



Hello to my Fellow Art and Faith Pilgrims!

After considering several other exciting options for our 2019 Art and Faith Journey with Bro. Mickey Tour, Dave Geen and I have landed on Germany- and I can't wait to tell you about it.

Several years ago, in what proved to be a highlight in all my years of art ministry, I taught with Fr. Richard Rohr on a Rhine River cruise which started and ended in historically rich **Cologne**. Our focus was on the German Mystics, including the greatest one of all: **St. Hildegard of Bingen**, Doctor of the Church.

Whether you are already a fan and devotee of Hildegard's, as I am, or if you never even heard of her, you will love the beautiful part of the world in which she lived. My morning presentations will highlight her bountiful creativity, wisdom and courage. She was a larger than life reformer who saw art and music as perfect healing remedies in very troubled times in her church and nation. Thank God we don't have those today!



David will outline for you the day by day details in his letter, **SO BE SURE TO READ THAT!**- but our general plan is this: the first half of the trip in and around **BINGEN** will center on rest, relaxation, and retreat. I will offer my usual morning sessions, which will be expanded to include optional creative activity such as creating a mandala and contemplative photography with your phone. Our tour guide there is a renowned scholar whose specialty is St. Hildegard.



And then there's **COLOGNE**, the beautiful city on the Rhine River which boasts amazing medieval churches, modern art galleries, and one of the most beautiful of all the Gothic cathedrals in Europe, which miraculously withstood severe bombing during WWII. While here, we will also explore the life of St. Edith Stein, the synagogue of Cologne, and a bit of the history of Catholic Christian-Jewish relations across time.

I will never forget that first trip to Germany and am **VERY** excited to return to do even more sketching and painting in your company. The beautiful scenery, the historic art and architecture, the incredible wine, beer, and food, and warm hospitality of the people- not necessarily in that order- all make me very anxious to experience it again- with you!

Peace and Blessings, Bro. Mickey



Villas and Vines
presents

Bro. Mickey McGrath's
Art of the Spirit:
Discovering St. Hildegard of Bingen

An Exploration of St. Hildegard's Art and Faith along Germany's Romantic Rhine River

September 23rd – October 1st, 2019

Join world-renowned artist and spiritual leader, Br. Mickey McGrath OSFS, on a 9-day discovery of Art and Faith in *Bingen* and *Cologne*, along Germany's Romantic Rhine River, one of the greatest waterways in Europe. This tour has been specifically crafted, following in the footsteps of the remarkable *St. Hildegard of Bingen* in her home village of Bingen and just across the Rhine in the story-book village of *Rüdesheim*; followed by a discovery of *Cologne*, home to the largest cathedral in Northern Europe, and a European religious epicenter. We explore two distinctly different locations along the Rhine River in Germany, connecting with Saints and Sinners along the way, and drawing them into our experience.

With Br. Mickey as our mentor, we discover the unique spirituality of Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179), a saint, prophet, poet, dramatist, physician, abbess, preacher, Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, and perhaps best known for the hymns and canticles that she specifically wrote for the nuns of her own convent. A visionary in every sense of the word, who had powerful influences in Art, Spirituality, Food, Medicine and Music; and one of the guiding influences in our own Br. Mickey's personal spiritual journey.

Bro. Mickey enhances the simple, yet profound, messages of St. Hildegard so beautifully through his artwork. This is the core meaning of Br. Mickey's *Journeys of Art and Faith*. On this trip, Br. Mickey shares these personal insights into his own spiritual path, with the guidance of St. Hildegard.

We visit destinations which were prominent features in Hildegard's life, along the "*Hildegard Way*"; and also some of the most beautiful villages along this most stunning stretch of the Rhine River. In Cologne, we discover in depth the massive *Cologne Cathedral*, but also some of the hidden gems in this city, which was founded by the Romans in 38 BC, and is now Germany's fourth-largest city.

If you want to get in touch with your personal journey, and enhance or re-discover your own spirituality, then this is the pilgrimage for you. Each morning we gather to anticipate the day's new discoveries through Br. Mickey's artistic expressions. During this trip, there will also be plenty of free time for drawing, painting, photography, and contemplation, with Br. Mickey as our mentor.

