

# The Passion of Our Lord

Sordevolo, Italy

with the Alpine & Wine Regions and Istria in Croatia



September 18—30, 2020



LA PASSIONE<sup>®</sup>  
SORDEVOLO

EDIZIONE  
2020

*Highlights: Sordevolo: The Passion Play/ Piedmont Region /  
St Julius Island/ Biella/ Prosecco Wine Region/ Castel' Alfero/  
Treviso / Vicenza / Trieste / Istria in Croatia*





*Dear Friends;*

*Please join us in this once in a lifetime opportunity The Passion Play of Sordevolo: a reenactment of the Passion of the Christ that has taken place in this small town every year since the beginning of the 18th century. An impressive, unique, and moving theatrical spectacle, more than 700 of the town's residents volunteer as actors and transform the ancient streets of Sordevolo into a reconstructed corner of Jerusalem circa 33 A.D. Work has already begun on this three and a half hour performance that will take place next in the Summer of 2020.*

*We are presenting this trip to the Passion Play in conjunction with a tour of this northern Alpine region of Piedmont, Italy; visiting such places as St Julius Island and Lake Garda. We will then travel westward to spend some days wine and food tasting ending in the last city of the Italian peninsula; Trieste. Two days are planned to the Istrian peninsula of Croatia one by land and one by sea. We sincerely hope you can join us on this wonderful trip.*

*Sincerely,*

*Fratelli & Company Group Travel*

#### **Day 1 - USA / Milan, Italy**

**We will provide a group air fare rate from Newark Liberty Airport. Depart from Newark Liberty International Airport, USA on our overnight flight into Milan, Italy, dinner and overnight onboard. Anyone coming from other parts of the US join the group in Newark or in Milan, Italy. Time schedule to be announced. Alternatively, we can assist you in making your air travel reservations if you wish.**

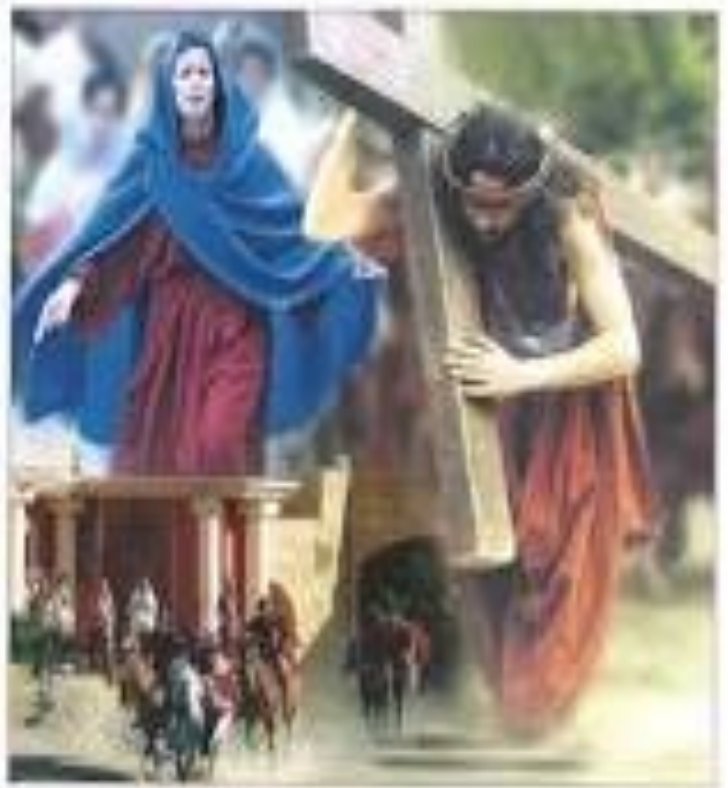
#### **Day 2—Milan / Biella**

**Morning arrival in Milan's Malpensa International Airport. We will be met by our motor-coach and taken to our hotel in Biella; a city rich in architecture, art and archaeology. After check-in and some time to freshen up we will have an afternoon walking tour of Biella will be followed by a Welcome Drink then dinner in a lovely local restaurant. Overnight in Biella. (D) [ristorantelalira.it](http://ristorantelalira.it)**

