

DISCOVERING SICILY

***A PARADE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION
MAY 24-JUNE 5, 2024***

***MONTFORT KNIGHTS WALKING TO
THE TEMPLE OF CONCORDIA, 435 BC, AGRIGENTO, SICILY (2022)***

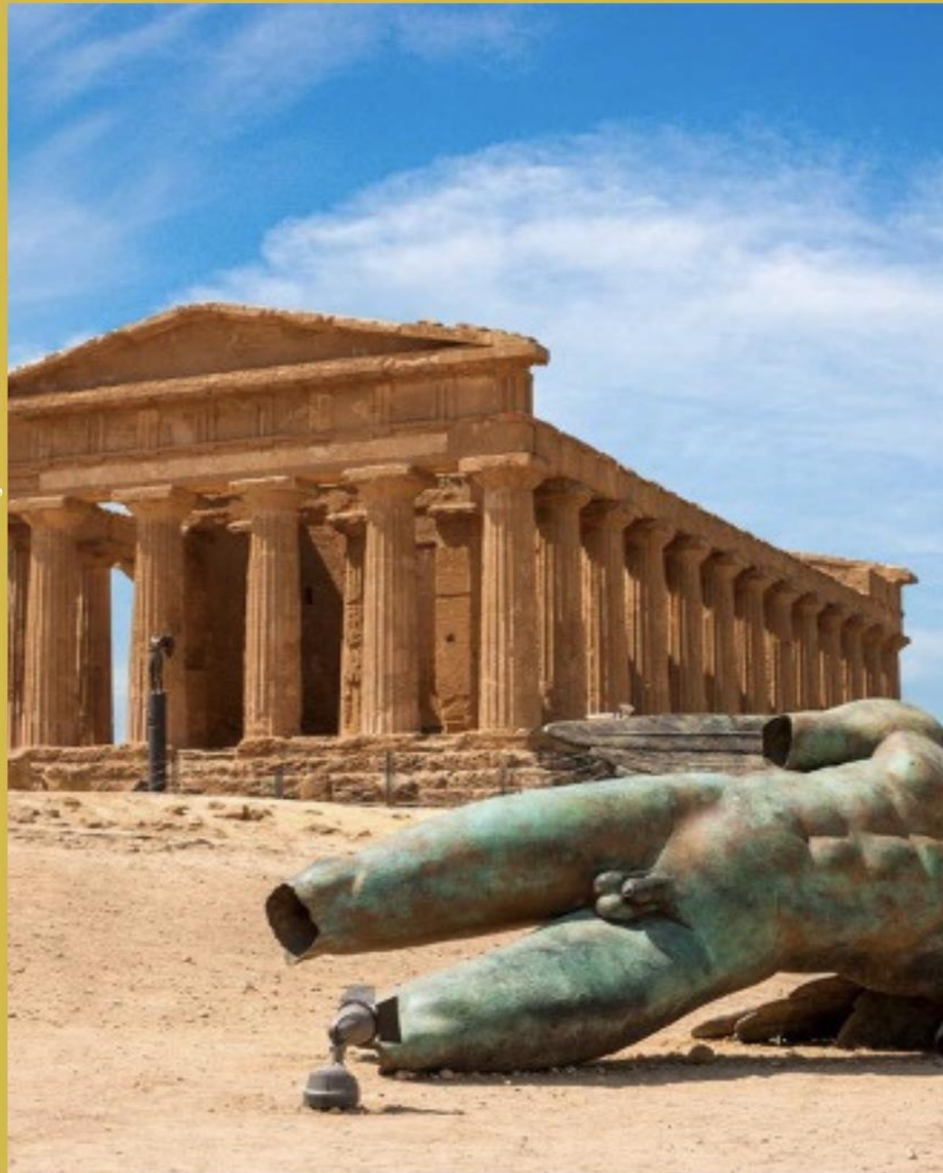


ITALY TRIP 2024

Overview

Exploring Italy has been part of a Montfort education since the founding of our Academy. Italy is a laboratory, a living museum where 4,000 years of the philosophy, languages, literature, history, art, science, religion, and math that we study at Montfort come alive. In the early years of Montfort, the trip to Italy focused on Calabria and Sicily in Southern Italy, the center of Magna Graecia and the Hellenization of the Mediterranean basin.

