

ST. THOMAS MISSION

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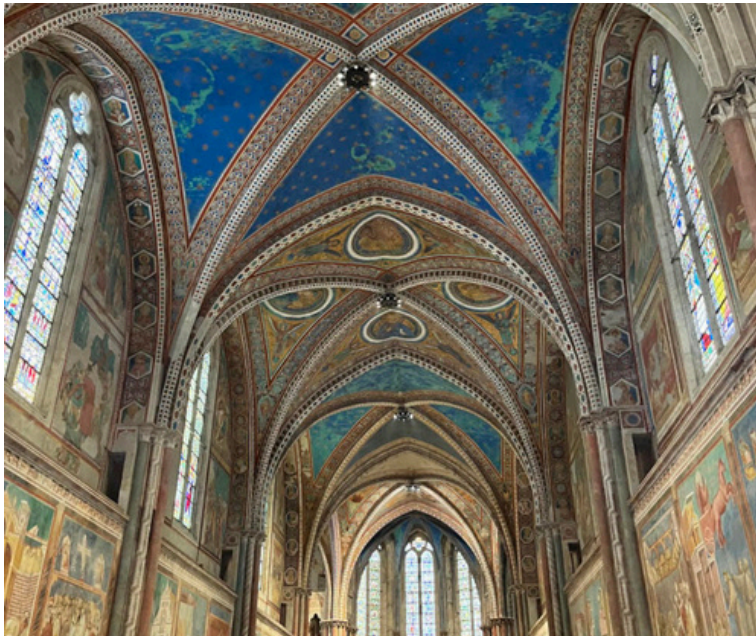
“Italy was where the soul went to find calm and love, and I wanted to hold the best of it in the palm of my hand.”

- Lisa Brennan-Jobs

Turks, Swiss, and Franks

by Anna Cannon

This Spring, we had not one but two breaks! For the first break, Rosie, Margaret, Lizzie, and I traveled to Turkey and Greece. We began our vacation in the dreamy coastal town of Cesme, Turkey. After enjoying local cuisine, marveling at the turquoise water of the Aegean Sea, and basking in the sun, we took a ferry to Chios, Greece. We happened to be in Chios during the “Mostra” festival, the locals’ celebration of their ancestors’ victory over pirates. Bidding adieu to Chios was not difficult, as our final destination still awaited—the charmingly quaint town of Alacati, Turkey. Alacati enthralled us with its labyrinth of cobblestone streets and flowery vine-enveloped stone buildings. Only a week later, I took a rejuvenating solo trip to Switzerland and France for our second break. After exploring Geneva, I traveled to Chamonix, a ski town at the base of Mont Blanc (the highest peak in the Alps). As much as I love living in Erbil, I deeply miss natural beauty. In Chamonix, the snow had melted just enough to allow hiking to considerable elevations—the Alpine views and fresh mountain air were incredibly restorative, rendering me energized to finish the school year strong.



Italy

by Lizzie Amland

I never thought I would have the opportunity to visit the birthplace of my faith. Embarking on a trip to Italy meant visiting the numerous Papal Basilicas was a must. From the grand majesty of St. Peter to the serene beauty of Santa Maria Maggiore, each basilica was a testament to Italy's rich tapestry of faith and history. The beauty of Italy's architecture reflects the beauty of its landscape.

Traveling into the countryside we explored the town of Assisi. Walking in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare, amidst the rolling hills and ancient stone walls, I was enveloped by a profound sense of peace and tranquility. To see such significant Catholic landmarks and experience the same surroundings that so many saints saw and experienced was an unforgettable adventure. Ultimately, the trip to Italy deepened my appreciation for the beauty of Catholicism, left a feeling of peace and contentment, and established a desire to see more of the world.

America

by Alex McKenna

Traveling to America for a whirlwind two weeks bookended by twenty-four hour travel times is not advisable—but it sure does pay off. For Easter, I flew back to Steubenville, OH (my hometown) to tramp around Franciscan University of Steubenville on the hunt for some new teachers. So far, the jury is still out but it looks like the St. Thomas Mission may grow to ten people for 2024-2025. We'll see what the Lord has in mind. Regardless, time for early morning lap swimming with mom, Easter dinner with the soon-to-be in-laws, and diving into lively conversation over coffee and life updates with friends proved a welcome respite from teaching and renewal for the last leg of the year. Not the ordinary breakaway out of Erbil but America posts high on the popularity charts!

