

## **Heritage Choir Newsletter #21 – Rome, Italy**

***It's Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. The Choir will have a Performance at Basilica di San Francesco of Assisi.....***



This afternoon, the Southern Utah Heritage Choir will have a Performance at Basilica di St. Francesco of Assisi.

Construction on the Basilica was started immediately after St. Francis' death in 1228 and it was officially completed after the addition of the upper church in 1253. It is divided into the upper church, lower church and the Crypt.

The upper church, or *Basilica Superiore*, is covered with 28 frescoes by Giotto (with extensive help from members of his school) which are probably the main artistic stars of the church. Each fresco is a scene from St. Francis' life. Though completed centuries ago, the frescoes are still vibrant.

The lower church, or *Basilica Inferiore*, houses frescoes by Cimabue, Pietro Lorenzetti, and Simone Martini, who were heavily influenced by Giotto's work. Also, in the lower sanctuary is the *Cripta di San Francesco* – that is, the monumental tomb of St. Francis of Assisi. While the upper church seems to be a celebration of beauty and life, the lower church's dark rooms and sparse decoration reflects the spirit of St. Francis and his Franciscan order.

The Basilica of St Francis of Assisi is the most famous and probably most impressive attraction in Assisi; so massive you can see it for miles around. Anywhere else in the world, it would be its own UNESCO World Heritage site, but as it is, it's the jewel in Assisi's crown.

Next, highlights of other sites in Assisi as you enjoy dinner on your own before we return to Rome.....**to be continued in next week's Newsletter.**

**Rome "Fun Fact" #21** - St. Francis' remains were hidden immediately after he died to keep them from being plundered by relic hunters. His final resting place was unknown for 600 years until being rediscovered in 1818.