This period of Greek colonization and civilization pre-dated even the Roman Republic and was critical in the very foundation of Roman civilization. Over the years, the trip began to focus more on Rome, but this year we return to the Greek routes of Western civilization by visiting Sicily and its magnificent Greek city-states. Because Sicily has Phoenician, Carthaginian, Greek, Roman, Jewish, Arab, Norman, Byzantine, Spanish, and French influences, too, we will have many opportunities to see, touch, feel, and live what is the multi-faceted, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-millennial history of Sicily. Because Greek Sicily helped form Roman civilization, and because in later centuries Arab and Norman Sicily helped lay the intellectual foundation of the Renaissance, this trip will be a splendid parade of Western civilization. The trip will be educational, but it will also be a lot of fun for the students with many once-in-a-lifetime experiences. It will be a beautiful experience of friendship, faith, and camaraderie, a wonderful way to end their four years of classical and Catholic education at The Montfort Academy.



"Italy without Sicily leaves no image in the soul. Sicily is the key to everything. The purity of the contours, the softness of everything, the exchange of colors, the harmonious unity of the sky with the sea and the sea to the land, who sees them once, shall possess them for a lifetime."

J.W. GOETHE, 1787



Dates: Friday May 24 – Wednesday June 5, 2024

This year's trip will be 13 days, including two days of travel.

Principal Archeological, Cultural, and Educational Sites

For the first portion of trip, we will be based in Modica, the UNESCO-recognized heart of Baroque Sicily, at a picturesque active farm called Masseria sul Mare, which features olive groves, rustic but elegant farmhouse rooms, a pool, a wood-fired oven for bread making, and even a Chapel for prayer and Mass. From Masseria sul Mare, we can easily visit the ancient Greek cities of Siracusa, Taormina, and Agrigento, settled by Corinthian and Doric Greeks seven hundred years before Christ. These cities are the homes of famous Greek philosophers, scientists, and playwrights such as Archimedes, Empedocles, Aeschylus, and even Plato, whose lived in Siracusa for years. These cities feature some of the best-preserved Greek temples and amphitheaters in the world. From our base, we can also visit the Roman city of Piazza Armerina and experience ancient and beautiful mosaics. Among the Arab and Baroque influences, we will visit Catania, with its famous fish and fruit markets. During our time at Torre, we will also experience ricotta making, olive oil making, bread and focaccia making, ceramic vase making, and more. We can have fun at Etnaland, an amusement park, and even visit active volcanoes and occasionally nearby beaches with opportunities to swim in the crystal blue waters of the Mediterranean.



After visiting the Greek cities of southeastern Sicily, we will transfer to northwest Sicily, to Hotel Kalura in the seaside city of Cefalù, a Greek (and still today) fishing village with 2500 years of history. From Cefalù we will visit the ancient cities of Segesta and Erice, which were settled by Elymians and Ionian Greeks as well as Carthaginians and Phoenecians. Cefalù will be our base to visit Palermo, Monreale, and Erice, to see some exquisite examples of Arab and Norman architecture during the time of Arab

occupation and subsequent Norman conquest. This was the pre-Renaissance second Golden Age of Sicily, when the Sicilian School dominated European education. We will also visit Catholic churches and cathedrals dedicated to St. Agatha and St. Lucy, the patron saints of Sicily and Siracusa. We will see some of the most beautiful mosaics of Our Lord anywhere in the world. Hotel Kalura has bicycles for rent and a spectacular beach with the opportunity for snorkeling to see colorful fish. This year we will also add a stop in Marsala, Sicily, famous for salt flats, windmills, and sweet Marsala wine.



