

drinks. I guess I had to cough up three or four bucks for a single beer. Needless to say we left. My buddies wanted more of that action, but my wallet decided to head on back. By ten o'clock the traffic was still busy on the streets and the opera was closing down after a performance. I did get to see a couple of the performers. These gals were still in makeup and costume hailing a cab. They certainly looked angelic, I imagined they were in the early twenties. They pulled a cab after five minutes. I waited like a half hour until I could get one. I made the mistake after about ten minutes of giving a couple of old nuns my cab. After that the fares kept yelling some Italian at the drivers and beating me out of the cabs. When I finally got one the guy knew my landmark after a minute of listening to my englized Italian, I paid about half what it cost to get down there since I was minus the guys. When I got back to the hotel I was ready to crash, crowdin, no air conditioning and all.

We had a anticlimactic day but covered much ground the next day. Another cathedral which was beautiful but little to compare with the sensations of the vatican. We stopped at Luther's steps, the most famous flight of steps in the world. Luther made the first manifestation of protestantism here. As a Student he was developing his philosophy and demonstrated its fruition, here at these steps.

The faithful climb these steps up to a blanked off wall praying a few words on there knees at each step. Luther didn't see it that way and back when walked up the steps to prove his philosophy. We were hustled out before the notion of climbing the steps set in.

Yes, we got the Three Coins in the Fountain bit to. I guess we were lucky to get to see the Trevi fountain when we did, as our guide pointed out that the statues were becoming much to corroded by the Italian form of acid rain. Roe stinks polution wise, but not as bad as Naples. Worse than most US cities though. I never saw much of smokestack industry in Rome so I can assume the damage to the fountain was from motor vehicles. The tourists can still dangle their feet in the pool, corrosion and all. Recalling the movie I was surprised the spot was in such a beat up old neighborhood. The zoning was hardly as panoramic as the movie made it out to be.

Some where along the line we visited the forum. which had not been repaired or built upon. It is an open area of classical rubble about three or four square blocks. As it is viewed an outline impression of the ancient civic center can be imagined. You may not walk in it though as vandalism must have already taken quite a toll.

The one ancient structure we were allowed to enter was the colleseum. This is still a visionary place for the tourist. Everyone in the world has seen the pictures, but to walk in the gate, take a ramp to the spectator area, is a real experience. I thought it odd to feel as if I was entering an American ballpark as I shuffled along with the crowd. It couldn't hold a baseball field but the granstand is of the same proportion and that odd similarity surfaced. The multitude of chambers on the floor of the stadium was a surprise. Hundreds of rooms must have been covered with a deck which is now missing. We were on our own and so just looked at the ruin and walked about in it. The spectacles we recreated in our movies must have been just as intense in this setting. This structure still stands out of sheer bulk, the blocks weather and corners round, but the masses of block will allow many more millions to marvel.

I t was awful nice to escape the Navy these few days.