**Tentative Itinerary for the May 2020**

**DSBS Study Trip**

**ST. PAUL IN GREECE and EARLY CHRISTIAN ROME**

**DAY 1 – SUNDAY, MAY 17: DEPART - U.S. FOR GREECE**Embark upon your journey to the lands of ancient treasures and Christian history with an overnight flight to Thessaloniki. Prepare yourself for a life-changing experience and get some rest on the flight. Tomorrow we will be walking in the Greek world that the Apostle Paul knew. The world and culture of the New Testament is about to come alive!

**DAY 2 – MONDAY, MAY18 - THESSALONIKI [Acts 17:1-9]**  
We arrive Thessaloniki International Airport. Your guide will await you in the arrival hall.  
We depart to the city to which Paul penned his earliest surviving letter. Departing for a comprehensive sightseeing tour of Thessaloniki, the largest city of the Macedonia Province in Northern Greece and an important city for Christianity as Paul preached here in 49 – 50 AD. We visit the triumphal Arch of the Roman Emperor Galerius, the Via Egnatia, the Cathedral of St. Demetrius ad St. Sophia. We transfer to our hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight.

**DAY 3 – TUESDAY - MAY 19 – THESSALONIKI, PHILIPPI, KAVALA, THESSALONIKI [Acts 16:11-17:1]**   
Following breakfast we travel east to the amazing site of Phillipi where Paul preached for the first time on the Continent. We visit the Baptistery of Lydia, near the river where Paul baptized the first European Christian convert. Mass celebration at the Shrine.We then visit the ruins of the Forum of Philippi, including the “Prison of Paul and Silas.” We drive to the coast, to the port of Kavala (ancient Neapolis). Here, Paul took his first step in bringing the Gospel to present day Europe. We view the Byzantine Castle and the Roman Aqueduct. To end the day, we drive back to Thessaloniki with a brief stop at Amphipolis along the way. Returning to our hotel for dinner and our second night in Thessaloniki.

**DAY 4 – MAY 20 - WEDNESDAY – BEREA, VERGINA, KALAMBAKA [Acts 17:10-14]**We leave Thessaloniki after breakfast and drive south through the beautiful landscape of inland Greece. Our first stop is Berea visited by Paul. It was here that Paul planted a church that “studied the Scriptures” on a regular basis. Close by is Vergina, where will have a guided tour of this famous and sacred Macedonian town. We continue to Kalambaka to visit Meteora, the ageless Byzantine Monasteries, part of the UNESCO’s World Heritage List with priceless historical and religious treasures. Built in the 15th century by Christian monks to evade the Ottoman Turks, they stand, suspended between earth and sky on top of huge granite rocks.  We spend the night in Kalambaka, located in the shadows of the unique monasteries of Meteora.

**DAY 5 – MAY 21 – THURSDAY – KALAMBAKA,THERMOPYLAE, DELPHI**This morning we head out on our drive to Thermopylae, it was here that the 300 Spartans, led by King Leonidas, fought with an alliance of Greek city states against the large Persian army in 480 B.C. From here we continue on to Delphi, one of the best preserved classic Greek sites in the country! Here we tour the ancient oracle of Apollo at Delphi, the ‘’Omphalos’’ (navel) of the Earth, whose prestige extended beyond the ancient Hellenic World. At this World Heritage sight we will visit the Sanctuary of Apollo Pythios, the Treasury of the Athenians, the Temple of Apollo, and the Delphi Museum that contains such masterpieces of Ancient Greek sculpture as the Bronze Charioteer and the Athlete Aghias. The day will end with arriving at our hotel in Delphi for dinner and overnight.

**DAY 6 – MAY 22 - FRIDAY – DELPHI, ATHENS [Acts 17:15-34]**  
Departing Delphi after breakfast we drive to Athens. Today we admire the architectural wonders of ancient Athens, as we follow our guide to the world – renowned Acropolis to see the Propylea, the Erechtheum and the Parthenon. We visit Mars Hill where Paul delivered his speech on the Unknown God. We will visit Constitution Square, the Parliament and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Hadrian’s Arch, the Temple of Olympian Zeus and the Marble Olympic Stadium. Ending the day as we arrive to our hotel in Athens for dinner and overnight.

**DAY 7 – MAY 23 – SATURDAY - MYCANEA, CORINTH , ATHENS [Acts 18:1-18; Romans 16:1]**

We start the day with a drive to the site of Mycenae, the legendary city rival of Troy, described by Homer as “Mycenae rich in gold.” This city dates back to the late Bronze Age, and is famous for the “beehive” Tomb of Agamemnon (Treasury of Atreus) and the gold masks. We then continue to ancient Corinth. This is the once glorious city near the Isthmus, where Paul met Aquila and Priscilla and spent a year and a half preaching the Word of God. We visit the Archaeological Museum, the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Forum and the Bema where Paul stood before Gallio, accused by the Jews of Corinth. We make a brief stop at Cenchreae, the home of Paul’s assistant Phoebe, and the harbor from which Paul sailed back to Asia, ending his second missionary journey. We end our day driving back to Athens with a brief stop at the remnants of Ancient Eleusis. On our way to our hotel in time for dinner and overnight.