Sicily is an island lying outside time, where past events endure in an external present, a beach on which the tides of successive civilizations have heaped in disorder their assorted treasure. — Vincent Cronin, British writer

ITINERARY

Day 1 Friday May 24th

Depart from New York JFK Airport in the evening direct for Rome, ITA Flight AZ609, 4:15 pm.

Day 2 Saturday May 25th

We arrive in Rome and transfer to our flight AZ1709 at 8:15 am to Catania, Sicily. We arrive in Catania and board our private coach that will take us to the center of the city, where we will spend the early part of the afternoon in the outdoor fish and cheese market and have our first lunch and gelato. Following lunch, we board the bus again and travel to our home in Avola for the next five days, Masseria sul Mare (MsM). We check in, unpack, explore the hotel grounds, and then leave for a pizza dinner before going to sleep. Rest Over Night (RON) MsM.



Day 3 Sunday May 26th

We wake up and have breakfast at Masseria sul Mare. Following breakfast, we board the bus for Noto where we will attend Mass in the main Cathedral. Following Mass, we will have a Sunday *pranzo* in one of the piazzas of Noto and then explore the city. Following our exploration of Noto, we will head back to MsM for a Sunday afternoon at the hotel's private beach. Following this we will return to MsM and prepare for our evening dinner. RON MsM.

Day 4 Monday May 27th

After breakfast at MsM, at 8:30 am we depart for Agrigento, founded in mythology by Daedalus and his son Icarus. Pindar called Agrigento, “the most beautiful city of the mortals.” Agrigento was also the home of Empedocles, who formulated the four classical elements of earth, fire, water, and air. We meet our guide, Mr. Rino Sabella, at 11:00 am. We eat under the great temples and then begin to tour all seven temples of the famed and breathtaking Valley of the



Temples. Following our tour of Agrigento, we return to MsM for our dinner. RON MsM.

Day 5 Tuesday May 28th

After breakfast, we depart for Modica - a Baroque city - for a tour of the chocolate factory "Sabadi" which includes chocolate-tasting and vermouth-tasting. We return to MsM for lunch and an hour or two of free time. At 3:30 pm we depart for our visit to the historic center of what Cicero called "the greatest Greek city," Siracusa, equal in size to Athens, allied with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War, and home to scientists, philosophers, and authors. St. Paul visited Siracusa when the city was already seven hundred years old, and St. Lucy lived there. 900 years later, Siracusa was the center of Islamic Sicily, when "lost" Greek classics and philosophical works, often through Arabic translation, were rediscovered, paving the way for the Italian Renaissance. We eat dinner at a local restaurant and then go to the ancient Greek theater to attend a production of *Ajax*, a Greek tragedy written by Sophocles, first performed in the fifth century BC. After the theater, we return to Masseria sul Mare. RON MsM.



Day 6 Wednesday May 29th



At 9:00 am we depart MsM and return to Siracusa and the island of Ortigia, and we meet our guide, Mrs Valentina Battaglia, at 10:00 am. We visit the archaeological park of "Neapolis", which includes the Greek Theatre, the Roman Amphitheater, the Ear of Dionysius and the Altar of Hieron. We can recite the oratory of Cicero or perform a brief Aeschylus Greek drama in the great amphitheater. We visit the actual cave that inspired Plato to write chapter six of *The Republic*, *The Allegory of the Cave*, where he describes the importance of

education in the formation of one's soul, the central tenet of Montfort's education. We eat at the beautiful *Carnezzeria* restaurant in historic Ortigia. We visit the Archimedes Museum and see demonstrations of the greatest scientist, engineer, and inventor of antiquity Archimedes, who calculated π precisely but was murdered during the Roman conquest of Sicily. We also visit the Duomo, among the oldest Churches in Europe, built right on the ancient Temple of Athena using its original columns, as well as the Church of Santa Lucia to admire "The burial of Saint Lucia", a beautiful painting by Caravaggio. We return to MsM for dinner. RON MsM.



