



ASSOCIATION VIA FRANCIGENA

to promote cultural and tourist awareness of the pilgrim routes to Rome.

The patrons of the Project VIA FRANCIGENA developed by the ASSOCIATION VIA FRANCIGENA are : the Holy See, in Italy : the Ministry of Culture, in France; the Ministry for Culture and Communication-F, in CH the Ministry for Home Affairs. The VIA FRANCIGENA ASSOCIATION was awarded the SANCTI BENEDICTI Rotary International for 2001 and is a partner of the European Institute of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

English Version The association (AVF) numbers 200 members in 11 countries around the world

LETTER to the FRIENDS of the VIA FRANCIGENA

July 2003

Thanks to YOUR GREAT support,

the **2nd edition of the Guide Vademecum from the Great Saint Bernard to Rome** has been published

with a **PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDED ROUTE** of 900km in **42** stages adhering to the itinerary of Sigeric, to which is now added for the first time, along the Via Domitia-Way of St James, the historic spur road Arles-Turin-Vercelli a distance_ of 585km in **19** stages,

thus promoting the **EUROPEAN NETWORK** of pilgrim and communication routes, which are at the basis of the Jewish/Christian origins in Europe

The guide is the fruit of long research, enabling us to determine numerous original sections of the Via Francigena, *routes royales*, to which are added riverside paths along the Po and Magra, and alternative countryside routes, well suited to pilgrims on the VF.

The Association Via Francigena has also obtained for its AMIS-FRIENDS, special reductions of 10 to 20% at most lodgings mentioned in the guide: which shows an increased awareness amongst the general public vis à vis this cultural itinerary

Over the last few years, due to the work of our Association, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of pilgrims and tourists. This indicates a positive trend towards a

LEISURELY TOURISM WITH A CULTURAL BIAS ACROSS INTERNATIONAL FRONTIERS

Our classic Vade-mecums are highly thought of: not only in Italy but in other European countries, in the United States and in Canada, and are now considered indispensable for travellers. They are made possible thanks to the technical and organisational help from numerous associations and local organisations.

The Association V.F. thanks

- the **Pontifical Council for Culture** for its continued support of the VF program and for the preface to the 2nd edition of the Vademecum
- the authors of the historic French link Arles-Montgenèvre: Alain LE STIR of the Association des Amis de Saint-Jacques- Provence- Alpes- Côte d'Azur and Robert PETRINI
- Peter ROBINS, responsible for the new look and for the maintenance of our website www.francigena.ch
- ANIAF (Ass. Naz. Imprese Armamento Ferroviario) for financial support

at the European level

the European Institute of Cultural Routes for participating in the meeting in Paris March 29 2003 with representatives of certain CDRP (regional committees for rambling organisations), and for having put the VF Library online July 2003 at www.culture-routes.lu

at a religious level

Don Bruno Vercesi for awarding the Testimonium (a parchment created and offered by the AVF) to 120 pilgrims, who are all very grateful to him for the moving ceremony in the *Vatican Grotta*

at the scientific level

- Professor André Vauchez ex-director of the Ecole Française in Rome for having set up a scientific committee for the V.F. and for having taken on the task of creating a Database for the Via Francigena, with the help of the European Institute of Cultural Routes.
- the University Grégorienne-Rome which, in October 2003, will offer a new course on "Pilgrim Routes and the Via Francigena", coordinated by Don Jacobone
- the University of Viterbo which, on 7-8 March 2003, organised 2 study days on the subject of "Travellers in Tuscia" (Latium)
- On March 5th 2003 at the Circolo Accueil of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Rome, the AVF gave a talk, with the help of transparencies and films, on the principal historic and cultural medieval aspects of the localities along the VF between Canterbury and Rome.

at an institutional level

a fruitful collaboration has been initiated with the Association of Communes on the VF (according to Sigeric's itinerary). The AVF hopes that this association will increase its work in Europe so that they will be able to offer pilgrims greater security, and be responsible for cultural and scientific aspects as well as the conservation of sites and monuments on the Via Francigena.

at a technical- cultural level in Europe

- the Rambling Associations RP51-Marne-F with François Louviot, and Doubs-F with Pierre Blondeau have organised walks and waymarked the Via Francigena with logos in their respective regions.
- Commander Renzo Malanca and 60 pilgrims, after a memorable ceremony at the hospice on the Great Saint Bernard Pass (2450 m), which the president of the AVF also attended, set off on a fortnight's walk to Lucca. En route, they were warmly welcomed and assisted by local and communal associations, a great comfort in the disagreeably torrid heat of the Po valley, and in the crossing of the Apennines. Their journey represents an extraordinary example of how to build a European fraternity.
We encourage others to follow their admirable example.
- the Polisportiva of Castelfiorentino organises walks along the VF from Siena to Castelfiorentino every Sunday in September; and on 4-5 October is holding the 19th International V.F. Day in Valdelsa; a remarkable event to which the AVF has also given its patronage.

AMIS Please give this event your support! Information Fax 0571 634217 polisportiva.igiglio@libero.it

The FRIENDS of the Via Francigena can receive on request:

- the **MEMBERSHIP CARD AMIS** and the list "Pilgrim **WELCOME VF** from Canterbury to Rome"; for a free coffee, meal or overnight stay. Put yourself forward and state your availability to experience the pleasure of sharing the experience of a slow journey across Europe.
- the *Litterae patentes peregrinatoris iter per viam francigenam facientis* By presenting an appropriately stamped pilgrim's passport, AMIS may by special permission visit the Christ Pantocrator (VIII-IX-century fresco) in the small church of San Pellegrino near the Porta S.Anna on the "Via del Pellegrino", final meditative stage for pilgrims in the time of Charlemagne. (Contact Mgr Giuseppe Conte)
- the booklet with maps for walkers *Via Francigena in Valdelsa* by Albano Marcarini (subject to availability)
- at the Information Office in St Peter's Square: information concerning the city of Rome, St Peter's Basilica and some visits which were particularly popular with medieval pilgrims.

ENTHUSIASM FAITH COOPERATION VOLUNTEERS and
a large number of AMIS-FRIENDS are the STRENGTH of the Association Via Francigena Thank you

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