#### **Day 3—Biella / Sordevolo & The Passion Play**

**This morning is free-time to explore of shop in Biella. The charm of Biella is tied to its local culture, including the production of articles from high quality wool and crafts, and an amazing culinary tradition and great wines. We will meet back at the hotel at noon for an excursion to a local grappa mill where we can enjoy a grappa tasting with some treats. We will return to Biella for some relax time before we depart for Sordevolo & The Passion Play, also home to the Church of Santa Marta and it's museum.**

**This evening we will be awed by the Passion Play which is staged and performed by Sordevolo's villagers every 5 years. The performance takes place in a 4,000 square meter open space; a reconstructed corner of Jerusalem dating back to 33 A.D: Herod's Palace, Sanhedrim, Pontius Pilate's Praetorium, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Cenacle, and Calvary. Prior to the play dinner (included) will be at a local agriturismo. Agriturismo Nicolo Paolo (località Morione, Sordevolo)**



*In Memory - The Passion Play of Sordevolo, Italy*

#### Day 4— Biella / The Island of Saint Julius / Lake Orta

The island of Saint Julius, is a 900-foot long stretch of land in the middle of Lake Orta. The island's Catholic history dates back to the 5th century, when a chapel was built on the island, possibly to commemorate the evangelizer St. Julius, who died there. A 12th-century Romanesque basilica was later erected, which was replaced by the 18th-century monastery, occupied by Benedictine nuns since 1976.

The narrow streets are all faded elegance and ochre charm, punctuated by sumptuous outbreaks of baroque. At one end of the square stands the town hall (1585); built on graceful columns – as if on stilts – it looks like the sort of place Caravaggio might have his cupid retire to sleep. A little up the hill, overlooking the many restaurants and cafes, stands the pale-peach parish church, the Chiesa dell'Assunta, founded in the 15th century. Lunch (included) on the island. Dinner (on your own) and overnight in Biella. (B,L)



#### Day 5—Biella/Castel'Alfero/Desenzano del Garda

Castell'Alfero rises in the Low Monferrato, on a hill on the right side of the Valle Versa, crossed by the river of the same name. The history of Castell'Alfero is not linked exclusively to that of its manor, but it began centuries earlier in Roman times. In Castell'Alfero in 1774 Giovan Battista De Rolandis was born, creator of the Italian flag Tricolor, while in 1808 Gianduja was born in Callianetto, the carnival mask symbol of Piedmont. Today we will have a short tour of the “castle” Castle Museum and the village. Later we will proceed to a local agriturismo for lunch (included) with typical products of the region and wine tasting.

The local wine of this region are Asti Spumante, Barbera and Nebiolo.

Afterwards, we will proceed to our final destination of the day Desenzano del Garda for our

overnight stay.

Desenzano is a smallish town on the southern shore of Lake Garda in the north of Italy, with a population of around 25,000. It's known as Desenzano del Garda. Desenzano del Garda has some pleasant winding historic streets between the town's castle on its hill, and the lakeshore below. A busy road runs along the edge of the lake, and on the inland side is a small peaceful harbor, where little boats are moored and swans glide about in front of several comfortable cafe-bars. A larger marina is situated along the shore, protected by an imposing harbor wall. Somewhat bizarrely, Desenzano is a trendy spot for partying northern Italians. On Saturday nights they flock here in their glitzy clothes and parade the streets in an evening passeggiata, eating and drinking at local bars and restaurants before fading off to their nightclubs and party spots. This parading is good for people-watching. Supper on you own and overnight in Desenzano del Garda.



## Day 6 -Desenzano del Garda / Vicenza “The Palladian Villas”

*Today after breakfast we will depart for this amazing city of the architect Palladio. You will be in awe of this magnificent architectural marvel.*

**Vincentia** appears for the first time in ancient sources in 135 B.C., though its origins stretch much further back, and was ruled by the Gauls until 157 B.C. Today the city remains steeped in the presence of Rome, whose spirit has remained in the air throughout the centuries.

