

Practical Tips for 2025 Holy Year's Pilgrims to Rome

by Lucy Gordan | Travel, Travel blog | 0 comments



St. Peter's Square

In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first ordinary Jubilee or Holy Year, with the Papal Bull, “Antiquorum Habet Fida Relatio.” Since then, they have taken place either every 50 or every 25 years. 2025’s Holy Year is the 27th. It will begin on Christmas Eve 2024 and last through Epiphany or January 6, 2026. If you still need to organize your pilgrimage to Rome, the Jubilee’s principal venue, and to other religiously significant places elsewhere in Italy, here are three unbeatable websites.



ACCOMMODATIONS



Pope Boniface VIII

My
article,



Pope Francis

“Religious Hospitality in Italy”, published in July 2020, featured the still valid website www.ospitalitareligiosa.it. This non-profit Association Ospitalità Religiosa Italiana (Italian Religious Hospitality) at Via Molina 10 in Varese, a city in Lombardy, northwest of Milan, tel. 011-39-327-3842841, still describes nearly 3,000 “religious places to stay” in Italy. As I’ve already explained, these include guesthouses, holiday houses, B&Bs, campsites, hostels, hermitages, convents, monasteries and hotels. In short somewhere for everybody.

Accommodations are found in all 20 regions of Italy. Logically the largest number, some 197, are in Latium, many fewer than before Co-Vid. Of these 123 are in the Eternal City. Several are within walking distance of Vatican City. Of the 123 sites in Rome, especially for pilgrims wanting more privacy, 13 are hotels all with restaurants, and conference rooms and often with chapels, free parking and spacious gardens: San Giuseppe House, Hotel Valle, Hotel Antico Palazzo Rospigliosi, Domus Australia, Hotel Adriatico, Casa Fraterna Domus, Hotel Varese, Casa Madre Nazarena, Hotel Nova Domus Aurelia, Villa EUR, Hotel Casa Tra Noi, Hotel Santa Prisca, and DNB House Hotel. San Giuseppe House, Hotel Adriatico, Hotel Nova Domus Aurelia, and Hotel Casa Tra Noi are all short walks to St. Peter’s Square.

Of the thirteen “religious” hotels listed on www.ospitalitareligiosa.it the closest to St. Peter’s Square is the Hotel Adriatico at Via Vitelleschi 25. However, if you want to be even closer, you should book at one of these three “religious places to stay” owned by religious orders, but not reviewed on www.ospitalitareligiosa.it. All 4-star, they might be better classified as guesthouses because they don’t have in-house restaurants and their profits go to their order’s Missions worldwide.



The closest to St. Peter’s is the Residenza San Paolo VI(www.residenzapaolovi.com) at Via



View from La Residenza

Paolo V1 29, the street alongside the left branch of Bernini's colonnade as you face the Basilica. Since 1886 the building has belonged and still houses the Augustinian Order, which Pope Innocent IV (1243-54) recognized on December 16, 1243. Martin Luther was an Augustinian friar from 1505 until his excommunication in 1520. Located on the third floor, the Residenza offers 35 non-smoking rooms, all with modern conveniences

like plasma TVs, minibars, telephones, free Wi-Fi, private bathrooms with shower stalls, hairdryers, air conditioning/heating, and safes for valuables. Twenty-five of the rooms are standard and small because once monks' cells; two are deluxe doubles, two Junior Suites, and six are deluxe Superior rooms named for famous Italian Renaissance artists. These more spacious and luxurious rooms overlook Bernini's Colonnade.

An American buffet breakfast is served every morning from 7:30 to 10:30 in the Bernini Room, which is also available for catered receptions, business lunches and private parties with up to 45 guests. A bar service with light snacks is also available from 4 PM to midnight in the Bernini Room or on the terrace just outside which overlooks St. Peter's Basilica and the Apostolic Palace.



Standard room at La Residenza

Unlike the Residenza, Palazzo Cardinal Cesi (www.palazzocesi.it) requires a minimum stay of four nights. Its grandiose palazzo was built c. 1500 by Cardinal Francesco Armellini (1470-1528), a counselor to Pope Leo X Medici. In 1565 Cardinal Pierdonato Cesi (1521-1586) and his brother Angelo, the bishop of Todi, bought the Palazzo. Over 300 years later, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan (1848-1918), founder a few years before of the rapidly-growing missionary order, the Society of the Divine Savior, commonly called the Salvatorians, bought the Palazzo and its Generalate is still headquartered there.