**DAY 8– MAY 24– SUNDAY- FAREWELL TO ATHENS, FLY TO ROME**Our time in Greece comes to an end and after breakfast we will celebrate Mass at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Denis before transfering to the airport for our flight to Rome We are met by our Italian guide and driver as we drive to our hotel. Dinner and overnight.

**DAY 9 – MAY 25 – MONDAY – IMPERIAL ROME, EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES**

After breakfast we drive to the city center and meet our local guide for a full day tour, starting with San Clemente, then the Imperial Rome area:  Palatine Hill, Colosseum and Roman Forum. We will break for lunch and then continue with the early Christian churches on the Aventine Hill: Santa Sabina, Santa Prisca The House on the Aventine Hill where Paul lived is named in a legal document of the 5th century, as “Titulus Priscae.” Then to St. Paul Outsidethe Walls, where we will also celebrate Mass. [POSSIBLE INSERT VISIT TO JEWISH QUARTER AND ST. BARTHOLOMEW.] Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

**DAY 10 – MAY 26 – TUESDAY – OSTIA ANTICA, ROMAN FRESCOES**

After breakfast we drive a short distance towards the sea, to reach the site of Ostia Antica for a sense of ancient Roman town life**.**  Ostia was a cosmopolitan city, which is reflected with the various temples dedicated to Mithra (Persian), *Magna Mater* (Asia Minor), Isis (Egypt), and a Jewish synagogue. We have the opportunity to view the insides of a Roman house of the well-off decorated with preserved frescoes and several insulae, the dwellings of the common people in Roman cities. We will have break for lunch, then drive back to Rome, continuing the tour of the first Roman Church after Constantine began to favor Christianity, the second of the four Major Basilicas in Rome, St John Lateran. Then we will move on to a third of the Major Basilicas, St Mary Major,built by Pope Sixtus III (AD 432-440), with remarkable nave mosaics depicting scenes from the Old Testament. Nearby is another church with excellent mosaics: Santa Prassede.Our day ends at the Palazzo Massimo Museum, which among its treasures, preserves a wonderful collection of frescoes and mosaics, the triclinium of the villa of Livia. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight

**DAY 11 – MAY 27 – WEDNESDAY – PAPAL AUDIENCE – APPIAN WAY, CATACOMBS, ST. PAUL’S MARTYRDOM**

We have an early morning breakfast and drive to San Peter’s Square, and for those who haven’t had the experience, we will participate in the weekly Papal Audience and blessing. Those who would rather spend the morning on their own will join us for lunch, after which we will depart the city center driving along the Ancient Appian way to visit the Catacombs of San Sebastian. The Christian catacombs are extremely important for the [art history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_history) of early [Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_art). We will board our bus and continue the tour visiting *Abbey of the Three Fountains****,*** the traditional place of Paul’s martyrdom [POSSIBLE INSERT VISIT TO JEWISH QUARTER AND ST. BARTHOLOMEW.] The balance of the afternoon is at leisure, at the end of which we will be transferred to the city center and spend time at the Trevi Fountain and at the Spanish Steps. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

**DAY 12 – MAY 28 - THURSDAY – THE VATICAN, BAROQUE CHURCHES AND SQUARES**

This morning, after a good breakfast, we drive back to the Vatican area, to visit to one of the great art collections in the world, the Vatican Museums. Walk in the footsteps of the Princes of the Church through the richly decorated galleries. Continue on to the Sistine Chapel, the private chapel of the Popes, where Michelangelo best expressed his genius in monumental frescoes. From here we continue to St. Peter's Basilica**.** Take in the awesome architecture and the statuary adorning this largest of all Christian churches, including Michelangelo’s magnificent “Pieta.” Pray at the new tomb of Blessed John Paul II, in St. Sebastian’s Chapel. After break for lunch, we are working at having the chance of visiting the Vatican *Scavi****,*** the crypt area under the Basilica that preserves the remains of ancient above ground cemetery where St. Peter is buried. Having emphasized the earlies Christian sights, a tour to Rome isn’t complete without visiting some of the remarkable baroque churches of the city, making a walking tour of the Church of Gesù and the Church of St. Ignatius*,* before we visit the Pantheon and end our tour in Piazza Navona. We will enjoy a restaurant farewell dinner tonight. Return to the hotel for overnight.

**DAY 13 – MAY 29 – FRIDAY – ROME, RETURN HOME**

We transfer in the morning to Rome Airport for our return flight back to the U.S., arriving home the same day.