Day 7 Thursday May 30th Today we will wake up, have breakfast, and then travel to a local winery to experience the delight of the Sicilian Nero d'Avola grapes. Following the demonstration, we will depart for Mt. Etna, the dwelling place of Hephaestus and home of giant Cyclops like Polyphemus. We will hike up Mt. Etna and be immersed in the red glow of lava during our hike, since Mt. Etna is one of the world's most active volcanos and always is in continuous eruption. After our hike, we will return to MsM. RON MsM. (Photo: Lava like a phoenix running down Mt. Etna at nighttime!)

Day 8 Friday May 31st

Today we will say goodbye to MsM and drive to the beautiful and postcard-like city of Taormina, which overlooks the Mediterranean on one side with Mt. Etna looming on the other side. We will have lunch in one of the piazzas, with pizza, panini or Arancini (Rosticceria Strit Fud, nearby the Greek Amphitheater). Here, too, we can stroll through the Greek Amphitheater, remodeled in later centuries in the slightly different, more oval, built-up Roman style, and even recite Latin and Greek passages to hear the splendid acoustics. In the afternoon, we visit an orange grove, olive with almond and olive trees before leaving for Cefalu. We will check into our next hotel, Hotel Kalura. RON Kalura.



Day 9 Saturday June 1st

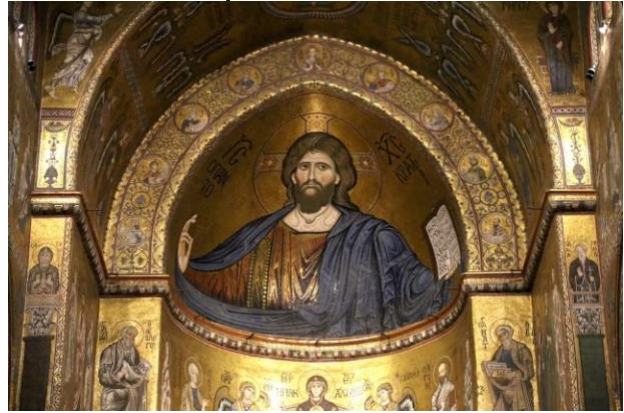
Today we spend the day in Cafalu, a major UNESCO cultural heritage city. We visit the Cathedral and central squares and museums. Then we have a few hours of free time walking around. We can even spend the time just sitting on the famous Cefalu beach, right in the center of the city, watching fishing boats come in with their catch of the day. In the afternoon,



we will return to Hotel Kalura to enjoy the beauty of the hotel and private beach. RON Kalura.

Day 10 Sunday June 2nd

Today after breakfast we walk to Cefalu and spend the morning going to Mass at the main Cathedral. We then return to the hotel for our early-afternoon Sunday dinner. Following dinner, we depart for Palermo for a brief introduction to the city. We stroll along the boardwalk and visit the famous Sicilian Cart Museum and other museums, also knowing we will return the next day. We stop for cannolis and frutta maturana made from almost paste. We then return to Kalura for evening dinner. RON Kalura.



Day 11 Monday, June 3rd



We visit Palermo all day, the capital city of Sicily, formerly called Panormos in ancient Greek, meaning All Ports, highlighting its former role as the center of world trade. Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman, Gothic, Byzantine, French, and Spanish influences are visible everywhere the eye can see. We meet our guide, Mrs Cetty Spoto, at 3:30 pm. We walk the city's historic center and visit the Cappella Palatina, the Cathedral, Quattro Canti (Piazza Vigliena), Teatro Massimo, San Cataldo and La Martorana and see some of the most beautiful artistic representations of Our Lord, the

Blessed Mother, and the Apostles anywhere in the world. We also spend some time in the Kalsa District, the center of the city when it was ruled for 200 years by Arab emirs, and we sit and discuss Sicily's modern multi-cultural society. On our return to Hotel Kalura, we visit the famous Cathedral of Monreale, one of the most splendid Cathedrals in all the world. It is said that the gold in this cathedral from all the mosaics weighs 4,840 pounds. The gold alone (not its priceless religious and artistic value) is worth \$141,000,000! We have dinner at Kalura. RON Kalura.

