

Dear Pilgrims of Art and Faith,

David Geen, our wonderful travel planner, will be in touch with details, so he is the one to contact if you are interested in our **2020 ART AND THE SPIRIT tour to Spain**. (And don't forget, we cap off our trips at twenty four!)

As you know, we focus on places where the greatest art and architecture of all time meet up with religious faith and history – with great meals among new friends in between. Each morning begins with my giving a one-hour art presentation at the hotel to introduce us to the day's discoveries. And we see it all: From Gothic cathedrals to sidewalk cafes; from cobblestone sidewalks to breathtaking scenery; from amazing artists to inspiring saints – we cover a lot of fascinating territory in a short time, but do so at a relaxed pace.

Here are some highlights that we can expect to see, and the reasons why we are going to this beautiful and historic region of Spain. Happy and Blessed New Year! Adios! Bro. Mickey

AVILA

I love the Women Doctors of the Church, each of whom lived in times such as ours – full of distress, anxiety, and wickedness - but who brought a sassy reforming attitude which today seems more relevant than ever.

On previous trips we have visited with Catherine in SIENA and Hildegard in BINGEN.

Now it is time to hang out with **TERESA in AVILA** for a day. She is one of the truly towering figures in Church history.



SEGOVIA

This city is a beautiful hill-town that boasts an ancient Roman aqueduct, a medieval castle, and the tomb of Teresa of Avila's friend, fellow Carmelite mystic, and Doctor of the Church:

St. John of the Cross.



For a few centuries in Spanish history, **JEWS, MUSLIMS, and CHRISTIANS** got along just fine – until, just like today, fear of “the other” took over people's hearts. We will look at the Art of Reforming spirit.



TOLEDO, MADRID, AND GREAT ART

Spain boasts some of the greatest artists in all of history – from El Greco to Picasso, which we will see, but I love the ordinary beauty of cafes and shops and people simply loving life even more.

And don't forget the tapas and wine!





Villas and Vines
presents

Bro. Mickey McGrath's

Art of the Spirit: A Discovery of Artistic and Spiritual Treasures in Spain *featuring Toledo, Segovia, Avila, and Madrid*

September 18th – 26th, 2020

Join world-renowned artist and spiritual leader, *Br. Mickey McGrath OSFS*, on a 9-day discovery of *Art and Faith in Spain*, one of the greatest Artistic and Spiritual centers in the western world. Spain's cultural richness is unique, brilliant, and diverse - a luxury for the senses! We discover unique monuments, as well as outstanding museums and masterpieces of universal art. This tour has been specifically crafted, bringing us to exciting and culturally-rich towns and cities. With Bro. Mickey as our mentor, we explore *Toledo, Segovia, Avila*, and *Madrid*, connecting with Saints and Sinners along the way, and drawing them into our experience.

From *El Greco* to *Goya* to *Picasso*, from Golden Age masters to contemporary icons, Spain has a rich tradition in art and has played a major role in the history of western painting. These artists and their masterpieces have also played a pivotal role in Spain's identity and culture.

Spain is truly an art aficionado's paradise. First of all, it's home to some of the top art museums on the planet, including the *Prado* and the *Reina Sofia*. Together with the *Thyssen-Bornemisza*, these museums form the "Golden Triangle of Art" in Madrid. Spanish Golden Age was a period from the early 16th-century to the late 17th-century which saw the nation flourishing in arts and literature; and, among other things, becoming an important contributor to the European art world. The best known artists of this era are *El Greco, Diego Velazquez, Zurbaran* and *Murillo*. Spanish artists have had an enormous impact on modern art with some of the most influential artists of the modern era such as *Joan Miro, Pablo Picasso* and *Salvador Dali* all coming from Spain.

In addition to Art, with Bro. Mickey we encounter abundant Faith. On this trip, Bro. Mickey gives special focus to *St. Teresa of Avila (1515 - 1582)* and *St. John of the Cross (1542 – 1591)*, two of the great *Spanish Mystics*. The Spanish Mystics attempted to express in words their experience of a mystical communion with Christ. In addition to being examples of Christian holiness and major Spanish literary figures, the Spanish Mystics were also real reformers in the Church. Their writings inspired a religious quest for God based on desire rather than obligation and medieval legalism, and three of them (including *St. Ignatius Loyola* and *St. Francis Xavier*) went on to found or reform religious orders that would carry on their work across continents and centuries.

Each morning we gather to anticipate the day's new discoveries through Br. Mickey's artistic expressions. Mickey enhances simple, yet profound, messages so beautifully through his artwork. This is the core meaning of Br. Mickey's *Journeys of Art and Faith*. On this trip, Mickey shares these personal insights into his own spiritual path. 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 spectacular Spanish cities. 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 Toledo, Segovia, and Madrid. 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!