Every aspect of our journey is exceptional, experiencing this striking landscape in a truly remarkable way. Our explorations include spirituality, art, and story-book Rhine villages. Romanesque and Gothic churches will abound. While Br. Mickey leads us with his artistic and spiritual insights, we also enjoy welcoming hospitality at hotels in the centers of both *Rüdesheim* and *Cologne*. Savor carefully selected dining experiences, along with plenty of free time to explore on your own. Stunning scenery will inspire, spiritual moments will abound, and artistic and natural beauty will preside!



Bingen/Rüdesheim

September 23rd – 27th

We have traveled to a lot of holy places, but *Bingen, Germany* is the only place where the pilgrimage route is marked by a nun sign! Hildegard is their most famous resident, and they want to make it easy for pilgrims to follow in her footsteps.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098 - 1179) is enjoying a surprising career resurgence for someone who's been dead for nine centuries. Her fan club is certainly diverse: feminists hail her as a fore-mother, environmentalists praise her views on nature, New Age enthusiasts recognize her as a kindred spirit, and musicians record her chants (the CD *"A Feather on the Breath of God"* was a surprise best-seller in 1988). In 2012, Hildegard was named a *Doctor of the Church* by *Pope Benedict XVI*, an honor given to only four women saints. It's no wonder they've put up nun signs in Bingen!

As a child, Hildegard saw and heard visions, but it wasn't until she was "42 years and seven months old" that she received a disturbing vision from God commanding her to "Write what you see and hear," in order to spread news of God's words and ways. Thus she began work on her first book, *Scivias* ("Know the Ways"), written over a period of ten years. Known as the *German Prophetess*, she perceived herself as the *Trumpet of God*, called to denounce the social and political state of her time. Thus, she did not merely admonish nuns and monks, but also popes and emperors. Hildegard was a *seeing listener* and a *listening seer*. Her visions were at once auditions in which she perceived the voice of God, heard the music of the angels, and gained insight into the secret of God (*Vision of Trinity*), the position of the human being in the cosmos, and the history ("her" story) of God with humankind – from creation, to redemption, culminating in sanctification.

Our journey leads us to the discovery of Hildegard's spirituality, teachings, and life. In Bingen we visit the *Museum am Strom*, *Hildegard Forum*, *Rochus Chapel*, and ruins of the *Disibodenberg Abbey*. Just outside Rüdesheim we discover the *Benedictine Abbey of St. Hildegard*, set on a hillside overlooking the villages of Bingen and Rüdesheim, with its church, gardens, sculpture garden, and wonderful gift shop (of course!) Also in Rüdesheim is the *Pilgrim Church of St. Hildegard*, which contains her relics. All our experiences are at a slow pace, generously allowing full immersion into the meaning and depth of each location.

Our home base is the beautiful village of *Rüdesheim am Rhein*, capital of the *Rheingau* wine region noted for its superior Rieslings, and a short ferry ride across the river from Bingen. At the heart of Rüdesheim's old town is a medieval alley known as *Drosselgasse*, a cobbled street filled with historic buildings, restaurants, bars and shops, creating an authentic and magical atmosphere. Here we enjoy regional dishes, riesling wine, and energetic live music, immersing us into German Rhine culture. The surrounding middle Rhine Valley is filled with idyllic villages with half-timbered houses and Gothic church steeples, seemingly plucked from the world of fairy tales. In 2002, UNESCO designated these 65 km of Rhine Valley riverscape as a World Heritage Site. We enjoy a full day dedicated to exploring the Romantic Rhine.





Cologne (Köln)

September 27th – October 1st

Cologne is Germany's fourth-largest city, was founded by the Romans in 38 BC, and is a living textbook on history and architecture. Walking around town, we discover an ancient Roman wall, medieval churches galore, nondescript postwar buildings, *avant-garde* structures and a new postmodern quarter right on the Rhine. Cologne's people are known for their liberalism and *Joie de Vivre*; it's easy to have a good time with them in the beer halls of *Old Town*, which is where our hotel is located. Spending four days in Cologne, allows for ample time to explore this fascinating city in-depth, even including a full day completely free to discover its charms on your own!