Day 12 Tuesday June 4th

Today is an entirely free day of rest in Cefalu and at Hotel Kalura. All are welcome to return to Cefalu city and shop for souvenirs or spend the day relaxing on the stone beach at our hotel. You may hike up La Rocca (the beautiful rock mountain that overlooks Cefalu) or visit the Mandralisca museum, or to final shopping before our return home. By climbing La Rocca, you will understand why Cefalu is called Cefalu, deriving from the Greek Kepheloidion, meaning "giant head." We will have a final gala farewell dinner on the Hotel Terrace. RON Kalura.





Day 13 Wednesday June 5th



New York at 6:35 pm.

Today we say good-bye to Sicily and return to the United States. After breakfast at Kalura, we leave for Rome ITA Flight 1784 at 12:40 pm. Arrive in Rome to transfer to ITA Flight 610 at 3:10 pm. After two weeks of touring, studying, learning, praying, spending time with one another in friendship, we say Arrivederci to Sicily, or Nni viremu, as the Sicilians say. But we remember that Arrivederci really means, "Until we see each other again." So, Sicily, we will see you again. We return to New York and wish each other a good summer. We arrive in

NNI VIREMU, SICILIA BEDDA!



PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE



This preliminary cost is subject to change.

Unfortunately, inflation has had a considerable impact on the cost of airfare, bus pricing, food prices, and hotel stays. The preliminary cost for this trip of 13 days is \$8,000 per student and \$7,500 per parent. These prices assume a minimum participation of 15 international students and 3 parent chaperones. This cost includes round-trip economy class airfare from China to Sicily, all agritourism and hotel stays, three meals a day, all excursions and museum entrance fees, bus transfers on a private and dedicated tour coach, tips for the bus driver, guides, and all private tours and lessons. The cost does not include the cost of passports (please begin arranging for your passports now), travel insurance, souvenirs, or gelato or snacks along the way, bicycle rental, snorkeling or kayak rentals, or laundry services. (Personally, I plan on budgeting about \$6-10 per day for gelato or granita.)



The overall price of the trip will increase or decrease depending on the number of students who will attend because some costs, like the bus, are fixed and will be spread among all participants. For example, if only 10 students attend, the price will increase by about \$1000. We will need to plan payments, including an initial deposit, since both the airfare and the hotels must be paid in advance. The trip will need to be fully paid for on April 1st.





REQUIRED READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE

- Read John L. Stoddard's Travelogue Lectures, Volume on Sicily
- Watch the Opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*
- Read short selections from Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Archimedes, Homer, Pindar, Plato, Cicero, Ibn Hamdis, da Lentini, Frederick II, Boccaccio, Dante, Pirandello, Quasimodo, di Lampedusa, Verga, Sciascia
- Study the Geography and Map of Sicily
- Watch select videos on Sicilian history over the centuries.



USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.torredonvirgilio.it/en/>

<https://hotelkalura.com/en/>

<http://www.susafa.com>

There are so many websites about Sicily. Here are some interesting ones.

<https://www.thethinkingtraveller.com/Media/documents/epubs/sicily/A%20Portrait%20of%20Sicily%20-%20The%20Thinking%20Traveller.pdf>

<http://www.sicilianexperience.com/history-of-sicily.html>

<https://italicsmag.com/2020/07/25/sicily-and-greece/>

<https://olli.berkeley.edu/programs/courses/sicily-key-everything>

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/88a139adb5364168994260b8b8ac1a86>

https://olli.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/course/documents/1_-_handout-history_of_sicily_outline_5_weeks.pdf

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/peloponnesian-war/>

<https://www.scent-of-sicily.com/sicily-travel-guide/selinunte/>

<https://www.summerinitaly.com/guide/archeology-park-and-canyon-cava-ispica>

<https://www.visitsicily.info/en/segesta-and-selinunte/>

<https://www.thethinkingtraveller.com/italy/sicily/guide-to-sicily/history-of-sicily/the-arabs-in-sicily>

<https://www.wondersofsicily.com/sicily-normans.htm>

<https://www.summerinitaly.com/guide/church-of-santa-maria-dell-ammiraglio>

ALL STUDENTS AND PARENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SIGN THESE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT. Montfort may add other rules as necessary.

