

The

# Roamin' Romans

Sunday, 30 September 2007

Day 7 of 11

Rome

## The glory that was Rome...



## & the bald spot on the dome

It is impossible to visit a city as old as Rome – which was showing its age 2,000 years ago – and not come away coated with the grit and grime of its history.

Rome is hot, and lots of its stuff sticks to you. Stuff that's icky and stuff that would  
***Continued on Page 2***

Inside	
<b>Full itinerary</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Tomb of the unknown</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Torture and other fun stuff</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Picture page</b>	<b>Separate email</b>

## Here's our full itinerary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sept 23	<b>24</b> Fly to Italy	<b>25</b> Arrive in Venice	<b>26</b> Vicenza Dedication of Margaret Williamson Memorial Garden	<b>27</b> Vicenza to Lake Como	<b>28</b> Lake Como	<b>29</b> Lake Como to Rome
<b>30 Rome</b>	<b>Oct 1</b> Rome to Florence & Tuscany	<b>2</b> Tuscany	<b>3</b> Tuscany to Milan	<b>4</b> Fly to United States	5	6

## The glory that was Rome

*Continued from Page 1*

be icky if you didn't know it also reeked of meaning and the historic dust of lust and human sacrifice.

Rome gets to you, even if only to drive you away with its chaos and dirt. But it's also a place where if you scratch the surface – any surface, it's all coated with something – there's something underneath that's interesting and may have figured into the life of one of your ancestors.

After a touch of Christian Rome yesterday at the Vatican, we spent today in the pre-Christian original city in the Forum and Colosseum, which is just a few blocks walk from the convent where we're staying.

It's the place where, over the centuries, an empire was built and its inhabitants sated with spectacle. And talk about crumbling infrastructure – this is where the concept originated.

We stood in rooms where Senators argued whether to go to war and who to fight. We visited the ruins of the Vestal Virgins' home. And we saw where Julius Caesar was assassinated and where his body was cremated.

Rome is a big deal.

We're fortunate it gave us an alphabet and not its numerals.



Today we're in Rome

### Little remembered, rarely visited



Out of favor with the Man, but revered nonetheless by the small band of fellow sourpusses best known for frowning at the idea of having a good time, Rome's Memorial to the Unknown Presbyterian sits ignored in a small niche at the Colosseum.

## Would it be OK to call?

<b>When it's this time in California / it's this time in Italy</b>	<b>When it's this time in N.C. / it's this time in Italy</b>
9 a.m. / 6 p.m.	<b>9 a.m. / 3 p.m.</b>
Noon / 9 p.m.	<b>Noon / 6 p.m.</b>
3 p.m. / Midnight	<b>3 p.m. / 9 p.m.</b>
6 p.m. / 3 a.m.	<b>6 p.m. / Midnight</b>
<b>9 p.m. / 6 a.m.</b>	<b>9 p.m. / 3 a.m.</b>

## Persecution: Not what it's cracked up to be?

Historians agree Christians suffered persecution, torture and death at the hands of the Roman Empire before the Emperor flip-flopped and imposed persecution, torture and death on anyone who wasn't Christian.

But despite the cross erected by a long-dead Pope to their eternal memory (right), the audio headset narrator who gives Colosseum visitors a tour of this ancient stadium said Christian slaughter probably never happened in this arena.

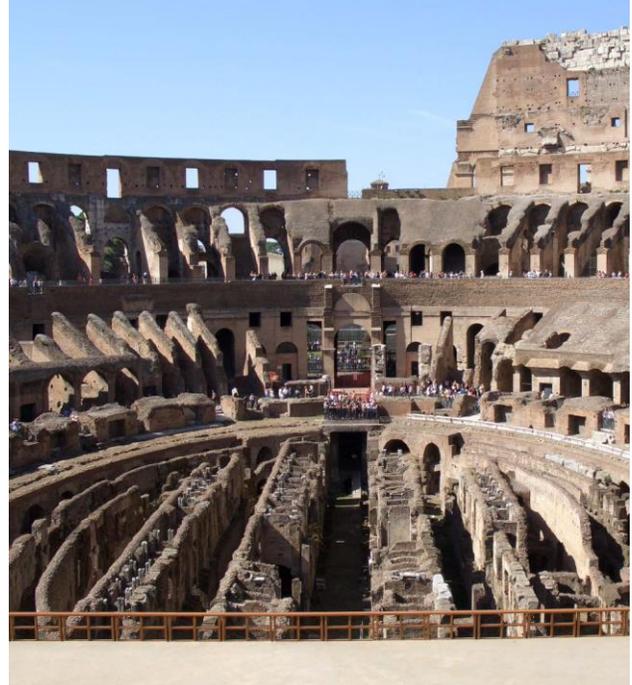
The written accounts that record these atrocities were written centuries after the acts that allegedly occurred.

Nevertheless, the voice from the headset is not the only voice heard in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Colosseum.

If you listen carefully as you peer down from the grandstand to the Colosseum floor, it's possible to make out the wails of suffering Christians today.

They are difficult to see in the lower photo, but urban legend says they are standing in long lines, pushing Wal-Mart shopping carts filled with Barbie dolls, Nintendo games and tinsel through the labyrinth of crumbling brick walls toward check-out counters at the far end.

There they are ruthlessly taunted by clerks wishing them "happy holidays," "season's greetings" – anything but "Merry Christmas" – until they are driven stark raving mad and vote Republican. Oh, the humanity.

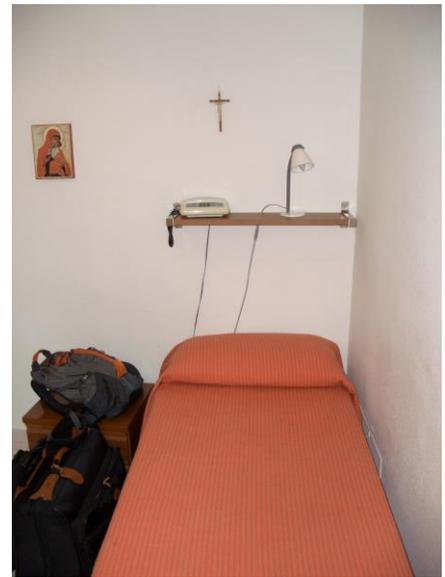


# Today's picture page

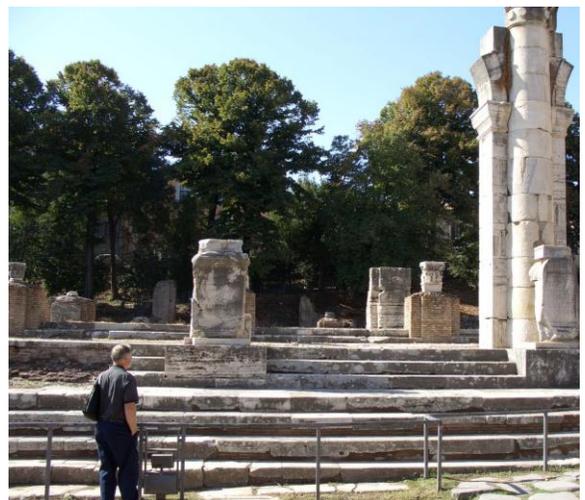


<<< Entering the Roman Forum, the original city built by the emperors, on the Via Sacra (Sacred Way).

At the convent – haven't found ESPN yet.



At the Forum, the Basilica Emilia for Emily Hallman Moak Meacham, and the Basilica Julia, for Julia Elizabeth Meacham Jones.



Lunch across the street from the Colosseum.  
>>>



Romans pour down into the Forum along the Via Sacra.