**Though born in Padua**, Palladio was adopted by Vicenza, and it was Vicenza that allowed his creative genius full rein, thus letting him become one of the greatest artists in history, employing classical themes and spatial harmony enforced through a rigid application of mathematical laws. Many

buildings bear witness to this; prominent among them, the Basilica Palladiana, or Palazzo della Ragione . Other masterpieces include the unparalleled wooden Teatro Olimpico and the villa La Rotonda. This last is unquestionably the jewel in the crown of Vicenza's Palladian treasures. Today we will have a tour of some of these magnificent works of art, masterpieces of Andrea Palladio. There will be some free time for lunch (on your own) and shopping in the main square.



Late in the afternoon we will return to Desenzano del Garda and enjoy a leisure evening in this lake resort town on the southern shore of Lake Garda. Stroll through this picturesque town on your own. Once you have explored the waterfront and shopping streets, head up narrow Via Castello to the town's small fortress, the Castello. Various events are held here, including summer concerts. Parts are sometimes open to the public; you can often wander into the courtyard and look around. Desenzano is the headquarters of Grana Padano cheese, a prized aged cheese used for grating or munching, much like

the protected Parmigiano-Reggiano. There are excellent shops, plenty of restaurants featuring the area's cuisine, and gelaterias for a creamy summer treat. Supper on your own and overnight in Desenzano del Garda.



## Day 7—Desenzano / Treviso / Valmarino



This morning, after breakfast, we will leave Lake Garda and head eastward to the Veneto Region. Our first stop today will be Treviso; the Venice of the North. Treviso is so called because of its labyrinths of canals that once ran throughout the city. Today we can still see some that have been left intact. The ancient city wall has preserved the medieval town, rich in romantic spots, water mills and pretty squares. We will visit the Cathedral of Treviso in Piazza Duomo; a witness to its medieval origins, though the facade and the inside are neoclassical. The Duomo houses an altarpiece "The

Annunciation" (1517) by Titian (Tiziano Vecellio). We will walk along Calmaggiora with numerous shops until we arrive at Piazza dei Signori, the heart of the historic center of Treviso. The most important building in the square is Palazzo dei Trecento, built in 1210. Behind Piazza dei Signori and Piazza San Vito we come to the river island, the Pescheria, the daily fish market. On river Cagnan, from the fish market, we can walk gently to Via San Parisio to the church of San Francesco, where Peter, the son of Dante Alighieri is buried. The church also contains beautiful frescoes by Tomaso da Modena. From this point we can walk to Porta St. Thomas looking North towards the Alps. Treviso is home to the headquarters of the clothing retailers Benetton, Sisley, Stefanel, Diadora and Lotto Sport Italia, appliance maker DeLonghi, and bicycle maker Pinarello, so there's lots of shopping! Also, on Via S. Agostino, the town boasts the very first gelato shop (over a hundred years old!) which, most years, wins best in Italy. Later in the afternoon we will depart Treviso for our hotel in the northern region of the Prosecco Road—Valmarino for supper (included) and overnight.



## Day 8 — The Prosecco Road Begins

We will begin in the morning after breakfast with a short ride to the wine trails; one of the world's most unique and breathtaking wine regions, where small vineyards planted on steep slopes are dedicated almost exclusively to grapes for Italy's most prized sparkling wine, "Prosecco". The roughly 20-mile stretch between Conegliano and Valdobbiadene—the heart of the "Prosecco Road"—is lined with family-run wineries producing the light, crisp bubbly, which is not only a classic aperitif served in every restaurant and bar in the region, but has enjoyed a recent explosion of popularity in the United States, thanks in part to its recession-friendly prices. Today we will visit a Medieval village, such as Asolo, to have some time for a lunch break (on your own) before continuing our journey of wine tasting. Dinner (included with wine and water) Overnight in Valmarino.