Toledo

September 18th – 20th

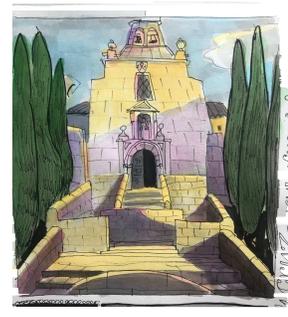
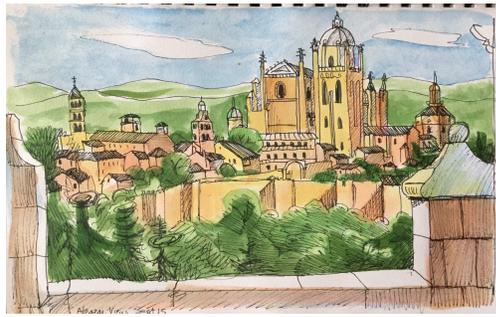
Toledo is one of the Spanish cities with the greatest wealth of monuments. Toledo is known as the “*City of the Three Cultures*”, because Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived there side-by-side for centuries. It exudes a unique atmosphere which has been preserved in the form of a great artistic and cultural legacy, notably reflected in its churches, palaces, fortresses, and synagogues. This great diversity of artistic styles makes Toledo's *Old Quarter* an authentic open-air museum, which has led to it being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

If there is one person's name that defines Toledo, it is that of *El Greco* (1541 - 1614), one of the most important and influential Spanish artists of all time. His House-Museum, a palace with the atmosphere of the period, exhibits some of the best works of the painter who made the city world famous. El Greco excelled as a painter of religious subjects, but was also equally adept in portraiture and landscapes. His “*View of Toledo*” has captured the world's imagination, and helps us realize how little Toledo's skyline has changed over the past 500 years!

During our stay in Toledo, we discover these amazing highlights:

- Two nights' stay in the cozy 4-star *Hotel Pintor El Greco*, located in Toledo's historic center and within easy walking distance to the *Cathedral*, the *Jewish Quarter*, and the *El Greco Museum*. www.hotelpintorelgreco.com
- *Walking Tour of the Old Town*. Discover why it's no surprise that UNESCO has named the historical center of Toledo a World Heritage Site. It's a fascinating mix of different styles and cultures, with churches, mosques and synagogues all sitting side by side.
- Visit the *Cathedral of Toledo*, often said to be one of Spain's most beautiful, and an excellent example of the *High Spanish Gothic* style. Dating from the 13th-century, the cathedral is filled with incredible artworks by *Caravaggio*, *Tiziano*, *Rubens* and *El Greco*.
- View the striking skyline of Toledo, dominated by the imposing *Alcázar*, and the subject of some of El Greco's most admired works.
- Guided walk through the historic *Jewish Quarter*, nowadays one of the most beautiful parts of the city, with some excellently preserved buildings.
- Visit the *Trànsito Synagogue*, Spain's most significant Jewish building. Famous for its geometric tiling and richly decorated stucco walls, it resembles the *Alcazar* of Seville and the *Alhambra* in Granada. The ornate synagogue is a symbol of the fusion between the Jewish and Spanish traditions.
- Discover the *El Greco Museum*, dedicated to one of the most important and influential Spanish artists of all time. The museum introduces us to El Greco not only as a painter, but also as an individual, exploring the deep influence he had in shaping Toledo's history in the 17th century.
- Visit the *Church of St. Thomas*, which contains El Greco's “*The Burial of the Count of Orgaz*” (1586), widely considered to be his finest work.
- Discover the rich and varied cuisine of Toledo, renowned throughout Spain as it clearly reflects the flavors of the three historic cultures that once inhabited the city.





Segovia

September 20th – 23rd

Segovia overflows with culture and history, to the point that a monumental Roman aqueduct actually runs through the middle of the city. Segovia is a place of romance, a living legacy of the past in an inspiring setting. Perched on a rocky hilltop, this historic walled town boasts stunning views and magnificent monuments. The ancient Roman aqueduct, fairy-tale castle, awe-inspiring cathedral, exquisite Romanesque churches, and mystical monasteries reveal Segovia's rich cultural heritage. Segovia is steeped in complex history, from the Romans of 80 BC to the medieval *Moorish* period and the coronation of *Queen Isabella "the Catholic"* in 1474. In its streets you will find reminders of all these periods. Segovia's *Old Town* is an atmospheric medieval world of cobblestone streets, ancient alleyways, and charming squares. Wander the narrow pedestrian lanes to find artisan boutiques, cafés, confectionary shops, and restaurants.

