

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.

Come and join us while we 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 medieval monastery 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 and the Marche.

STAGES OF THE JOURNEY

DAY 1. ARRIVAL

On September 17, you begin by arriving at Fabriano train station, which is a stop on the direct train from Rome to Ancona. Upon arrival, you are welcomed and transported to the Benedictine [Monastero San Luca](#). Those of us in Florence who have participated in the [8th International Meeting at Casa Assagioli](#) will gather with Catherine at Santa Maria Novella train station to travel together to Fabriano, where we will be met and brought to the Monastero San Luca. That evening we all enjoy a festive *cena* together.

DAY 2. 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 below Mount Catria at 1700 m, this 10th 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 the Monastero San Luca for dinner and take some time to share our experiences.

DAY 3. FABRIANO



Women hanging newly made paper to dry (Fabriano)

We spend the entire day getting to know Fabriano with something for everyone. Shoppers can wander past the many stalls at the Wednesday market, art lovers can enjoy the Pinacoteca gallery, and those interested in history of craft 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.

We will have lunch together at the market, and we promise to point out the best biological gelato shop in the whole area. In the afternoon, we will meet again for a special surprise to our *Journey to Places of the Higher Self*. We return to Monastero San Luca for dinner.

DAY 4. WALKING THE SAINT FRANCIS WAY



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 towards 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 little 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 Monastero San Luca for dinner.

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



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 quiet 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 pioneer of ecumenism, Sister Maria exchanged letters with Gandhi (as well as many others) for decades and met with him when he visited Rome in 1931. We will be welcomed by its small yet vital female community. (You can read [Catherine's](#)

[blog about Sister Maria, here](#). And you can read more about the [Fountain and Temple of Clitunno, here](#).)

Afterwards, we return to Monastero San Luca for a light supper.

DAY 6. THE CAVES OF FRASASSI, ABBEY OF SAN VITTORE, AND GENGA



On our last full day together, we begin with a tour inside the famous [Grotte di Frasassi](#), a 1½ km guided walk through the cave's sculptured spaces carved by underground water. Once above ground, we head of to the nearby [Abbey of San Vittore](#), a 10th century Benedictine Monastery, one of the most important Romanesque buildings of the Marche. There we will enjoy a picnic lunch.

One of the many beautiful caves we will visit.

After lunch, we will then travel a short distance to Genga, a beautiful walled medieval village where you can enjoy viewing sacred art – from the Paleolithic Venus to the Madonna and Child – at its Museum of Art, History and Territory. In the late afternoon, we will have a special surprise ending to our *Journey to Places of the Higher Self*.

We return to Monastero San Luca for a celebratory dinner together.

DAY 7. DEPARTURE

The next morning, we say our goodbyes after breakfast and transport you to the train station at Fabriano, 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.



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.

ORGANIZATION AND COST OF THE TRIP

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

Included in the price: all transportation while in Fabriano, 6 overnight stays, 6 dinners, 2 lunches, 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 Fabriano, 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 and making a non-reimbursable deposit of **€ 150.00**. Bank account information will be sent after registration.