

Dear Merion Community,

September 21, 2017

It has been our pleasure to have designed and led trips to the Classics sites in Italy and Greece for Merion Mercy students. Often in those meetings parents have asked us to create a trip for adults and families. Having heard the request, we are happy to be offering a trip to Italy for Merion alumnae, parents, families, and friends. Departing on March 29<sup>th</sup> and returning on April 8<sup>th</sup>, this comprehensive itinerary includes Easter weekend in Rome, then a few days in Florence, followed by a trip south to Pompeii, Sorrento, Capri and the Amalfi coast.

In Rome, we will stay in the city center, literally steps away from the Pantheon, one of Rome's greatest monuments, and very close to the churches of the Gesu, St. Ignatius, and Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. Through our wonderfully broad itinerary, we will experience classical, spiritual, and modern Rome. From there, we will depart for Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance. Here, we will stay along the Via Tornabuoni – Florence's proverbial Fifth Avenue – in the heart of the city. After Florence, we will take a fast train south where, from our hotel in Sorrento, we will explore the Amalfi Coast. We will walk the streets of ancient Pompeii, the Roman city preserved through the volcanic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79AD. We will take a ferry to the island of Capri, known for its lush vegetation, beautiful Blue Grotto, and spectacular views of the Bay of Naples. And we will visit the coast towns of Positano and Amalfi, before returning to Rome for our final night.

It is our tradition to obtain the finest hotels we can for our groups. The week we are using unfortunately is also one of the most sought after and expensive for hotels particularly in Sorrento. To achieve our program, which is full, and to keep our prices where they are—all the more difficult now since the US dollar is falling against the euro—we will use the Hotel Carlton International in Sorrento, a good hotel with a terrific location and near restaurants which we will use. It is impossible, however, to secure waterside space in Sorrento that week, but we will sleep well, eat well, and enjoy a great series of adventures in Sorrento.

As is an integral part of our program, we will offer a brief series of orientation meetings prior to departure. This way, you will learn about the sites we will visit, you will get to know your fellow travelers, and you will have answers to the nuts-and-bolts questions about the trip. After registration has concluded, we will let you know the first meeting date.

Please send your registration forms and deposits to Elizabeth or Henry during or before the week of October 9<sup>th</sup>. Prior to that date, however, we ask that you send an email to either of us ([elizabeth.c.mccall@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.c.mccall@gmail.com) / [hbender@thehill.org](mailto:hbender@thehill.org)) indicating your intention to register so that we can hold your spot. Don't hesitate to contact either of us, by email or phone, with any questions.

Wishing you all the best,

Henry V. Bender, PhD  
Long Time Teacher of Classics (Saint Joseph's University, Villanova University, Holy Cross, The Hill School, Saint Joseph's Preparatory School)  
Leader of more than 100 trips to Italy and Greece  
At Merion Mercy, most recently, Latin Teacher, 2016-2017, Former Board of Trustees Member, and father of Kate Bender, MMA '96  
Currently Adjunct Professor of Classics, Saint Joseph's University

Elizabeth C. McCall, Merion Mercy Academy '04  
Merion Mercy Latin Teacher, 2008-2016, Chair of Merion Mercy Language Department, 2012-2016  
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