



ROME

'Empires, Icons, Images and Idols'

Thursday 28th – Sunday 31st October 2010

With Jeremy Leigh & Julian Resnick

There is little neutral in the game of Jewish travel. Even for a city as beautiful as Rome there is dissonance and complexity. Its landscapes are dominated by the imprints bequeathed by two great empires, ancient Rome and the Catholic Church, neither of which has been neutral on the subject of Judaism and the Jewish People. And yet, Jews have lived here for over two thousand years, pre-dating the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. They are, in one sense, amongst the oldest 'Romans'. In that time they have experienced slavery, Ghettoisation and mass murder as well as prosperity, creativity and freedom.

The great irony of the Rome Jewish story is the fact that these very empires have both been compromised or destroyed. The Roman Empire, with all its power, crushed the Jews in the Land of Israel bringing many thousands of them to Rome where they were humiliated. Two thousand years later, the Roman Empire is no more. The Jews in the meantime have survived; they have returned to history; rebuilt their national home; and contributed great culture to the world.

The Catholic Church like the Roman Empire, has also been challenged by history. Despite Crusades, blood libels and ghettos, the Jews resolutely clung to their faith, resisting pressures to convert. Today, the Church has abandoned its conversionist aspirations and is learning to live with the Jews. Indeed, in 1985, Pope John Paul II visited the Rome Synagogue, the first pontiff ever to do so, in an effort to reach out to the Jewish older sibling. Today the Vatican and Israel have diplomatic relations.

The end result of all this is to present the Jewish visitor to Rome with the challenge of navigating around a complicated and at times painful story whilst at the same time enjoying the beauty and energy of the contemporary city.

Thursday 28th October **Entering the Past tense**

17.30 Introduction to Jewish Rome: River Tiber, Tiburtina Island, Introduction to the Ghetto

Group dinner

Palladium Hotel

Friday 29th October **Jews and Empire I: Ancient Rome**

Empire I, ancient Rome transports us back to the beginnings of the European Jewish Exile, and the challenge of living as a minority in a majority environment.

8.00 onwards Breakfast

9.00 Jews and Empire: The morning will focus on the wonders of Ancient Rome and their meaning for Jews. Sites including **Mammertine Prisons***, **Forum Romanum**, **Arch of Titus**, **the Coliseum***

12.00 **Ghetto (contd.)**

13.30 Lunch and Free Time Free Afternoon. We recommend that you use your afternoon to visit one of the great art museums of Rome such as the new Modern Art museum in Rome the MAXXI

18.00 Friday night service in the magnificent **Tempio Maggiore di Roma (Great Synagogue of Rome)** (*please dress appropriately, smart casual and be aware that there is separate seating for men and women*)

20.30 Friday evening Shabbat Dinner

Saturday 30th October

Jews and Empire II: Christianity

The second empire we encounter is that of the Catholic Church, with its long history of theological self-confidence, and more recent history of contrition.

8.00 onwards Breakfast

09.30 **Vatican City:**

- **Basilica of St. Peter's**
- **House of Catechums**
- (*please wear clothes appropriate for a visit to the Vatican, men long trousers, women should have their shoulders covered and be wearing long trousers or dresses*)

12.30 Lunch

16.00 Renaissance Rome through Jewish Eyes: (**incl. San Pietro in Vincoli, Piazza Navonna, Campo de Fiori**)

19.30 Havdalah

20.00 Dinner / Free Time

Sunday 31st **October** **Empire (III), Icons, Images and Idols**

As a city of empires, Rome overflows with icons for the great and the glorious. We conclude by examining how Jews view such images, understand them and draw conclusions for the world around them.

8.00 Breakfast

9.00 **Tiburtina train station:** In the Shadow of the Shoah

10.30 Iconic Images of the Recent Past, challenging questions for the present: **Vittorio Emanuele Monument, Via Corso, Spanish Steps**

13.00 Close

