We meet at Dulles International Airport at the Lufthansa check-in desk at 3 PM, three hours prior to our departure. We will check in as a group. Bring your Passport!

- Restrictions on what may be brought on the plane: http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items.
- Our travel and “off-duty” dress code precludes sweat clothes, pajamas, tight clothes, and anything exposing the knees or shoulders.

Before you depart, make sure that you have . . .

- Informed your bank that you will be traveling. Also check with your health insurance company, as well.
- The PIN for any ATM card.
- Signed up any cell phone for an international plan that will work in Italy, if you plan to have one to use.
- Copies of all credit cards, your passport, and any other important documents at home, so you know what is missing if you lose anything or it gets stolen.
- All contact information you might need copied and handy – not just on a phone.

Recall that our flight will arrive at 12:10 PM Rome time, but it will feel like it is 6:10 AM, as Rome is 6 hours ahead of the time zone here in Virginia. Get what sleep you can on the plane, as we will have a full day when we arrive!

Remember that we will be visiting a foreign country! This is a wonderful opportunity, but it does mean that we need to keep a few points and safety matters in mind:

- Never go out without a chaperone, and another classmate – and make a point of keeping an eye on your classmate (roommate if in the main group). If we all watch for one another, we are much less likely to have someone get lost!
- When we are walking around the city, always pay attention and be aware of your surroundings. If something looks suspicious, mention it to a chaperone.
- The most prevalent crime in Rome is that of the pickpocket. Keep your valuables where you can keep them secure! When we are on public buses, the metro, or in crowds, we are most likely to be the target of such attempts. Credit cards and passports, especially, should remain in a safe place. Keep your bags in sight – hanging in front of you, and where someone could grab them and run – and a hand on your wallet when strangers are around. Again, be vigilant!

Each one of you will have a copy of the hotel address & phone number, along with my cell phone number. Remember to be polite and considerate to those you come across, and be courteous guests in their country! Italians are proud of their home, and appreciate attempts to speak their language and appreciate their treasures; don’t be the loud, tasteless foreigner!
Weather: The average temperature in Rome in late November is a high around 60° Fahrenheit and a low in the upper 40s. As such, a windbreaker for chilly evenings and/or rain showers would be prudent.

Dress Code: While we are touring as a group:

- The gentlemen will be expected to wear a blazer, collared shirt, tie, and slacks. (No corduroy or cargo pants, no painter pant loops, no outside rear-stitched pocket.) The gentlemen should wear comfortable, but not white tennis or sneaker, shoes.
- The ladies will be expected to wear a dress or skirt and top. Skirts must be below the knee and tops must be sleeved and modest. Shoes should be comfortable dress shoes – not tennis shoes. Ladies, especially, should make sure they have shoes that will allow them to comfortably walk some distance, and on ground that is sometimes uneven, such as cobblestone!
- All students, during their free time, may dress in a clean and modest fashion, keeping in mind that we should conduct ourselves in accord with the spirit of pilgrimage. Hence, revealing or tight-fitting clothing would not be acceptable. Nor would clothing that would draw undue attention be desirable.

Meals: Breakfast will be provided each morning at our hotel. It consists of a continental-style breakfast. On the following days a group dinner will be provided: November 22, 24, and 29, and December 1. On the other days, and at lunch, you will have the opportunity to select your own dining options around the city. Remember that any wine, premium coffee, or gelato, will not be provided, and will cost extra.

Money: The currency used in Rome is, of course, the Euro. The current exchange rate is: $1.00 = €0.93. One Euro is worth about $1.07. There are several options for paying for items while in Rome:

- If your bank offers the service, you might see about acquiring hard currency before we depart.
- ATMs are plentiful in Rome, and most American ATM cards work in Rome, though there is usually a foreign transaction fee and possibly other fees, as well. You should check with your bank to ensure that your card works for international transactions.
- Credit cards are accepted in Rome, with VISA and MasterCard generally accepted in places that take credit. Again, there is usually a foreign transaction fee. Please note that with the economic conditions and austerity measures in Italy, a vast majority of shops, restaurants, and vendors will prefer or only accept cash. During our last pilgrimage, only hotels and government-run locations seemed comfortable with credit. For the pilgrims in our group, cash is their most reliable means of payment for meals and souvenirs.
- You can also exchange US currency into Euros either in the airport (where you receive very poor rates, typically) or in Rome itself. While this does eliminate the use of "cards," you usually don’t get quite as good a rate of exchange.

Telephones and Internet: Some American cell phones will work well in Italy, but you have to check. Verizon and Sprint, it seems, are less likely to work than AT&T. With my own carrier, AT&T, they have an international roaming plan that will give me a particular rate for calls from Italy to the US. Phone cards are also available for that purpose at shops in Rome. Our hotel claims to have Wi-fi, though we had some trouble with that before – having to rely on their lobby computers for internet access. Wi-fi connections are not particularly common in the city of Rome, as there are only a scattered number of internet cafes. At the very least, I will bring an internet capable device that students can use for short messages – and I will have a phone for short phone calls! I do plan to check e-mail (academicdean@holyfamilyacademy.net) and have my phone (1-214-701-3777) if you need to get in contact with me during the trip.
Post Office: The Vatican Post is the most efficient in the city, and is easily accessible from our lodgings.

Electrical Outlets: A reminder, as well, for those planning on bringing electronic devices, whether computers, phones, or hair dryers – outlets in Europe run at 220V/50 Hz, while American outlets are 110V/60Hz. In order to even be able to plug in your items, you will need to have an adapter/converter!

Address and location: It is possible to do a Google map search using the hotel’s address to locate, ahead of time, any particular service you might be interested in using. We will be staying at the Casa per ferie Santa Maria alle Fornaci, located at P.zza S. Maria alle Fornaci, 27 - 00163 Roma (Italy).

Student Behavior Expectations: Students are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the spirit of the school and of pilgrimage, and in accordance with our school code of conduct. Specifically, students will be expected:
• to abide by the applicable rules in the HFA student handbook,
• to follow directions from teachers and chaperones,
• to remain with a teacher or chaperone whenever exploring the city of Rome or leaving our hotel,
• to refrain from behavior or speech ill-conformed to our purpose of pilgrimage,
• to refrain from inter-visitaton between boys’ and girls’ rooms,
• to consume alcohol only with parental permission, adult supervision, and in accord with the laws of the Italian Republic.
• Likewise, students are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (aside from cameras) while out and about in Italy!