Our time in Segovia includes these magnificent highlights:

- Three nights' stay at the 4-star *Hotel Real Segovia*, in a privileged location in the heart of Segovia, next to the Cathedral and Aqueduct. Hotel Real Segovia was the first luxury hotel in Segovia, originally known as 'Gran Hotel Las Sirenas'. It opened in 1952, boosted by the large amount of Hollywood films being made in Segovia at the time. www.hotelrealsegovia.com/en/
- Visit the *Roman Aqueduct*, one of Europe's greatest Roman monuments and the symbol of Segovia. Its 167 arches form a magnificent backdrop for the historic city. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this monumental structure has stood the test of time, enduring two millennia in remarkably well-preserved condition.
- Visit the *Cathedral of Segovia*, a wonder of Late Gothic style, standing at the highest point of the Old Town, and dominating its surroundings. The location offers commanding views of the entire city and the surrounding *Sierra de Guadarrama* foothills. Built between 1525 and 1593, it was the last Gothic cathedral built in Spain. Constructed of yellow stone, the cathedral's intricately articulated facade creates an impressive effect with a tower soaring to over 300 feet.
- Discover the *Alcazar*, once the home of kings and queens. With its storybook turreted towers giving a fairy-tale impression, the Alcazar is definitely the most famous castle in all of Spain. The fortress stands majestically above the city on a steep-sided rocky crag, offering amazing views of the city and surrounding countryside. The Alcazar is known for being one of several castles that inspired the creation of *Cinderella's Castle* at *Walt Disney World*.
- Visit the *Monastery of the Discalced Carmelites*, founded in 1586 by *John of the Cross*, the *Patron Saint of Poets*, and also the location of his tomb. The monastery is approached by a steep stone staircase, reinforcing the impression of ascending to a higher spiritual place; and is also surrounded by lovely gardens and ancient cypress trees.
- Discover the splendid 12th-century *Church of St. Martin*, exemplifying Castilian-Romanesque architecture. The church faces the picturesque little *Plazuela de San Martín*, with its fountain decorated by two mermaids.

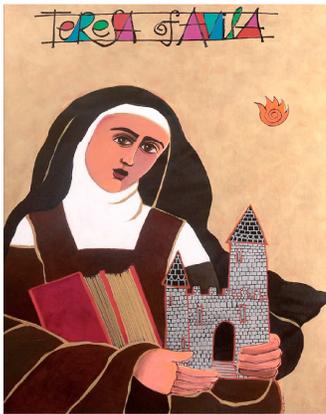
Avila

From Segovia, we take a day-trip to Avila, about 1 hour's drive west.

Ávila is a medieval city, founded in the 11th-century to protect the Spanish territories from the Moors. *Ávila* has a magnificently well-preserved city wall, a historic cathedral, a number of Romanesque churches, and an authentic medieval atmosphere. For all these reasons, the entire *Old Town* of *Ávila* has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

For pilgrims (like us!), the city of Ávila is important because of its association with the great mystic and reformer *St. Teresa de Jesus*, better known as *St. Teresa of Ávila* (1515 – 1582). Teresa was known for her spiritual experiences, which led her to adopt a lifelong imitation of the life and suffering of Jesus. She was a prominent *Carmelite* nun, reformer, founder, spiritual thinker and contemplative. She wrote profoundly on the Christian life, especially on prayer. Her books, regarded as classic works of Christian mysticism, include *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*. Living during the *Counter Reformation*, she was a reformer of the Carmelite Order and is considered the founder, along with *St. John of the Cross*, of the *Discalced Carmelites*. She is the *female patron saint of Spain*, and was the *first woman* to be named a *Doctor of the Church*. (in 1970, by Pope Paul VI).

Ávila contains two main shrines honoring St. Teresa, along with a few more sites associated with the saint. The primary shrine is the *Convent of St. Teresa*, containing her relics, and the second is the *Convent of the Incarnation*, where St. Teresa lived for 30 years and where her cell can be visited. Of course, we will visit both of these sites.



