



**Europe - Volume 2**  
51st Wedding Anniversary Adventure 5/17/2016 - 6/7/2016



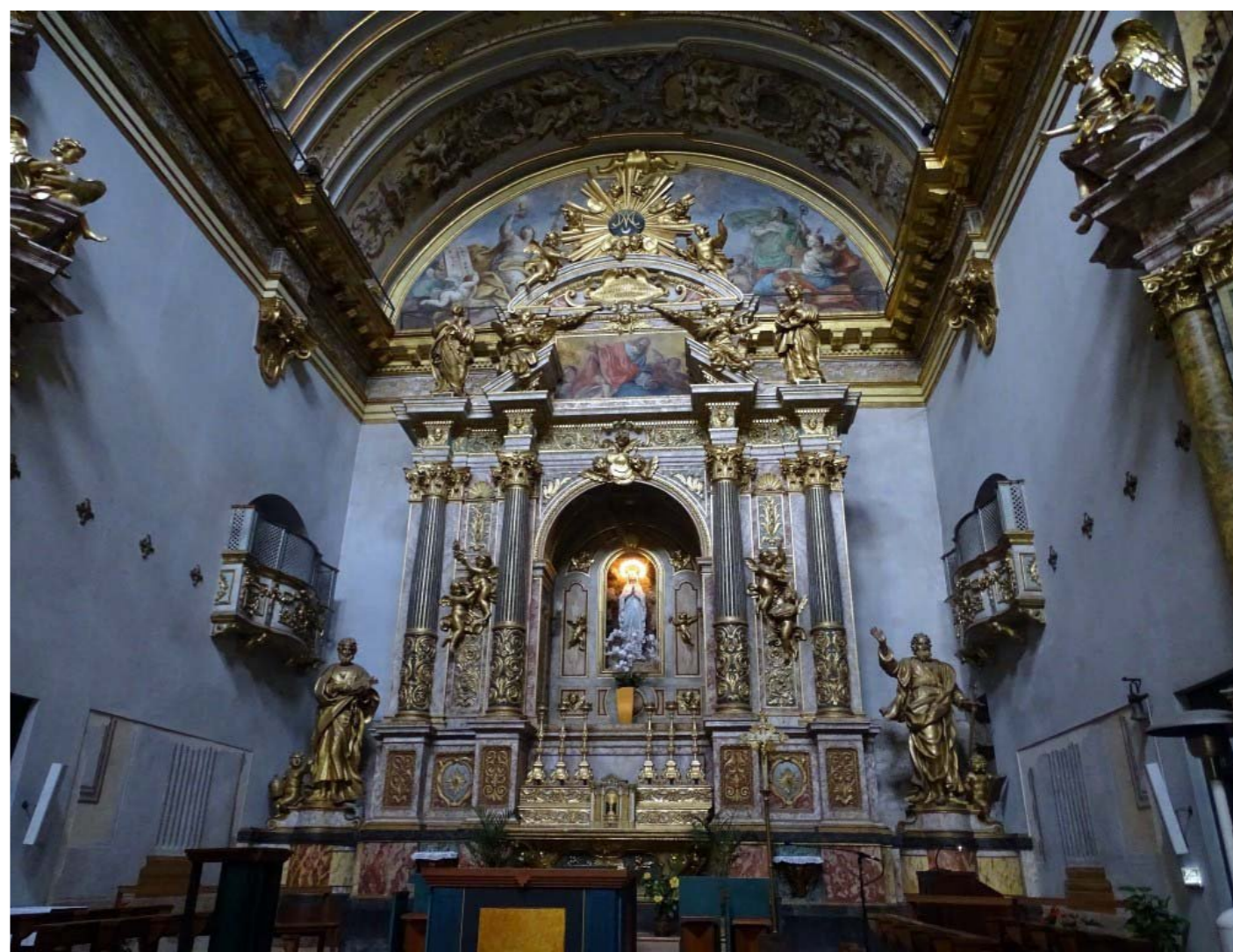
We arrived in Assisi after a nice drive to find a beautiful hotel with a wonderful view. We decided after a short rest to go into the walled center city and discovered the Temple of Minerva. Linda made it up and down many stairs with the help of an Angel Australian RN . We had a very nice dinner.







