

A Pilgrimage Along the Romantic Road to Bavaria and
THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY
by The Community of Guildford Cathedral,
Under the Spiritual Guidance of Canon Paul Smith
5th - 12th September 2020



Organised by
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Both the Romantic Road and the Oberammergau Passion Play came about as a result of the aftermath of war and destruction, and in the case of Oberammergau, a deadly plague. The Romantic Road was developed as an idea in 1950, when West Germany was rebuilding itself after the Second World War. It is now one of Germany's most beautiful and well known tourist routes. At the northern end, the town of Wurzburg was all but destroyed by allied saturation bombing on 16th March 1945. But, miraculously, the main sights have been carefully rebuilt, and we will travel over six days from Wurzburg through picture postcard scenery and medieval towns, including Rothenburg ob-der-Tauber to Fussen which overlooks the northern side of the Alps. From here we make the short journey to the village of Oberammergau where in 1633, during the carnage of the Thirty Years War, and after months of suffering and death from the plague, the inhabitants of Oberammergau swore an oath that they would perform the "Play of the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ" every ten years. It was first performed at Pentecost in 1634, and has been performed since then every ten years for the last 380 years. 2020 marks the 42nd year of staging the play. All the participants in the play, including singers and orchestra members, must either have been born in Oberammergau or to have lived there for at least 20 years.

Day One. Saturday 5th September 2020

London - Frankfurt - Wurzburg

Morning scheduled flight from London to Frankfurt. Transfer to the town of Wurzburg (1 hour) for an overnight stay. This afternoon we will visit the Residenz, a baroque palace, formerly home to the line of Prince Bishops of Wurzburg. Dinner will be in our hotel or a local restaurant on each night of our stay in Germany.

Day Two. Sunday 6th September

Wurzburg - Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber

There will be time for Sunday worship this morning. We visit the Neumunster (New Minster), an early 18th century Romanesque basilica. In the crypt is the grave of the 7th century Irish martyr, Saint Colman, who brought Christianity to Wurzburg and was put to death here with his two companions in 689. Later, we drive south to the medieval town of Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber, where we check into our hotel for a two-night stay.

Day Three. Monday 7th September

Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber

The name of this town literally means "red castle on the Tauber". It overlooks the course of the Tauber River. Today we will be at leisure to rest. We recommend visiting the 14th century parish church of St Jacob, which contains the famous Heliges Blut (Holy Blood) altar and where a crystal capsule above the altar is said to contain drops of Christ's blood. The city museum (Reichsstadtmuseum) is also worthy of a visit, displaying artefacts relating to the history of the town, including the 15th century Rothenburg Stations of the Cross.

Day Four. Tuesday 8th September.

Rothenburg - Augsburg

We travel south through picturesque countryside to Augsburg the third largest city in Bavaria, and one of Germany's oldest cities, originally founded in 15 BC by Tiberius, the

stepson of the Emperor Augustus. Famous luminaries of Augsburg include Leopold Mozart, Hans Holbein the Younger, and Berthold Brecht. Check into our hotel for an overnight stay.

Day Five. Wednesday 9th September.

Augsburg - Wieskirche - Fussen

We continue our drive southwards towards Fussen. We diverge slightly from the Romantic Road near to Steingaden, in order to visit the Wieskirche, Germany's best known pilgrimage church, now a UNESCO world heritage site. Its full name is the Pilgrimage Church of the Scourged Saviour. It was built in 1745 by the architect Dominicus Zimmermann on the spot where a local woman claimed to have seen tears running down the face of a picture of Christ. Afterwards, we drive to Weingarten, where the 18th century Abbey Church rivals Ottobeuren as the largest baroque sanctuary in Germany. Hopefully it will be possible to hear the baroque Gabler organ played by the organist. Our final destination today is the town of Fussen, which is the southernmost point of the Romantic Road. It is situated at the foot of the mountains that separate Bavaria from the Austrian Tyrol. Check into our hotel for a two-night stay.

Day Six. Thursday 10th September

Fussen

As we come to the end of the Romantic Road, today will give us the opportunity to relax in this historic town, surrounded by three lakes. For those who wish, there will be a visit to the Neuschwanstein Castle. A boat trip on Lake Forgggen is also a possibility (at your own expense). Or else, why not visit the Hohes Schloss, a beautifully preserved late Gothic castle. Or take a leisurely stroll through the main shopping street, the Reichenstrasse, a cobblestone walkway lined with high-gabled medieval houses.

Day Seven. Friday 11th September

Oberammergau

This morning we travel to Oberammergau. Apart from its fame as a result of the Passion Play, Oberammergau is a beautiful and picturesque alpine village in its own right. Set in the heart of the Bavarian Alps, many of the buildings in the village are adorned with colourful frescoes, some of which depict biblical scenes, or traditional German folklore. Whilst in the village, after we have checked in at our central hotel, the Alte Post, we may like to visit the local museum and the exhibition, "Passion Play in the Alps". There are two churches in Oberammergau, the Catholic Parish Church of SS Peter and Paul, and the Lutheran Kreuzkirche. At noon there will be a three-course lunch. The Passion Play commences at 2.30 pm, with the interval at 5 pm, during which we will be served dinner, before witnessing the second part of the Passion Play which starts at 8pm and finishes at 10:30 pm.

Day Eight. Saturday 12th September

Munich - London

After breakfast, we transfer to Munich airport for our return flight to London.

This itinerary is subject to change without prior notice

