

Heritage Choir Newsletter #38 – Rome, Italy

It's Thursday, October 17th, during your 2019 Rome, Italy Performance Tour. Today, you will enjoy a Guided Walking Tour of Venice including a visit to San Marco Basilica.



The Basilica Cattedrale Patriarcale di San Marco and commonly known as Saint Mark's Basilica is the cathedral church of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Venice; one of the finest examples of Italo-Byzantine architecture.

The Basilica's interior is predominantly gold colored, hence its nickname "Chiesa d'Oro" (Golden Church). The main dome of the religious building is called Ascension Dome and is covered in early thirteenth-century mosaics, which depict scenes from the New Testament. The mosaics found in the church's atrium are made of small glass tiles with gold leaf. These represent scenes from the Old Testament. St Mark's relics are contained in the high altar of the church, held up by four marble and alabaster columns.

The construction of the Basilica began in 828 to house Saint Mark's relics which had been smuggled out of Alexandria. Although the current building is from the eleventh century, it has been renovated and modified throughout the following centuries.

The Museo di San Marco, gives you the opportunity of observing the Basilica's ceilings and mosaics up close, and most importantly, to see the magnificent original sculptures of the Horses of St. Mark. The four gold-plated bronze horses were originally in the Hippodrome of Constantinople and were pillaged during the Fourth Crusade. The replicas of the Horses of St. Mark stand in the Loggia dei Cavalieri (St Mark's Basilica front balcony).

Rialto Bridge, Italian **Ponte di Rialto**, stone-arch bridge crossing over the narrowest point of the Grand Canal in the heart of Venice. Built in the closing years of the 16th century, the Rialto Bridge is the oldest bridge across the canal and is renowned as an architectural and engineering achievement of the Renaissance.

The Bridge of Sighs was constructed in 1602 to link up the facade of the Ducal Palace with the newly established Prison established in 1589. It is the only covered bridge in Venice and entirely closed; windows are narrow and let very little light pass through the stony wire netting. It was the last picture of the freedom for those who were going to spend the remainder of their days in prison. A moment of intense regrets and sadness.



This afternoon, you will have some free time to explore Venice. Then, we will meet back at Saint Mark's Basilica to enjoy a performance by the Southern Utah Heritage Choir at the 6:45p.m. Mass.

Rome "Fun Fact" #38 – Saint Mark's altarpiece is the famous Pala d'Oro (Golden Pall), a panel of gold embedded with gems. This masterpiece incorporates 1,300 pearls, 300 sapphires, 300 emeralds, and 400 garnets. It was commissioned from Byzantine goldsmiths in 976 and further embellished over the centuries. Napoleon stole some of the precious stones in 1797, but there is still plenty left, gleaming behind protective glass.