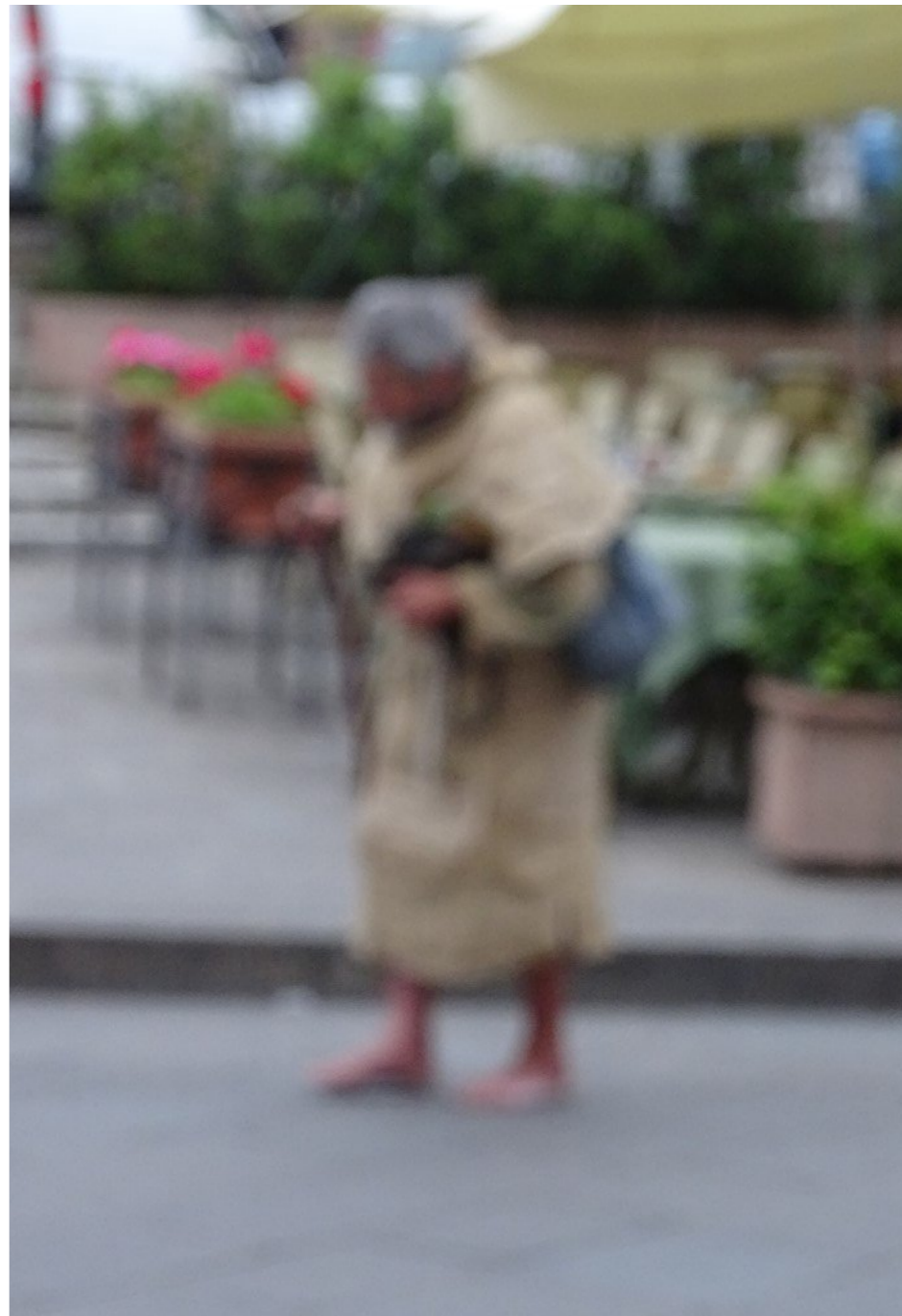














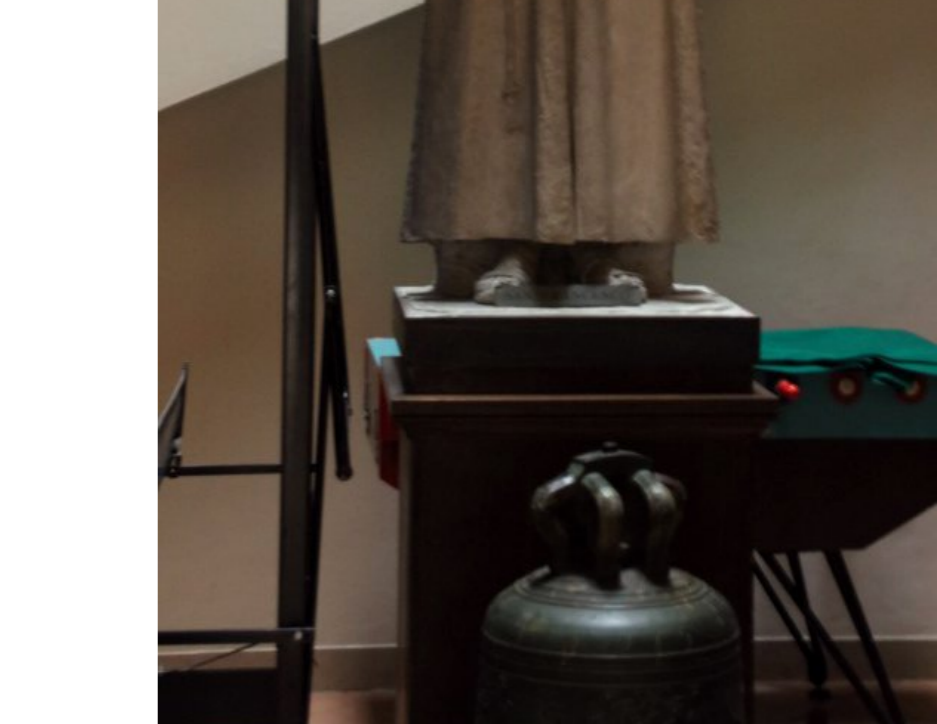


This was to be a rare day where we did not have our picture taken together because we wanted to see so much. The beautiful St. Clare who looks the same as on the day she died in 1253. Linda and St. Clare share the same birthday, July 16. The Basilica of St. Francis where we again took unauthorized photos. The highlight though could easily be pictures (with permission) of the Cross that spoke to St. Francis which has such meaning for me.

