

Going on the Italy Pilgrimage was truly a life changing experience that helped to grow my faith in tremendous amounts. The most meaningful place was St. Peter's Basilica because it put the size of the Catholic Church into perspective for me. I went through RCIA during my freshman year and recently came to the Church, so I've never had a firm grasp on who each figure was and how important everyone is. I really believed it was just Jesus and everyone else was just significantly below him. Seeing St. Peter's tomb, and all the different saints portrayed in the Basilica showed me that the Church is so much bigger than I thought, and that was extremely monumental in my journey of faith.



Another event on this pilgrimage that stood out to me was visiting Bl. Pier Gorgio Frassati's summer home and taking part in a hike that he frequently conquered. The home was so cool to see in person, and having mass inside was so meaningful to feeling close to this saint. The hike was fascinating because it was so much different from everything else, we were seeing and doing on our trip. It was good to experience a non-tourist location and truly experience a new culture. I felt so close to Pier Gorgio on this hike, which helped me grow in my faith because I had never felt spiritually close to anyone except Jesus before. It was so fulfilling to realize that there are other people in heaven watching over us and praying for us other than Jesus and Mary.



I developed a newfound devotion to Virgin Mary during the pilgrimage. I had never felt able to pray to anyone else except Jesus, it had always felt hard to me. But this trip showed me so many people I had never learned about and so many ways to pray that I had never experienced. Learning about Mary and how much she can do for me taught me so much about my prayer life, and made me feel so much closer to her, especially through the rosary.



Rome in general was life changing and was definitely my favorite place out of the entire trip. There are pieces of Catholicism everywhere and it was truly a blessing to feel a part of something so huge. There was a church on every corner and there was always a rosary or prayer card available to purchase wherever we were. Seeing what I believe in representing so widely like this was unforgettable and made me feel so proud to have come to the Church last year.