



## 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

With the TOPOFRANCIGENA from Canterbury to the Gt St-Bernard, **the third** milestone, the Via Francigena has become accessible to EVERYONE and a united Europe becomes more tangible

**40** geo-cultural pocket-sized colour map-cards, prepared by Adelaide Trezzini with Giovanni Caselli providing the graphics, cover a route of around 1.000 km following the stages of the Guide-Vademecum.

The AVF is convinced that the TOPOFRANCIGENA will ensure that the VF is also planted in the French, Swiss and Italian soil, and in the pilgrim spirit of the whole world.

As a next step the AVF will try and help those (ever more numerous!) who are already thinking already of Jerusalem. Logistically everything is still to do, as local populations know nothing of this pilgrimage on foot and are suspicious of foreigners. Veronica and Joe were obliged to turn back.

Every effort of the AVF is dedicated to finding a route as varied, pleasant and authentic as possible for the pilgrim on the VF.

The TOPOFRANCIGENA map-cards show amongst other things the extant ancient Roman and medieval roads, places of cultural interest, medical assistance, railway lines etc. The walker will find significant improvements especially in the departments of Aisne, Haute-Marne and Haute-Saône.

**The rebirth of the VF** continues, thanks also to Edward Gordon and Jeff McDonald, both Australians, and to John Joyce of South Africa who will start his pilgrimage-walk at Vallorbe in the Swiss Jura, profiting from the most beautiful part of the VF.

### □ **Some news from the AVF from pilgrims currently en route**

the Norwegian Eiler Pritz left Canterbury on May 1, and recommended us to change the stage around La Fère (11-12 in the Vademecum) because of the difficulty of finding accommodation. He's planning on arriving in Rome towards the middle of July.

Two Canadian couples (nicknamed the *4 tortoises* because of their young age, from 65 to 73) advancing at the rate of 10-15 km a day will make a real pilgrimage of around 6 months. They let themselves be tempted by the Pilgrims' way (Chaucer's 14<sup>th</sup>-century London-Canterbury pilgrimage), suggested in the Guide-Vademecum UK-F-CH.

- Andrew & Carole Welch-UK, after being blessed in Canterbury cathedral on 30.5.04, set themselves the objective of raising funds along the VF for mentally and physically handicapped children at Plymouth hospital. You can follow their progress and help them on [www.walktorome2004.co.uk](http://www.walktorome2004.co.uk)!
- A group of 6 Italian pilgrims arrived on June 2 in Rome after having completed the 2000 or so km in 2 months (like Archbishop Sigeric in 990) thus commemorating the 10 years since the acceptance by the Council of Europe of the VIA FRANCIGENA as a European Cultural Itinerary. They took their first day of rest at Reims, where they were presented during the Sunday mass in the cathedral, their second at the Abbey of St-Maurice in Switzerland, and a third halfway along the Italian section, at Fidenza.

German and Swiss pilgrims have completed sections of the VF and the German-speaking world is starting to discover the north-south pilgrimage axis.

-At the moment the largest number of pilgrims-pionners comes from the Netherlands and especially from France where they are ably assisted by Mme Virginie Brouillard.

**The AVF encourages pilgrims** to start as far north as possible, if not at Canterbury itself, and is pleased to honour those FRIENDS of the **Club BIG-francigena** who have already completed ALL the VF :

1. Brandon Wilson USA 8.9.00 Aosta-Rome + 30.09.02 Lausanne-Canterbury
2. Huguette St-Pierre + Serge Hamelin - Quebec - CA 16.4-10.7.01 Canterbury-Roma

- 3. Nicola Caruso & friends - I. 24.8-8.9.01 by bicycle from Canterbury to Rome
  - 4. Joe Patterson - UK 5.8-10.10.01: Canterbury-Rome
  - 5. Veronica O'Connor- Paris : 30.3- 20.6.02 Canterbury-Rome
  - 6. Willy Steiner & friends – CH: 28.4-1.6.02 Domodossola-Roma + 27.4-5.6.03 Canterbury-Losanna .
- Further FRIENDS –UK intend to set off this summer or next, such as Raymond T., Andrew G. et Karl P.

### Technical Information

- ☐ Thanks to Peter Robins webmaster@via-francigena.org the AVF has a new [www.via-francigena.org](http://www.via-francigena.org)
- ☐ **VF waymarking** has been created in Marne by the CDRP (Comité Départemental de Randonnée Pédestre) and RP51 (Randonneurs et Pèlerins), in Doubs by P. Blondeau, and the AVF hopes that it will gradually follow in other départements as well, and that it will be possible to restore some historic sections (for example at Hûmes, one of Sigéric's stages, and between Martigny and Vernayaz, at Bourg St-Pierre-CH), some sections of Roman road (near Mormant, Meilx, for example) to bring pleasure to those who like to FEEL history « under their feet ».
- ☐ **VF waymarking in Italy** is lacking or confusing, and little use to the walker. To remedy this lacuna the AVF is committed to the preparation of a TOPOFRANCIGENA Great St-Bernard to Rome, if resources permit, and hopes for all possible cooperation with the relevant institutions.

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### Other informations

- ☐ The AVF is delighted with the exceptional success of Don Jacobone's course «VF and pilgrimage paths» at the Gregorian University in Rome.
- ☐ Already 140 pilgrims have registered in the [Register of Via Francigena](#) in the Vicariato of the Vatican City and received their Testimonium (realised and offered by AVF)
- ☐ Spanish, French and Italian students contacted the AVF for information on different aspects (touristic, geographical, organisation-management) of this new itinerary and were very appreciative of the Guides-Vademecum, the fruit of years of research by the AVF. At the same time Bernard Grisiez of Besançon provided the AVF with valuable information concerning the alternative route from LES ARCHOTsto DAMPIERREbetween Haute-Marne and Haute-Saône.
- ☐ Two other cultural associations in Rome were able to discover the « Historic-cultural journey on the VF from Canterbury to Rome » illustrated by some 90 slides prepared by Adelaide Trezzini-AVF.
- ☐ Two editors (American and German) are basing their « VF pilgrimage» on information provided in the Association's publications

Thanks to its volunteers, the AVF works tirelessly to offer experiences of spiritually-enriching pilgrimage across our old continent of Europe.

With your encouragement and help, the AVF will do its best.

The Via Francigena is being reborn because YOU appreciate its values:  
religious, spiritual and of European culture.

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