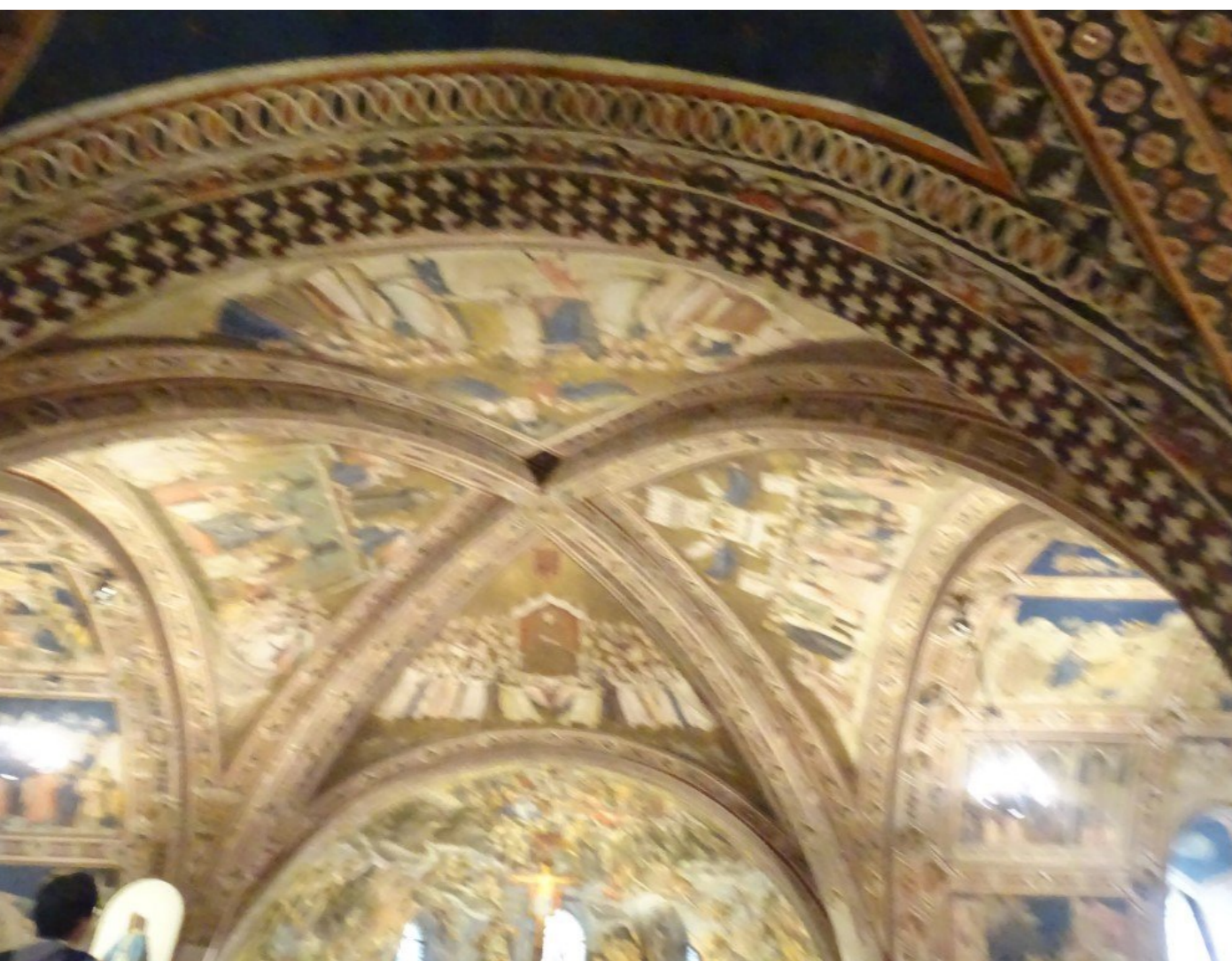






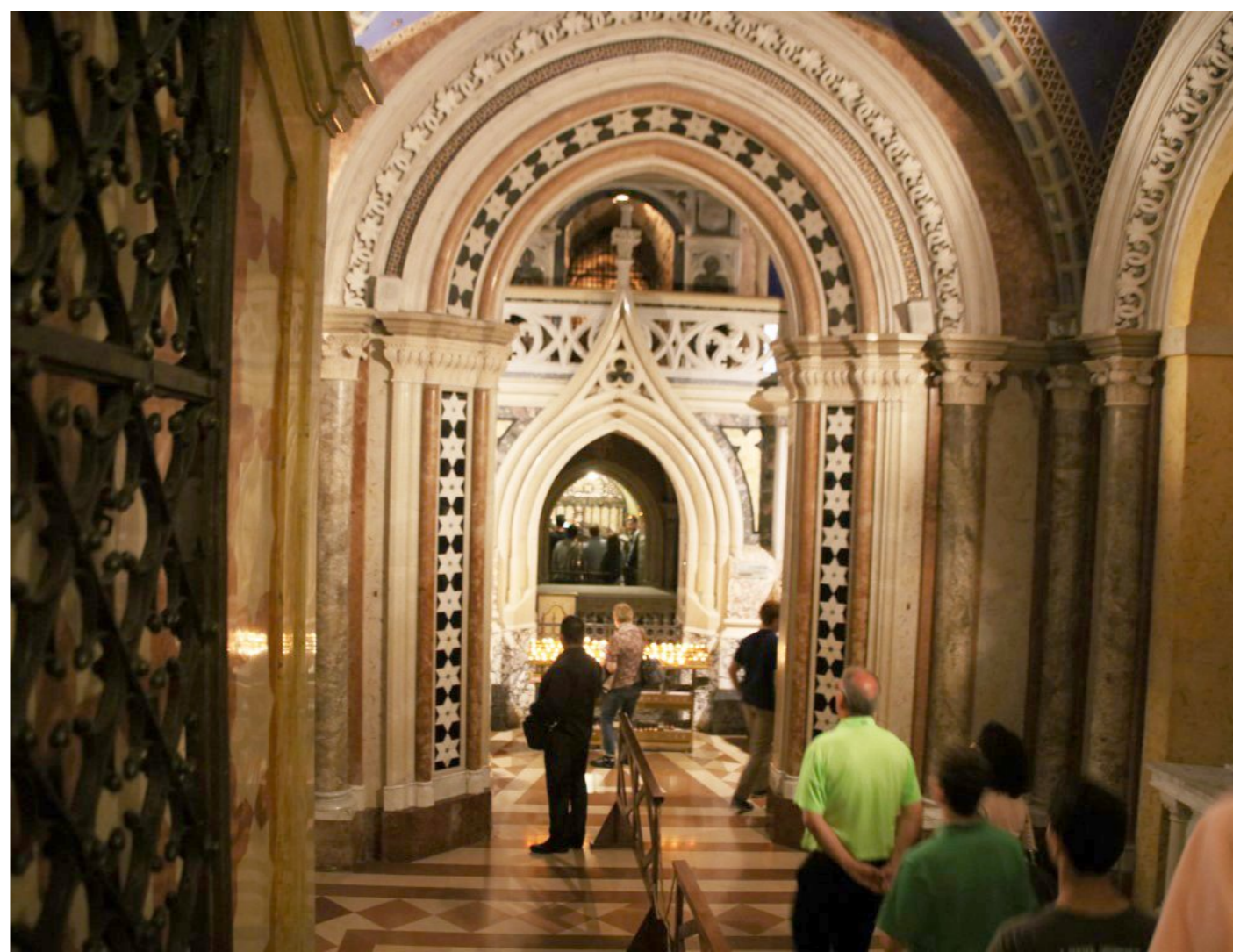














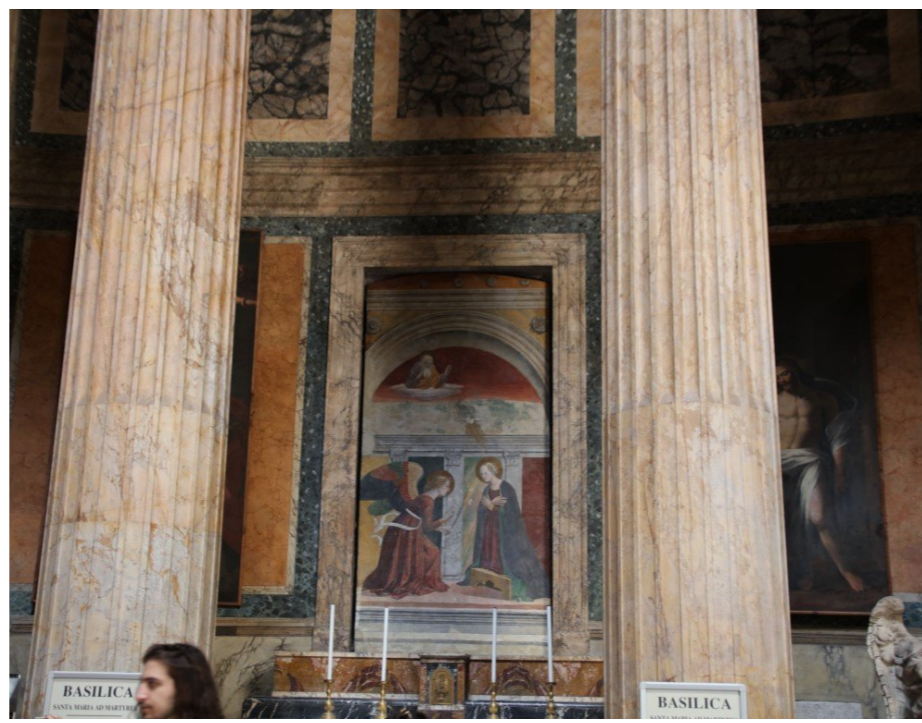






**Our first day in Rome! We went to the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain (millions of people), and had a wonderful visit at the Roman Colosseum. We walked forever and it was just a start to an unbelievably wonderful visit to this special city.**