The Palazzo's entrance opens directly onto the street Via della Conciliazione at No. 51, but to reach the lobby guests must pass through a peaceful courtyard, once a monastic cloister, now a



Cloister at Palazzo Cesi

refreshment area. Off to the right is the two-floor “Garden Suite” with a living room on the ground floor and bed and bath up a charming spiral staircase. Along the courtyard’s left side is a series of rooms available for conferences and private events. Its other 29 rooms offer the same services and amenities as the Residenza, but ask to see the magnificently frescoed library with its red-and-gold coffered ceiling thereby

stepping into a bygone age.

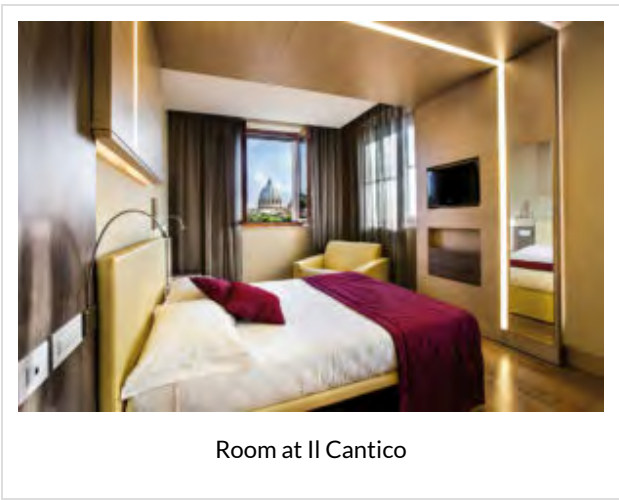
“Il Cantico” (www.ilcantico.it) is located on the quiet residential side street Via del Cottolengo at no. 50, five city blocks from St. Peter’s Square —a ten-minute walk or three stops on any of these buses: 98, 881, 916 and 982. With its black-and-white and beige décor in appearance it looks like other comfortable 4-star accommodations, but it’s unique in spirit because it belongs to the Frati



Deluxe room at Palazzo Cesi

Francescani Minori (www.ofm.org), whose motherhouse is on the hilltop directly above at Via Santa Maria Mediatrice 25. “Any profit we make,” Milena Gorga, the Manager, told me, “goes to the Brothers’ missions in over 100 countries. The Brothers try to spend our guests’ money wisely and make sure that it’s socially useful to that part of humanity that suffers. They run leprosy, AIDS centers and soup kitchens and are dedicated to eradicating poverty.” All 71 rooms, if a bit small, have a safe, mini-bar, free Wi-Fi TV, air-conditioning, 4-way LED lighting, exclusive “Linea Terre” bath accessories, free bottled water, and special wall soundproof cladding which is decorated with verses of the “Canticum of the Sun”. St. Francis composed this religious song during the spring of 1225, when he was sick at San Damiano and was being cared for by Clare and the Poor Sisters. Written in the Umbrian dialect, it’s believed to be among the first works of literature, if not the very first, written in Italian.

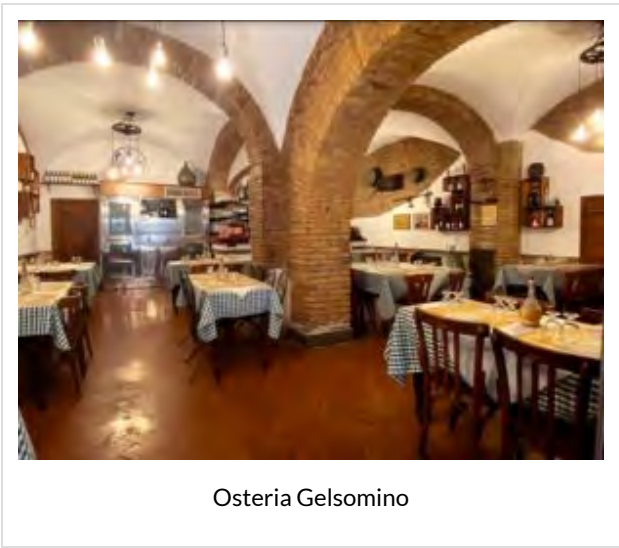




Many of the rooms have splendid views of St. Peter’s dome as do an 80-seat roof garden and the small chapel open 24-hours for prayer. Other amenities include a Lounge/Bar serving drinks and snacks, a 60-space garage and an over 200,000 square-foot park with a unique herb garden and woods for long walks and quiet meditation.