Cologne's geographical and spiritual heart – and its most alluring sight – is the magnificent *Kölner Dom*, or *Cologne Cathedral*. A masterpiece of Gothic architecture and a symbol of the enduring character of European Christianity, the Cathedral in Cologne is a spectacular medieval cathedral that was built over six centuries. The ground plan is shaped in the form of the Latin cross and the height of its soaring twin majestic spires is a monumental 515 feet. This is the tallest Roman Catholic cathedral in the world, the largest Gothic cathedral in Northern Europe, and is jam-packed with art and treasures – simply wondrous!

An international pilgrimage site, the Cologne Cathedral has held the reliquary of the *Three Kings* since 1164. In 1248 work started on a new Gothic cathedral for these precious remains, which was inspired by the ethereal cathedrals of Northern France. Now a UNESCO site, the Cologne Cathedral is the single most visited landmark in all of Germany, and its 19th-century towers are still the second-tallest structures in the city. Inside is a dizzying profusion of invaluable art, like stained glass windows from the 1500s, the 10th-century *Gero-Kreuz* crucifix, and a black marble high altar from the 1300s carved with niches featuring images from the Coronation of the Virgin. However, the gilded shrine of the Three Kings has been the attraction for pilgrims over the centuries.

In addition to the Cathedral, we explore other remarkable sights that make Cologne such a fascinating city and one of Bro. Mickey's favorite places in Europe. Discover the Romanesque *Basilica of St. Ursula*, built on the site of ancient ruins of a Roman cemetery, where the 11,000 virgins associated with the legend of Saint Ursula are said to have been buried. Visit the memorial of *St. Edith Stein*, a Jewish woman who converted to Roman Catholicism and became a Discalced Carmelite nun, only later to be martyred at Auschwitz in 1942. Admire the *Great St. Martin Church*, with its distinctive tower. This Romanesque masterpiece has shaped the skyline of Cologne's Old Town since the Middle Ages.

The history of Jews in Cologne is documented from the year 321 AD, almost as long as the history of Cologne itself. We will explore a bit of the Jewish history here, which of course includes persecutions, expulsions, and massacres. The community numbered about 19,500 people before its dispersal, murders, and destruction by the Nazis; and is now re-established with about 4,500 members. Because of its historical continuity, today's Jewish synagogue calls itself the "*oldest Jewish congregation north of the Alps*". We discover the *Stolpersteine* project, or "*Stumbling Stones*", initiated by the German artist *Gunter Demnig* in 1992, commemorating individuals at exactly the last place of residency or work before he or she fell victim to Nazi terror.

You cannot mention *Germany* and *Bro. Mickey* in the same sentence without mentioning *Beer*! Here in Cologne there is a very definite culture centered around beer. Cologne's traditional city center is home to a number of *Brauhäuser*, or *brewery restaurants*, that are steeped in tradition and have an atmosphere of their very own. Nowhere else is the *Kölsch* culture so enthusiastically cultivated, and nowhere else is Cologne's legendary hospitality so clearly in evidence. Here communication is easy, social differences become meaningless, and people can drink and have fun together. With Bro. Mickey as our "*beer captain*", we allow ourselves to be carried away by Cologne's way of life and dive into its traditional *Brauhaus* culture, if only for a night or two!

This 9-day, 8-night adventure includes these magnificent highlights:

- 4 nights' stay in Rudesheim at the *Park Hotel*, located in the center of this historic village, directly across the river from St. Hildegard's Bingen. The Park Hotel is within easy walking distance of the shops and restaurants of Rudesheim, including the famous *Drosselgasse*. The hotel also features a restaurant and bar, with sun terrace and wonderful views over the Rhine.

(www.parkhotel-ruedesheim.de/E_start.html)

- 4 nights' stay in Cologne at the 4-star *Hotel Mondial am Dom Cologne*, located in the heart of Cologne's Old Town, in the shadow of the majestic Cathedral. The Rhine, shopping streets, and a wide range of museums and other attractions are just outside the door. (www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-1306-hotel-mondial-am-dom-cologne-gallery-by-sofitel/index.shtml)

- Each morning Br. Mickey will begin with prayer and a presentation on the life and spirituality of St. Hildegard, and other images and works of Art and Faith, setting the tone for each day's discoveries.