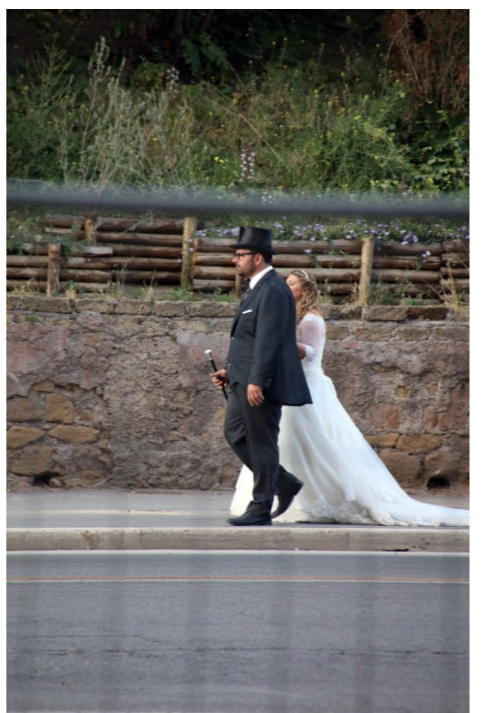




















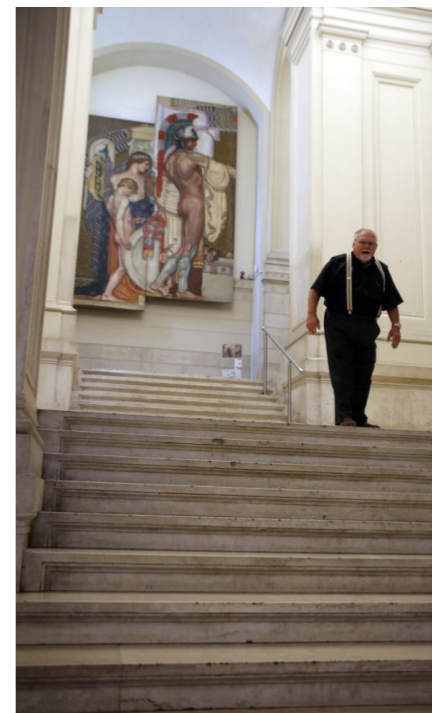




**Our 2nd day in Rome included going to the top of Vittorio Emmanuele 11 Monument, and the Great Michelangelo's Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels and the Martyrs which was beautiful!  
We finished a great day by attending "La Traviata". It was an incredible day!**





