While in Avila:

- Discover the *City Walls*, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and considered among the finest city defenses in the world. The walls, which were begun in 1090, comprise 8 monumental gates, 88 watchtowers and more than 2,500 turrets.
- Visit the *Convent of St. Teresa*, one of two main destinations for our pilgrimage to Avila. The 17th-century convent was built after the canonization of St. Teresa, over the house where she was born.
- Visit the *Convent of the Incarnation*, the other important stop on our pilgrimage to St. Teresa's Avila, just outside the medieval walls. Teresa lived at *La Encarnación* for 30 years. It was here that she received the advice of *Francisco de Borja* (St. Francis Borgia, 1510 – 1572) and *Juan de la Cruz* (John of the Cross, 1542 – 1591), wrote, began to reform the Carmelite order, and had many of her mystical experiences.
- Discover the *Avila Cathedral*, the first Gothic cathedral in Spain, dating from the 11th-century. Originally planned as a cathedral-fortress, its apse is actually one of the turrets of the famous medieval city walls.



Madrid

September 23rd – 26th

Located in the geographical center of Spain, *Madrid* is the Spanish capital and its largest city. Madrid has one of the most important historical, cultural, and artistic centers of all the great European cities. With its centuries of heritage merging seamlessly, the drive of a dynamic and open society, and the high-spirited and friendly locals, Madrid is definitely one of the great capitals of the Western World. Madrid is home to some of the top art museums on the planet, including the *Prado* and the *Reina Sofia*, and together with the *Thyssen-Bornemisza*, these museums form the “*Golden Triangle of Art*”.

Madrid makes its first major appearance in history in the 9th century AD, when the *Ottoman Sultan Mehmet I* arrived and built a palace, a mosque and a citadel here. Nearby was the *River Manzanares*, which the Turks called *al-Magrit* (“source of water”), leading to Madrid's modern name. The Ottoman citadel was conquered in 1085 by *King Alfonso VI* in his advance towards Toledo. The kingdoms of *Castille*, with its capital at Toledo, and *Aragón*, with its capital at Barcelona, were combined into modern Spain under *King Carlos I* in 1512. Carlos' son, *Felipe II* (1527-1598) is the one who eventually moved the court to Madrid in 1561, where it has functioned as the capital ever since.

After spending much of the 20th century at the center of a totalitarian regime, Madrid has burst back onto the world stage as an open, democratic, growing metropolis. Best known for its outstanding art museums, galleries, and culture, Madrid's religious sites do not quite approach the grandeur of those in Barcelona or Toledo. Still, Madrid is home to numerous religious sites worth seeing, especially the huge modern *Almudena Cathedral*.

We are fortunate to spend three nights in Madrid, giving us the opportunity to have *one full day completely free* to discover the city on your own as you wish.

Our time in Madrid will be fantastic, including these highlights:

- Three nights' stay at the *RoomMate Oscar Hotel*, a boutique design hotel located on one of the most luminous plazas of Madrid's downtown. All the rooms feature a modern and bright design, furnished in attractive tones. Room Mate Oscar is located within easy walking distance of all the main sights in Madrid. Best of all, Oscar's *Rooftop Terrace & Bar* is one of the most desired locations in Madrid to enjoy the sunset with your favorite beverage. www.room-matehotels.com/en/oscar/
- Enjoy a *panoramic driving tour*, offering an easy overview of the main sights of Madrid, including the *Debod Temple, Ventas Bullring, Retiro Park, Madrid Rio*, and many other hidden gems.
- Explore the *Old Town* on a *private walking tour* visiting such prominent locations as the *Plaza Mayor, Royal Palace, Plaza del Sol, San Miguel Market*, and the *Barrio de la Letras*.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to visit one or all of the noteworthy museums that form the "Golden Triangle of Art": the *Prado*, the *Reina Sofia*, and the *Thyssen-Bornemisza* museums.
- Visit the *Almudena Cathedral*, Madrid's grandest church, situated next to the Royal Palace. Dating from the late 19th and 20th centuries, Almudena Cathedral is very new by European standards, and its traditional-meets-modern design reflects its youth. While plans to build this epic church had been in discussion since the 16th-century, construction of churches in the Spanish colonies took priority and Madrid remained without a cathedral for many years. The site on which Almudena Cathedral now stands was originally occupied by Madrid's first mosque, then by a church dedicated to one of Madrid's patron saints, *Santa María de la Almudena*.
- *One full day is completely free* to enjoy and discover Madrid as you wish on your own.

Throughout our entire journey:

- Each morning Br. Mickey will begin with a presentation of his own images and works of Art and Faith, setting the tone for each day's discoveries.
- All our experiences are at a slow pace, generously allowing full immersion into the meaning and depth of each location.
- 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.





Brother Mickey McGrath's
Art of the Spirit:
A Discovery of Artistic and Spiritual Treasures in Spain
featuring Toledo, Segovia, Avila, and Madrid
September 18th – 26th, 2020

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ E-Mail _____

_____ \$4,000 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 20, 2020 (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 in MADRID, Spain.

Air is NOT included to/from Madrid.

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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www.villasandvines.com



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