1. Unity of Command
 - a. Mr. Greco and the other teacher chaperones are in charge. When the group divides into smaller groups, parent chaperones will be in charge of their group.
 - b. You must follow chaperone directions immediately and without complaint.
2. A two-person rule applies at all times
 - a. **Do not wander.**
 - b. You should never be alone anywhere. You must be with another Montfort traveler at all times.
3. Look out for the other person and be courteous to and tolerant of one another.

PUNCTUALITY is a sign of care and consideration for your fellow-travelers. **CHRONIC LATENESS** is inconsiderate and a sign of disrespect for your friends and chaperones.

4. Electronics are strictly limited to cell phones and cameras.
 - a. **There will be no exceptions.**
 - b. Cell phones may be used for photographs. Voice and texting should be used for emergencies only. We highly advise that you keep social media use to an extreme minimum. *Live in the moment and be fully present to the people and place around you.*
 - c. Listening to music through headphones is for travelling and private times only. When we are walking around Italy, see and **hear** where you are.
 - d. Any misuse of cell phones, cell phone cameras, or social media will not be tolerated. This includes inappropriate posting of photos, videos, etc.
5. You will not sneak around the hotels or leave your rooms without permission. The chaperones must know where you are at all times.
6. You will observe the highest standards of decorum at all times. You are guests in a foreign country. Represent your country, your school, and your families appropriately.
7. Don't even think about sneaking alcohol (or drugs) at any time. There is a separate permission slip if parents want to permit an occasional glass of wine or Italian cordial, but always under adult supervision.
8. This is the first co-educational trip to Italy Montfort has ever conducted. Boys and girls are not permitted to be in one another's rooms behind closed doors at any time, or at all after 8:00 pm. There will be opportunities for swimming at beaches. Swimwear must be appropriate. In the interest of modesty, we strongly encourage regular-length bathing suits for boys (no Speedos) and one-piece bathing suits for girls. Other guidance on clothing will follow. For example, no ripped jeans or profane t-shirts will be allowed at any time.

9. We will have enough cash on hand to buy an immediate plane ticket to send someone home, if necessary, due to inappropriate behavior. There are plenty of common areas around the two farm hotels for friendship and socialization, so again, no visiting of rooms allowed.
10. Honor code – do not behave inappropriately or tolerate inappropriate behavior from others, even a friend. It is better to tell us immediately if something bad happens than to cover it up. That’s when real trouble begins.
11. Report any accidents, injuries, or illnesses to Mr. Greco or one of the other chaperones immediately. The same goes for any damage to property.

On this trip especially, **THE MORTAR MATTERS!**

I have read and will abide by these Rules of Engagement:

Signature of Student

Signature of Parent/Guardian

REGARDING THE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

The drinking age in Italy is 16. On all our prior trips to Italy, some parents have given permission for their children to have an occasional glass of wine or Italian cordial, like limoncello, always at meals. Sicily is famous for its liqueurs made from lemons, oranges, cinnamon, prickly pear, almonds, chocolate, and other typical Sicilian fruits.

By signing the below, you give your child permission to consume alcohol and at the frequency indicated, but not more than one glass of wine or one cordial per day, and always under the responsible supervision of an adult.

By signing, the student also pledges to adhere to the parent’s permission.

Frequency: Once every _____day(s). If never, please indicate “0.” If every day, please indicate “1.” If every 3 days, for example, please indicate “3.”

Signature of Student

Signature of Parent/Guardian