## Day 9 - San Daniele del Friuli—Prosciutto production and tasting and light lunch with wine.



Today will be a unique experience that you not soon forget. We will visit the quaint village of San Daniele del Friuli very close to the Slovenian border. San Daniele is a medieval town located in the Morainic hills of Friuli, northern-east of Italy. This place in the province of Udine is famous worldwide for its tasty ham called Prosciutto di San Daniele. So, what is so unique of this ham? How is it made and how different it is from the other famous Parma ham made in Emilia Romagna Region?

The Celts were the first culture to use salt in preserving pork, and their arrival in the hill town of San Daniele del Friuli around 400 BC marks the origin of

prosciutto di San Daniele. But the real trick is the geographical location of San Daniele and its micro-climate; since centuries, people have realized that this location makes the ham have a unique taste which is beyond the simple drying and preservation process. This is possible thanks to the position of this town, located between the fresh air currents from the Alps and the humid currents from the Adriatic Sea. In addition the town is located on a foothill and its excellent ventilation coupled with the low humidity of the place makes an ideal location for the seasoning of the ham. These characteristics contribute to the transformation of a simple piece of dry meat into a miracle; a mix of flavors so tasty and unique in its own. And all this by using just natural ingredients.

Today's tour includes a detailed visit of one of the prosciutto producers followed by a lunch with generous tastings of the local ham paired with local wine.

Later, we will have a short tour of the village of San Daniele which will include the Chiesa (church) di Sant'Antonio Abate in which is dedicated to the patron saint of pork butchers. One might say this is quite fitting for a town best known for its prosciutto. The tiny 15th-century church is often called the "Sistine Chapel of Friuli" for its vividly colored fresco cycle by Renaissance artist Martino da Udine (a.k.a. Pellegrino da San Daniele).

Afterwards we will return to Trieste, the balance of the day is free time to shop or sightsee. Tonight dinner is on your own and overnight is in Trieste.





## Day 10—Trieste City Tour

Trieste is the capital city of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region in northeast Italy. Founded by the Ancient Romans, it stands on the Adriatic coast below the Karst Plateau, a few kilometers from the border with Slovenia. Historic Italian, Austro-Hungarian and Slavic cultural influences are all evident in its layout, which encompasses a medieval old city and a neoclassical Austrian quarter. Trieste was one of the oldest parts of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the 19th century, it was the most important port of one of the Great Powers of Europe. As a prosperous seaport in the Mediterranean region, Trieste became the fourth largest city of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (after Vienna, Budapest, and Prague). In the fin-de-siecle period, it emerged as an important hub for literature and music. During our stay in Trieste we will visit the Città Vecchia (Old Town) - Trieste boasts an extensive old town; there are many very narrow and crooked streets with typical medieval houses. Nearly the entire area is closed to traffic. We will also visit the Austrian Quarter - Half of the city was built under Austrian-Hungarian dominion, so there is present a very large number of palaces that resemble Vienna. An iconic place of this quarter is the majestic Piazza Unità (Unity Square), which is Europe's largest sea-front square with the ever imposing “Miramare Castle” (pictured above) built under the order of Archduke Maximilian Habsburg, who was later executed in Mexico where he served as the Monarch. Tonight dinner (included) with wine and water, will be at a local restaurant and overnight will be in Trieste.



Coffee has been an important part of Trieste since the 1700s. Some of the most famous caffès are known as much for their famous patrons as their food and drink. Coffee beans arrived in Europe for the first time through the port of Trieste in the 1700's and has been a favorite beverage of the Triestine people ever since. Trieste boasts the some of oldest coffee shops in the world, like “Café San Marco”. We will have time in our days in Trieste to taste the many varieties of coffee. Trieste has a strong passion for coffee: its inhabitants' consumption per person is twice the national average.

