

## ***Heritage Choir Newsletter #20 – Rome, Italy***

***It's Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. We will travel to Assisi.....***



Pilgrims have been coming to Assisi, Italy since the 13th century to venerate St. Francis, who was born and buried here. Enjoy the beauty of this postcard-perfect town. Framed by the long, undulating hills of Umbria and the forests of Monte Subasio,

Assisi is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in the world and one of Italy's most spell-binding gems. Assisi isn't just home to UNESCO World Heritage sites, it *is* a UNESCO World Heritage site. The entire town basks in this coveted status because of its plethora of art and historically significant buildings, like the Basilica di San Francesco.

The basilica has such a collection of frescoes and paintings that it rivals many art museums. According to the UN, the town has a singular importance for its role in the diffusion of the Franciscan Order and for its "continuity of a city-sanctuary" from its Umbrian-Roman origins to today.

As the birth place of one of Catholicism's most venerated saints (one of the two patron saints of Italy), Assisi is a town with religion very close to its heart. Visitors shouldn't be surprised to see monks in long brown robes roaming the streets or bands of pilgrims walking the country roads surrounding the town.

Today Assisi is considered a global symbol of peace. It was also the home of St. Clare, who was personally inspired to follow the path of God by St. Francis and helped form the Order of Poor Clares which still exists today.

Assisi's strong religious ties have influenced its history and art to the point where the three are inextricably linked. Local artisans craft religious figurines and the most valuable artistic works in the region are housed in Assisi's many churches and Basilicas.

Next, the Choir will have a performance in the Basilica di San Francesco during our visit. ....to **be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

**Rome "Fun Fact" #20 - Town Origin -** One legend tells that the ancient town, called Assisium, came into existence around a holy spring that was later venerated by the Etruscans (9th – 5th centuries BC) and, following them, by the Romans.