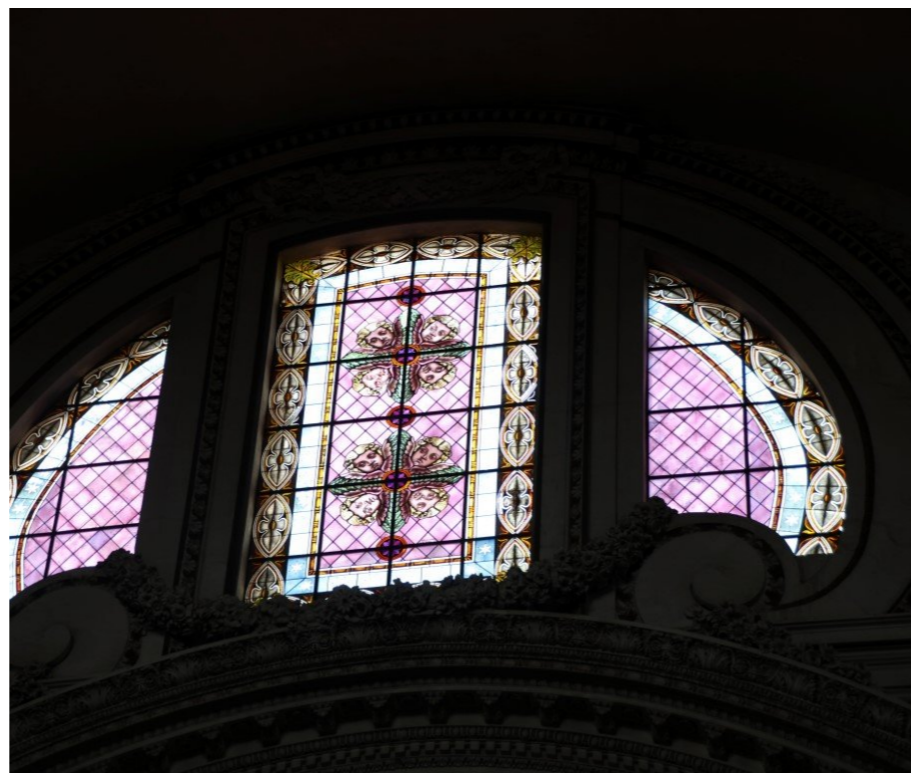


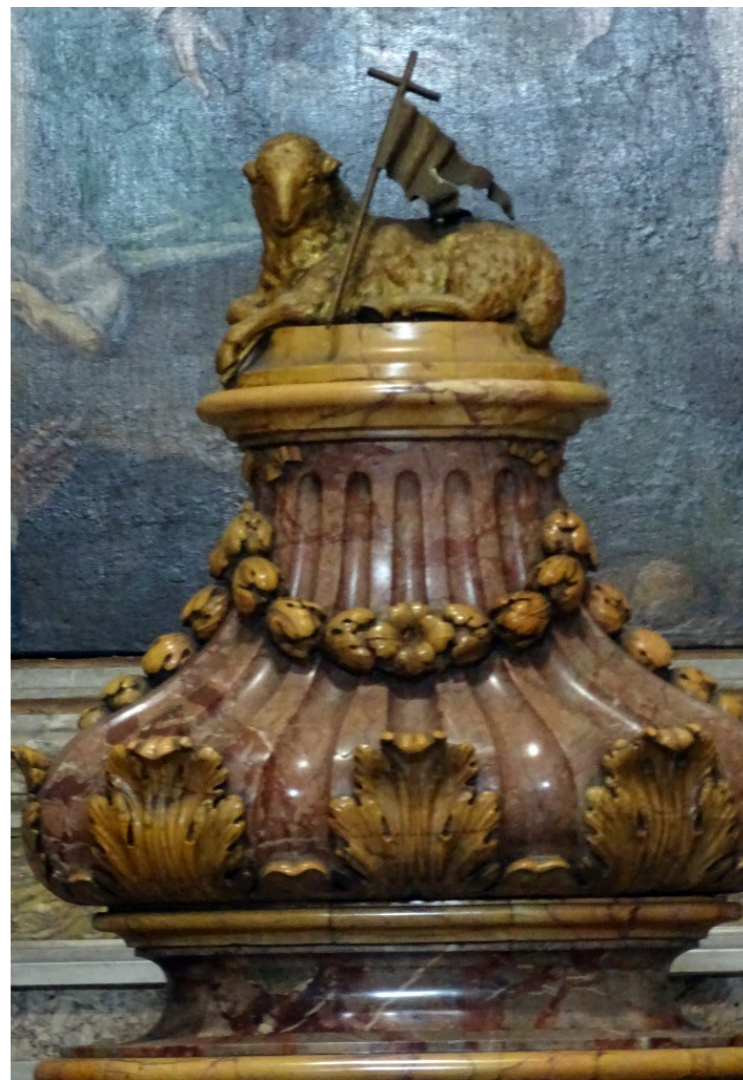






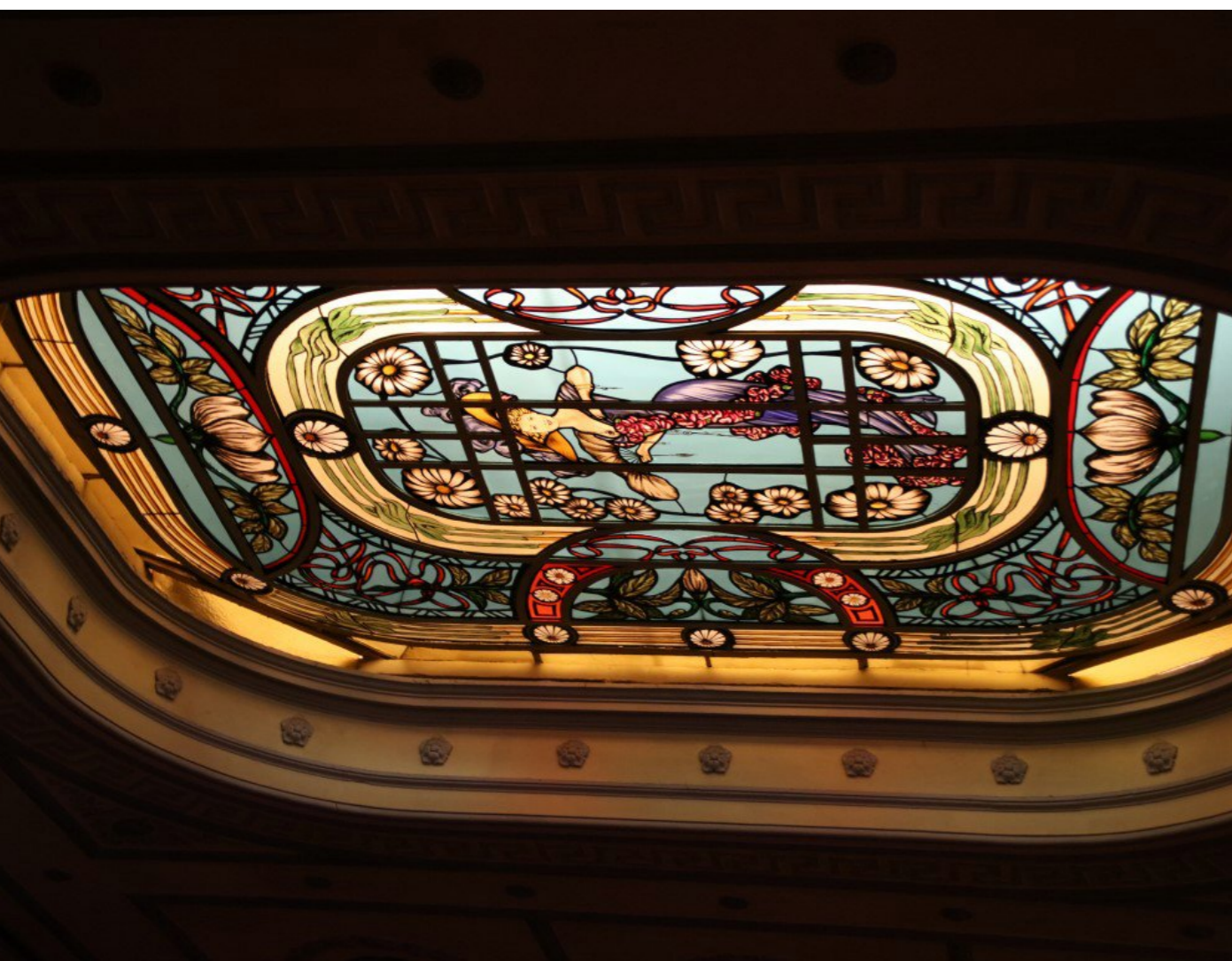




















Our day at the Vatican and with Pope Francis was wonderful including meeting a young Polish boy who wanted to "go home with the lady." Our private guided tour of the Vatican Museum, St. Peter's, and the Sistine Chapel( no pictures) was so perfect. Linda walked what seemed to be an unending amount of stairs, and by the way, so did I.