In Bingen/Rudesheim:

- Follow in the footsteps of *St. Hildegard of Bingen*, discovering her spirituality, teachings, and life.
- Visit the *Museum am Strom* in Bingen, most of which is an overview of Hildegard's life and legacy, including models of the monasteries where she lived, information on the daily life of a Benedictine nun during the Middle Ages, exhibits on her many talents and accomplishments, and displays on the ways in which her legacy continues to influence the world. The ethereal, haunting background music, naturally, is by Hildegard herself.
- Visit the *Hildegard Forum* in Bingen, an "integration space" where we encounter the healing messages of St. Hildegard, a medicinal herb garden, the gift shop, and also where we enjoy lunch.
- Explore the ruins of the *Disibodenberg Abbey*, where in 1112, a young girl named Hildegard joined the monastery to become a nun. It was here that she was to stay for 40 years and to become world famous as Hildegard of Bingen because of her writings on ethics, the world, mankind and her visions.
- Discover the *Benedictine Abbey of St. Hildegard*, set on a hillside overlooking the villages of Bingen and Rudesheim, with its church, gardens, sculpture garden, and wonderful gift shop (of course!)
- Visit the *Pilgrim Church of St. Hildegard* in Rudesheim, which contains her relics.
- All our experiences are at a slow pace, generously allowing full immersion into the meaning and depth of each location.

In Cologne:

- Explore in-depth the *Cologne Cathedral*, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture. At 515 feet, it is the tallest Roman Catholic cathedral in the world, the largest Gothic cathedral in Northern Europe, and is jam-packed with art and treasures.
 - Private guided walking tour of Cologne, Germany's fourth-largest city, founded by the Romans in 38 BC, and a living textbook on history and architecture.
 - Discover the Romanesque *Basilica of St. Ursula*, built on the site of ancient ruins of a Roman cemetery.
 - Visit the memorial of *St. Edith Stein*, a Jewish woman who converted to Roman Catholicism and became a Discalced Carmelite nun, only later to be martyred at Auschwitz in 1942.
 - Admire the *Great St. Martin Church*, with its distinctive tower. This Romanesque masterpiece has shaped the skyline of Cologne's Old Town since the Middle Ages.
 - Explore *Cologne's Jewish history*, which is documented from the year 321 AD, making it the oldest Jewish congregation North of the Alps.
 - Discover the *Stolpersteine* project, or "*Stumbling Stones*", commemorating individuals at exactly the last place of residency or work before he or she fell victim to Nazi terror.
 - Experience Cologne's distinctive "*beer culture*" at local atmospheric beer halls and brewery restaurants, with Bro. Mickey as our "*beer captain*".
 - A full day free to explore Cologne on your own, for shopping, museums, or enjoying the cafés.
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- All private English-speaking guides.
 - All private transfers.
 - All activities included.
 - Plenty of free time, giving you the opportunity to explore as you wish.
 - Dining together is a special part of our experience; at least two meals each day, with wines, are included at carefully selected atmospheric restaurants and hidden gems.
 - Intelligent Trip Design, always with a sense of journey, genuinely connecting you to the region.



Bro. Mickey O'Neill McGrath's

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Art of the Spirit:
Discovering St. Hildegard of Bingen

An Exploration of St. Hildegard's Art and Faith along Germany's Romantic Rhine River

September 23rd – October 1st, 2019

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ E-Mail _____

_____ **\$3,700 per person double occupancy**

Single Supplement is \$500

Deposit of \$500 per person is required to reserve your place.

Personal checks accepted.

Please return this form with the \$500 per person, payable to:

Villas and Vines
PO Box 131
62 Wall Street
Douglas, MI 49406

MasterCard and Visa accepted with a 3% processing fee added to the final payment.

Final payment is due by July 25, 2019 (60 days prior)

This tour includes all hotels, ground transportation, tour guide, activities, meals, and drinks/wines as outlined in the program.

Please note this trip begins and ends at the FRANKFURT, Germany airport.

Air is NOT included to/from Frankfurt.

CANCELLATION: If canceled up to 60 days prior, there is a \$500 cancellation fee. If canceled between 60 – 30 days prior, the penalty is 50% of the total cost of the trip. The trip is non-refundable if canceled within 30 days of departure.

Trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

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