Please visit [poeticplaces.org](http://poeticplaces.org).

## ORGANIZATION AND COST OF THE TRIP

The trip through Umbria is organized and hosted by Catherine Ann Lombard and Kees den Biesen, the guides and facilitators.

**Included in the price:** all transportation while in Gualdo Tadino, 6 overnight stays, 6 dinners, 1 lunch, 3 picnics, and all museum fees for group events.

**Not included in the price:** all beverages. Participants take care of their journey to and from Gualdo Tadino, including travel insurance.

**Cost:** € 1050.00 per person when sharing a double room; the use of a single room costs € 125.00 extra.

**Registration:** please register by sending an email to [loveandwill@live.com](mailto:loveandwill@live.com) and making a non-reimbursable deposit of € 150.00. Bank account information will be sent after registration.