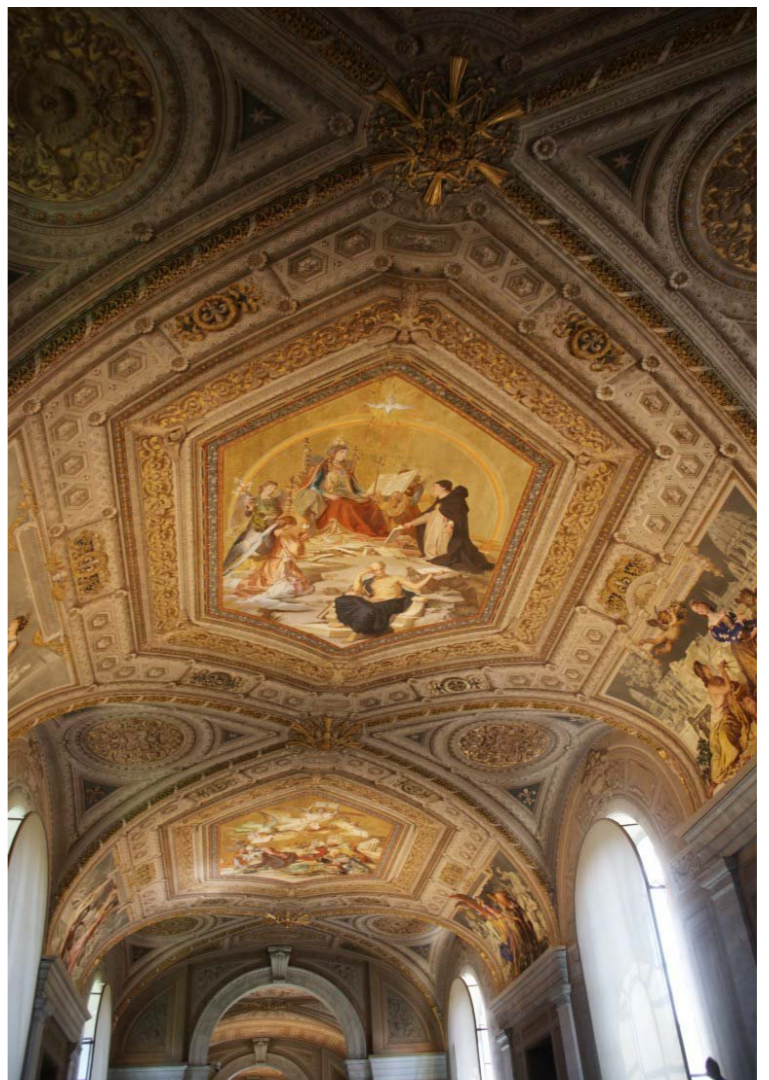
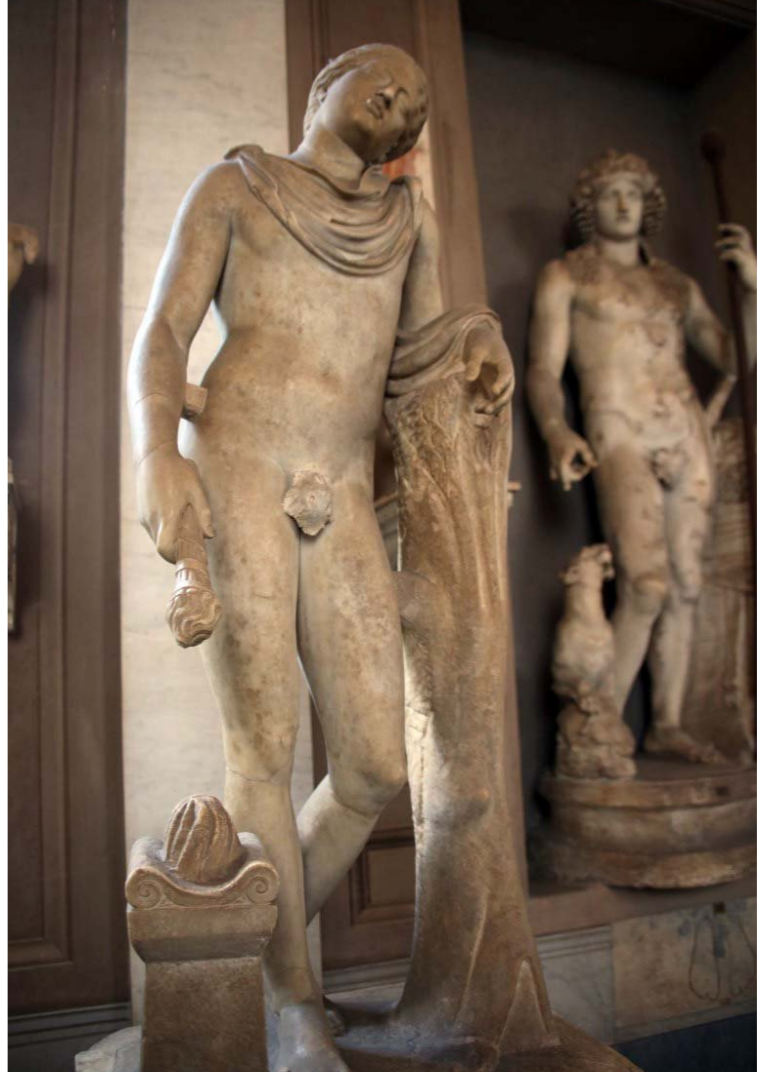






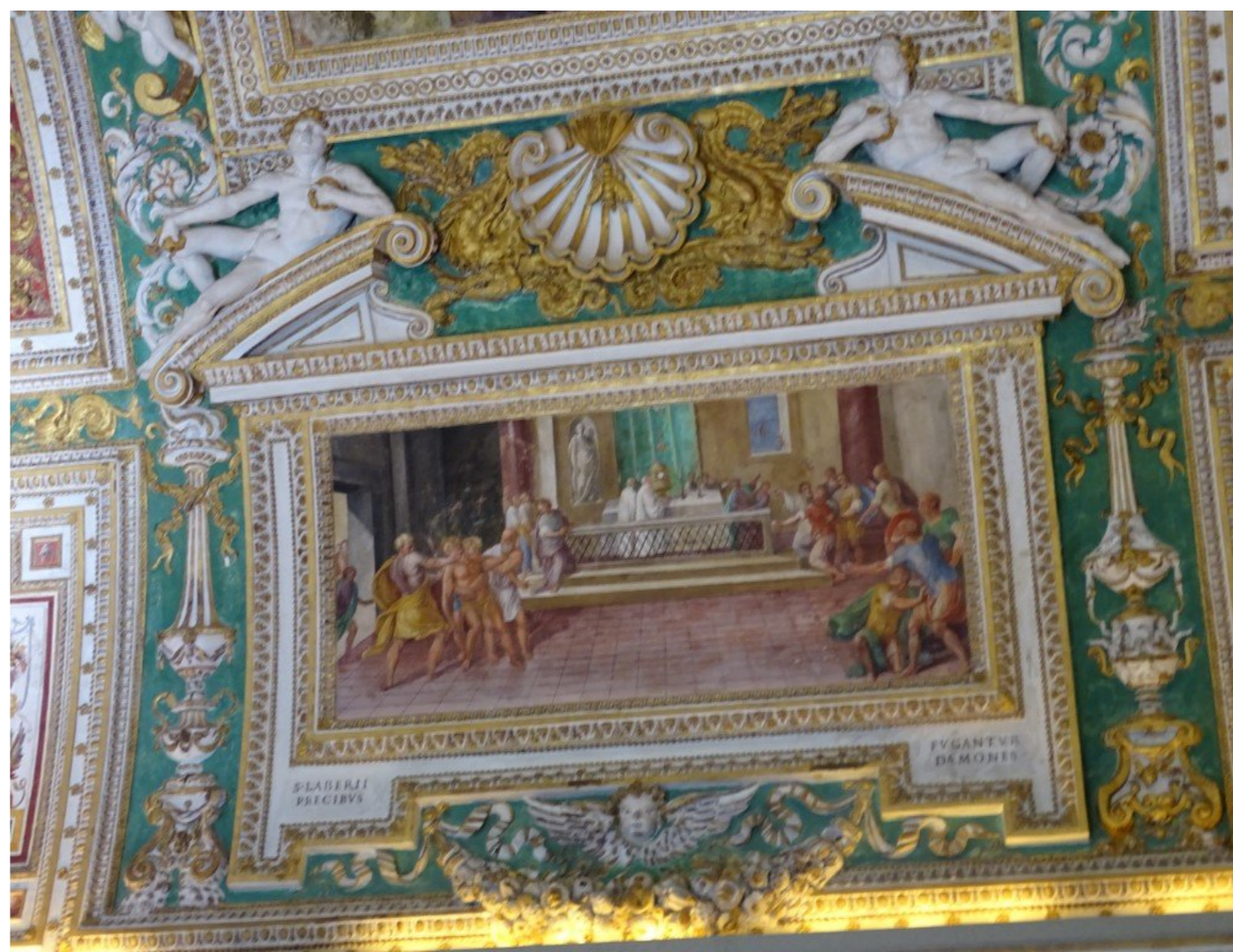




























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### Pisa

The only place on the trip we felt very uneasy, so we left as soon as we took a few pictures. The best thing this day was a reunion with a woman, ( Keri), who had graduated high school and college with our daughter, Gigi.