Unlike in the rest of Italy, nobody will order just "a coffee", but:

*"un nero" (an espresso),*

*"un capo" (an espresso with hot milk in a cup),*

*"un capo in b" (an espresso with hot milk in a glass)*

*"caffè latte" or "capo" in tazza grande (in Trieste it is used as a synonym for "capuccino"),*

*"gocciato" or "goccia" (literally "drop", an espresso with a just a tiny quantity of milk).*

*It is not customary in Trieste to drink coffee with liquor.*



## Day 11— Panoramic & Piran & Wine cellar & Typical Lunch

Depart from Trieste and drive south following Slovenia's precious Adriatic coastline, a strip of land only 27 miles long, wedged between Italy and Croatia. What the coastline lacks in length, it makes up for in beauty. It's particularly picturesque around Izola, where you will stop for photos of this traditional fishing village.

Upon reaching Piran, a spectacularly scenic village on the tip of a thin peninsula, you will enjoy on short walking tour and some free time to wander its narrow, atmospheric streets. Much of the architecture is 15th-century Venetian Gothic, lending the village a wonderfully medieval feel. A statue of Guissepe Tartini stands in the marbled main square, a tribute to the 18th-century Piran-born violinist and composer. Elsewhere you will see historical churches, inviting cafes and the picture-



perfect port.

Continuing on, you will pass Portorož, a lovely coastal village whose fortunes were once linked to the vast salt pans nearby. While no longer valued commercially, the salt pans provide a fine habitat for birds and other wildlife. On the way you will also visit the traditional villages on Istrian countryside, which are surrounded by vineyards, olive groves and farms. There we'll take a time to learn the importance of wine in Slovenian culture and to enjoy in tasting of the local wines, prosciutto, olive oil and cheese as well.

Our last stop will be on an authentic farm where we'll be treated with typical local lunch. Simple rural ambient, excellent home-made food, wine and as well wonderful horses will surely make your trip unforgettable.

Tour concludes with relaxing scenic ride back to Trieste. Supper on your own and overnight in Trieste.





## **Day 12—Trieste to Rovinj, Istria/Croatia by Hydrofoil Ferry**

Today after breakfast we will depart for the Port of Trieste for an exciting and different experience. We will visit the city of Rovinj, once called Rovigno when the Istrian peninsula was part of Italy. This area was annexed to Yugoslavia after WWII in the Cold War period. Many people fled to Trieste which became the new border. The people who remained became ultimately Croatian. That's why this region is enthusiastically bilingual and has an engaging mix of Croatian and Italian. Upon our arrival in Rovinj (about 1.5 hours trip) we will be greeted by a local guide for a tour of this amazing old city dating back to Roman and Venetian times. It remains one of the last true Mediterranean fishing ports. Fishermen haul their catch into



the harbor in the early morning, followed by a horde of squawking gulls. Prayers for a good catch are sent forth at the massive Church of St Euphemia; the 60 meter high tower punctuates the peninsula. The quaint old town, is webbed with steep cobbled streets, squares, shops and restaurants. Just strolling the streets of the Old Town is a delight. The historical center is crammed with reminders of Venice, most strikingly in the Church of St Euphemia and the Balbi Arch. Climb to the hilltop by St Euphemia's and you'll be treated to inspiring views over the town, sea and islets. Lunch (included with wine & water) today will be in a local restaurant to savor the gastronomy of this unique region. After lunch there will be some free-time before boarding our hydrofoil back to Trieste. Overnight in Trieste and dinner on your own.

## **Day 13—Trieste—Munich—USA**

Today as we depart from this lovely city of Trieste on Italy's furthest border, we take with us many memories of a unique experience in Italy. From the mountains of Piedmont to the wine regions of Veneto, to the prosciutto capital of San Daniele to the distinctive areas of Croatia, once part of Italy, you will be overwhelmed with your new and different experiences of Italy from past trips. Italy is much more than Rome, Florence and Naples, it is a country with many different cultures, traditions and ethnic differences that vary greatly from region to region. As you return to the USA you can ponder these days and remember with pleasure all that you have experienced on this trip.

We say ARRIVEDERCI, not Good-Bye to Italy once again!