

Heritage Choir Newsletter #14 – Rome, Italy

It's Friday, October 11th, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. This evening, the Choir will have a Performance at St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican....



After lunch on our own, we will meet as a Group; mid-afternoon, to line up to enter **St. Peter's Basilica**. The Choir will perform at the 5:00 pm Mass.

St. Peter's Basilica is a monument to Peter whom Jesus tapped as the chief apostle, declaring that Peter was the rock on which he would build the church. Because Rome was the capital of the empire, Peter, along with the apostle Paul, came to the city to spread the faith, early in the first millennium.

St. Peter's Basilica is one of the most spectacular churches in the world. Although some may confuse it for the "mother church" of Roman Catholics, it isn't even a cathedral because it's not the seat of the pope, who is also the bishop of Rome. Because of its size, grandeur, and location within Vatican City, papal authorities use the church for numerous ceremonies. Its capacity is enormous—it can hold 20,000 seated worshippers or 60,000 standing.

All around you are spectacular works of art that look like paintings but aren't. They are mosaics made of tiny tiles, or tesserae, each about the size of a fingernail. Mosaics were chosen over paintings to decorate the basilica so that they wouldn't be vulnerable to the ravages of time, smoke, and humidity—eternal art for the eternal church. Four marvelous examples are **the mosaic medallions** that decorate the area between the main cupola of the basilica and the enormous piers underneath. These medallions represent the four evangelists who composed the Gospels. We can see St. Matthew on the left above the baldachin, and St. John on the right.

St. Peter's Baldachin – Situated directly under the dome in the Basilica stands this 29-meter high bronze canopy. Gian Lorenzo Bernini started work on the Baldachin in 1623 and it was completed 11 years later in 1634. The Baldachin stands over the papal altar which is directly above St Peter's tomb. Only the Pope may serve at the altar.

We will continue are visit to St Peter's Basilica.....**to be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

Rome "Fun Fact" #14. The Statue of Liberty could fit inside of St Peter's Basilica, even on her foundation with her torch raised. As a matter of fact, her 305-foot stature would be dwarfed under the towering 450-foot dome of the church.