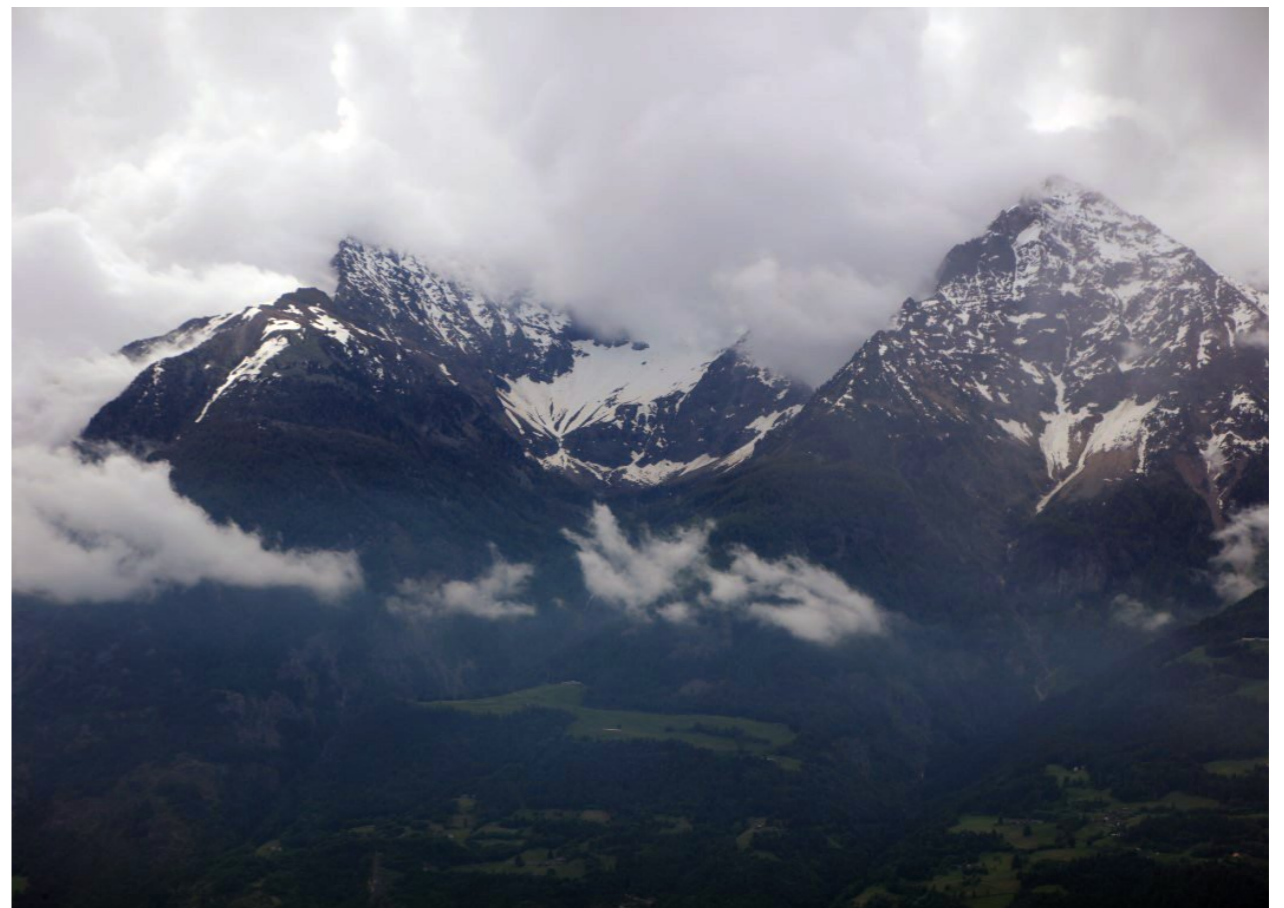


We drove on the Italian Coast and ended our day in Turin. We were very much still in recovery mode from Pisa. We stayed in a small but very nice Italian Hotel and was very glad to escape the driving rain of the afternoon.