RESTAURANTS

The nearest restaurant to “Il Cantico”, across Via del Cottolegno and immediately on the left is “Osteria del Gelsomino”, at Via del Gelsomino 68. At this same address for over 100 years, the atmospheric eatery, until the 1960s outside the city limits, specializes in Roman cuisine at reasonable prices. (open for lunch and supper, closed Sunday).



Instead, if you cross Via Gregorio VII, on Via della Cava Aurelia you can choose between four

good places(you can take me at my word since I live nearby and frequent all of them): “La Buona Forchetta” for a wood-oven pizza or grilled fish (open every day except Friday from 10:30 AM to midnight and on Friday from 16:30 PM to midnight); family-run “Casa Sceppa” for Roman specialties and homemade desserts (open for lunch and supper, closed Mondays); the Irish pub “Rosy O’Grady” (open every day from 17:30 PM to 2:00 AM) for its wide selection of beers and Guinness and succulent pulled pork; and year-old “Gregorio”, named for medieval Pope Gregory VII “The Great”, open from 8:00 AM for an American breakfast, and staying open all day until midnight: for lunch, tea, aperitivi, and supper. Pizzas are served only in the



evening. The house specialty is pizza capriciosa (closed Mondays).

Instead the best restaurants closest to Residenza Paolo VI and Casa Cesi are friendly, rustic-style with Roman cuisine Ristorante Dai Miei, family-run Osteria Padi Vaticano with a children’s menu, and Pizzeria Castello, all informal, if you follow around the left branch of Bernini’s colonnade to Via delle Fornaci. Instead if cross over Via della Conciliazione head to charming

family-owned Arlù in Borgo Pio for its tonnairelli cacio pepe and home-made desserts or to Les Étoiles, the elegant rooftop restaurant and bar in the Hotel Atlante Star on Via dei Bastoni for its unique views of St. Peter’s and live piano music. Reservations are obligatory at both of these.

TRANSPORTATION

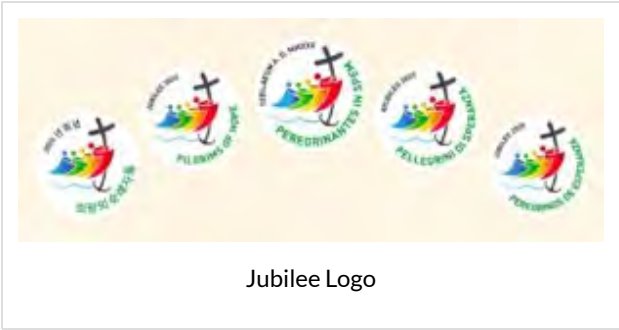
The Vatican’s Dicastery for Evangelization has chosen “My Safe Place Transfer” as the Vatican’s Official Taxi and Transfer Partner during 2025’s Holy Year. Its shared mob(ility service seeks to reduce travel costs and traffic especially when it comes to transfers to and from Rome’s airport, a ride that usually costs 50 euros not counting luggage and tips. “My Safe Place Transfer” charges 14.99 euros per person for religious and 19.90 euros per person for pilgrims. This door-to-door service, payable via Visa, Mastercard, Amex, and debit cards, as well as cash, is



available Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 8 PM and 8 AM to 5 PM on Saturday and Sunday.

To be eligible you must download: www.mysafeplace.it. It’s already accepting bookings if you’re registered on the official Jubilee App: www.register.iubilaeum2025.va. In addition to the airport transfer, “My Safe Place Transfer” can meet cruise ship passengers at Civitavecchia and offers transportation to Assisi, San Giovanni Rotondo, and Padua at negotiable prices so you may want to check out accommodations on www.ospitalitareligiosa.it in these locations as well. The service to travel outside of Rome is available 24 hours a day and every day of the week.

THE JUBILEE APP



To book specific Jubilee events, you need to download the pilgrim’s card on the official Jubilee App. The App explains how you can become a Jubilee volunteer, recounts the history of the Jubilee, lists all the 2025 Jubilee’s special events, Jubilee churches, and Jubilee itineraries. Here too, if you click on contacts, you can write in personal requests, or telephone questions to 011-39-0669869201, 011-39-0669869202, or 011-39-0669869203. Once in Rome, you can also visit the Pilgrims Welcome Center at no. 7 Via della Conciliazione, the wide street from the Tiber to St. Peter’s Square built by Mussolini to celebrate the Lateran Pacts in 1929, whereby Italy recognized The Holy See as a sovereign state.



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