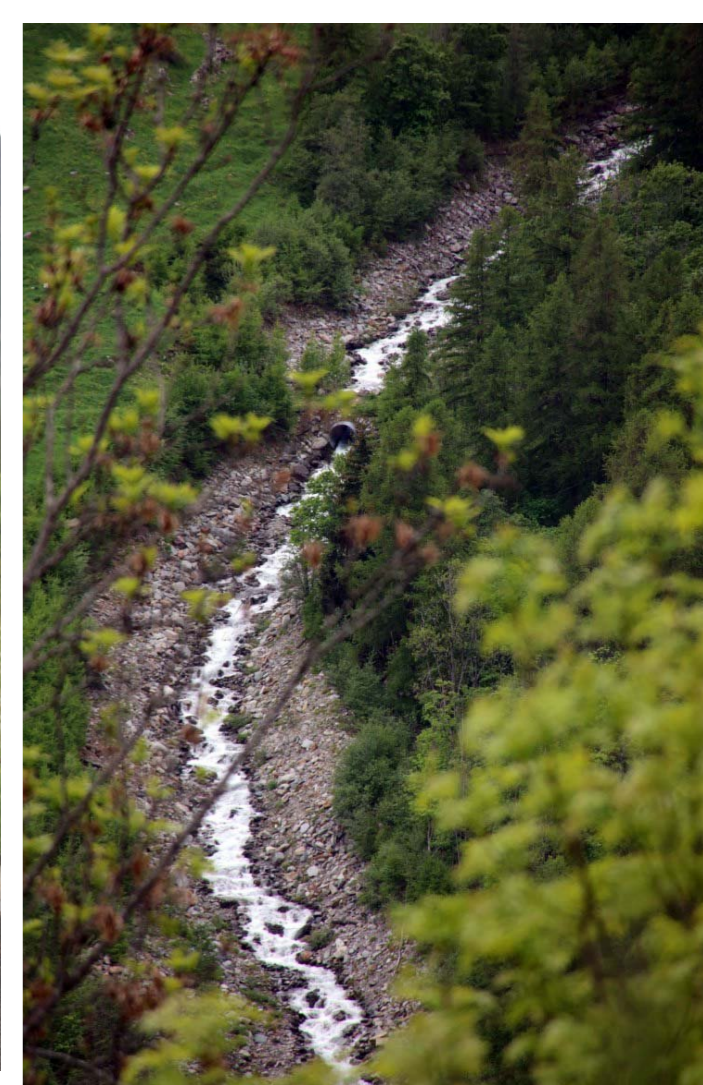




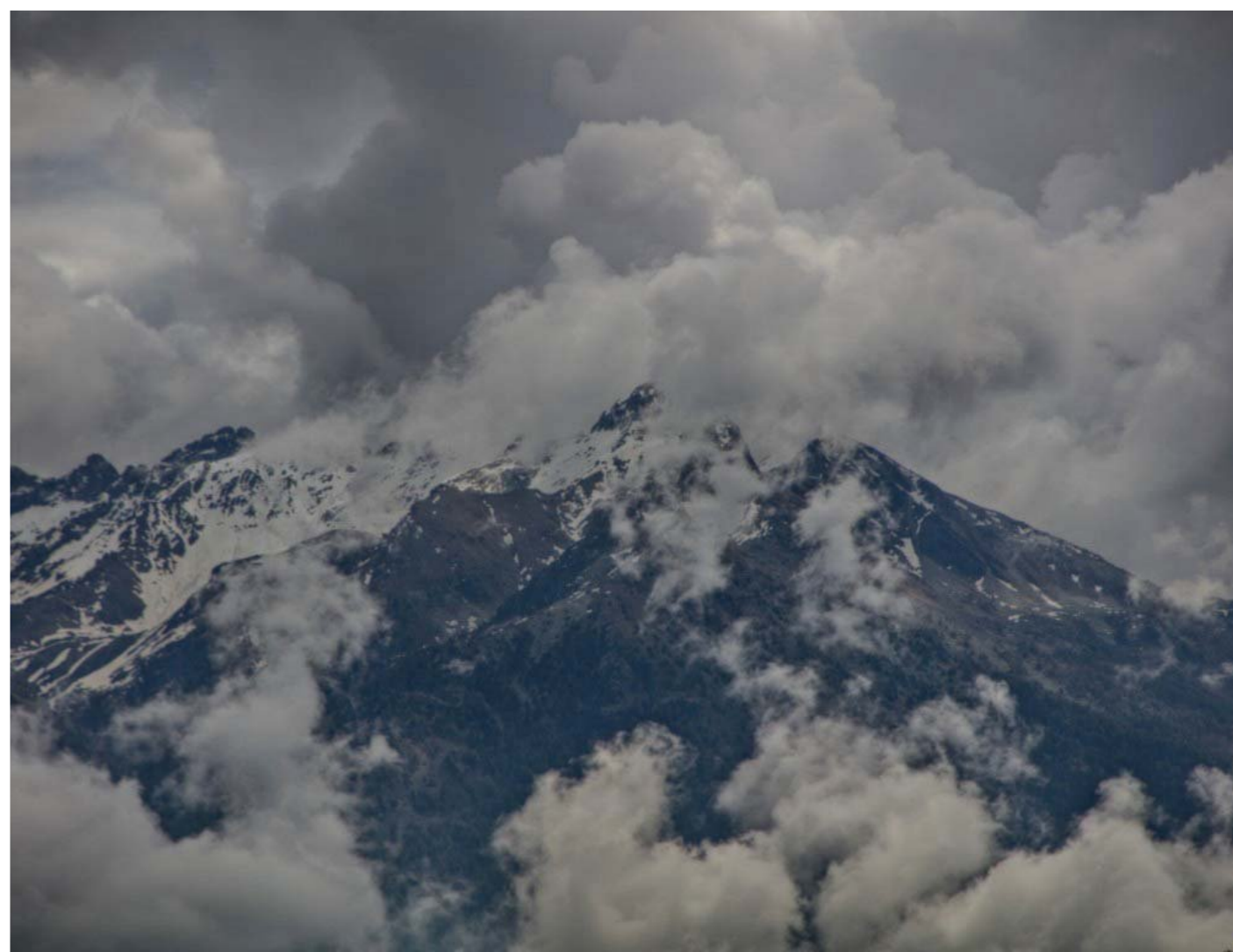


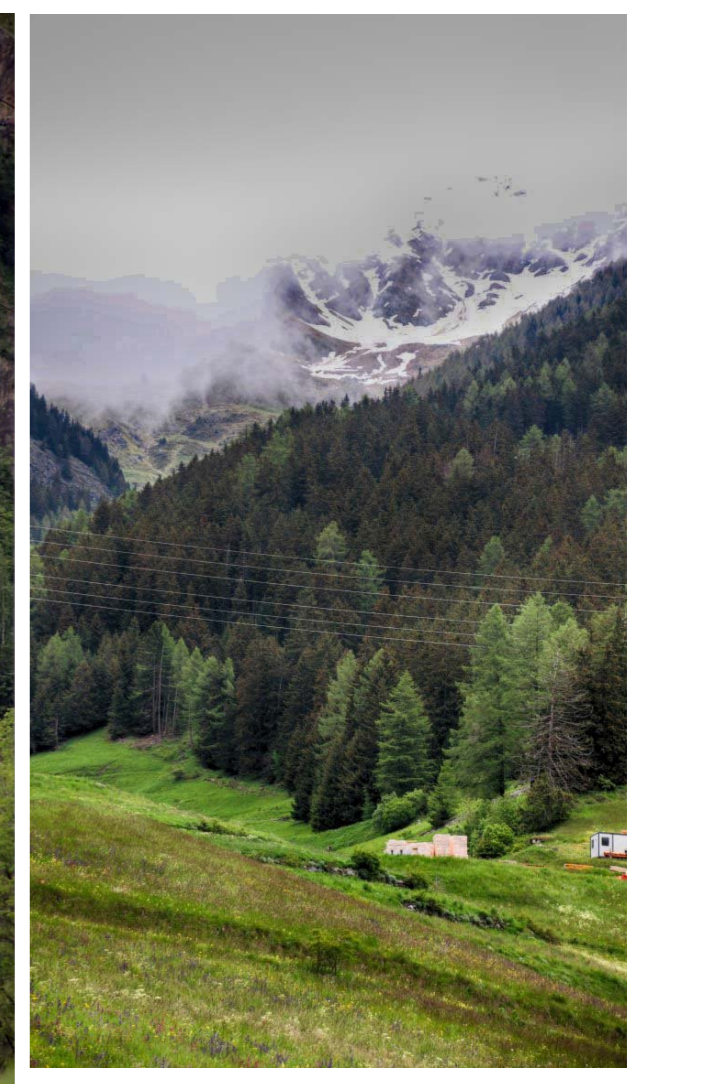
We drove through an incredibly beautiful landscape from Italy into Switzerland and ended up on the Swiss Riviera in Montreux. We stayed on the 13th floor for the next 2 nights with the most beautiful of views.

















June 5, 2016  
Our 51st Wedding Anniversary











Well, we are finally at the end of this adventure filled with memories that will last beyond our lives. Too many special things to single out any one day, one hour or one moment. It was an adventure we never ever thought we would be able to take and as we look back we wonder, is this really us? Did Linda and John Flakes really rent a car and drive for 3 weeks in Europe all by ourselves. The answer is no - not alone - so many people contributed in ways that they will never know. The people who were so thoughtful and nice to us and celebrated our marriage as though we were their personal relatives. Mom and Dad McDonald who left us the means to do this. Our God who gave us the courage to not only do this but came along with us. We are so very thankful to all!

