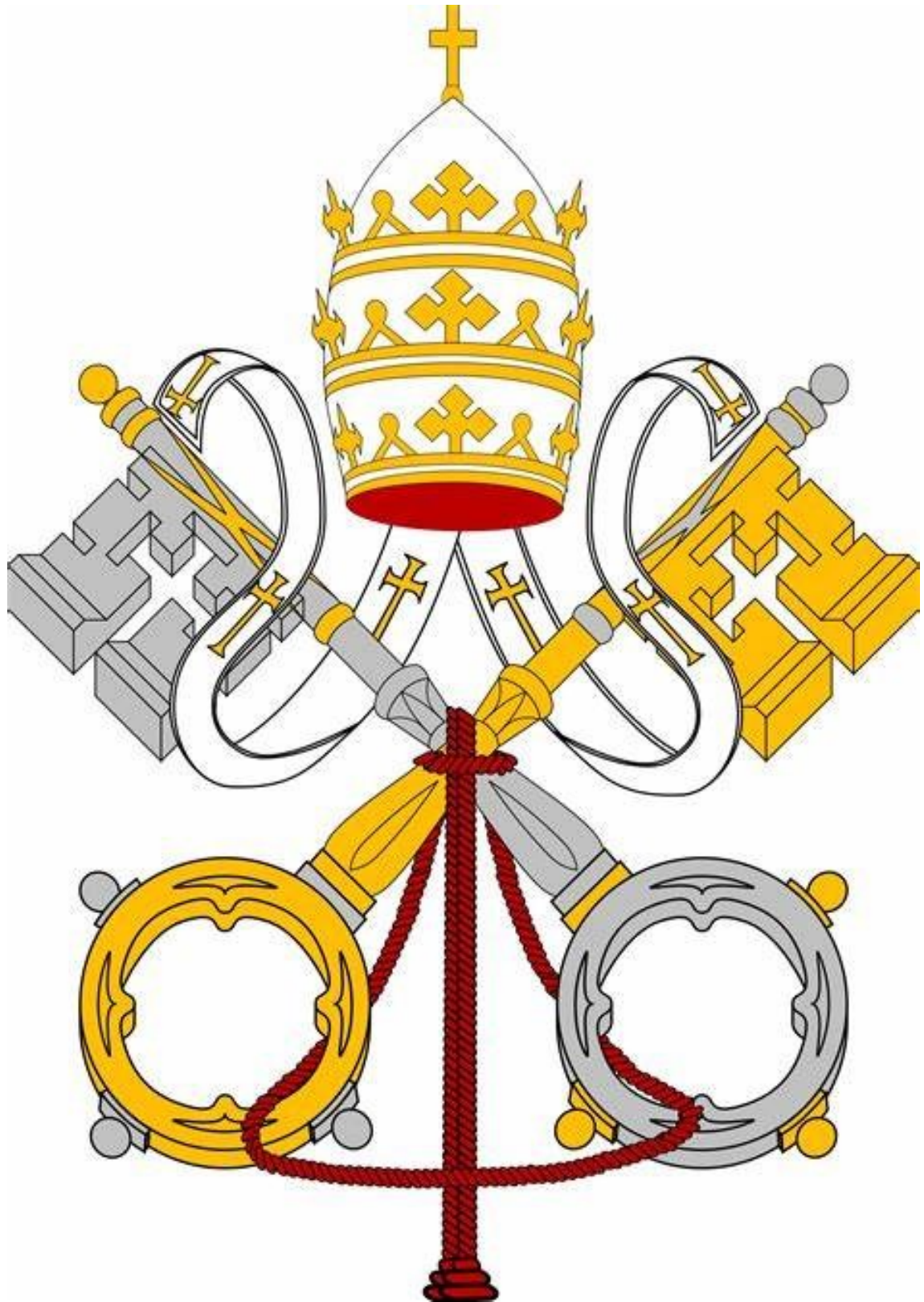


THE VATICAN CITY



What is Vatican City ?



Vatican City, nestled within Rome's historic centre, is the world's smallest sovereign state, governed by the Holy See, and serves as an ecclesiastical or sacerdotal-monarchical state led by the Pope.

The history of Vatican City's independence dates back to the Lateran Treaty when it became a separate entity from Italy. Today, it thrives on various sources of income, with tourism being one of the most vital contributors to its economy. The Vatican Museums alone attracted 4.3 million people in 2007. The Vatican is also home to St. Peter's Basilica, an architectural masterpiece and a symbol of faith. For those seeking a deeper connection to their faith or a chance to immerse themselves in art and history, a visit to Vatican City is an unforgettable experience.



Where Does Vatican City Get its Name From?

The Lateran Treaty, signed on February 11, 1929, established the modern city-state of Vatican City, which was named after Vatican Hill, the state's geopolitical setting. The name "Vatican" comes from an Etruscan settlement called Vatica or Vaticum, which was located in the broad area known to the Romans as Ager Vaticanus, or "Vatican territory".

Geography

The Vatican City is located near the Tiber's right bank, on a small slope that was once part of the ancient Vatican Hill, on which some villas were built prior to Christ's birth. The state's territory, which covers 44 hectares, is partially besieged by the walls and continues up to a strip of travertine on St. Peter's Square that connects the external ends of the colonnade to the ground, marking the state border at the edge of the square, which is usually open to the public.

Population

There are 825 people of the state, although only 246 (including 104 Swiss Guards members) dwell within the walls. Approximately half of the citizens live outside of the country, primarily for reasons of service. Vatican citizenship is not based on birth or blood but granted only to those who reside and work for the Vatican office. Cardinals who live in Vatican City or Rome, as well as diplomats of the Holy See, are also considered citizens. Citizenship is lost when the term of office comes to an end. Children cannot inherit it from their parents. The Vatican allows keeping dual citizenship.



Religion

Its entire population comprises of Christians. Catholicism is the official religion of the Vatican City. The Vatican City is the center of the Roman Catholic Church and the seat of the Pope. The pope is not only the Bishop of Rome, and head of the Roman Catholic Church, but also head of the Vatican City State. Catholics believe that the Pope is the successor to Saint Peter, who is believed to have been appointed by Jesus as the first head of his church.



Culture

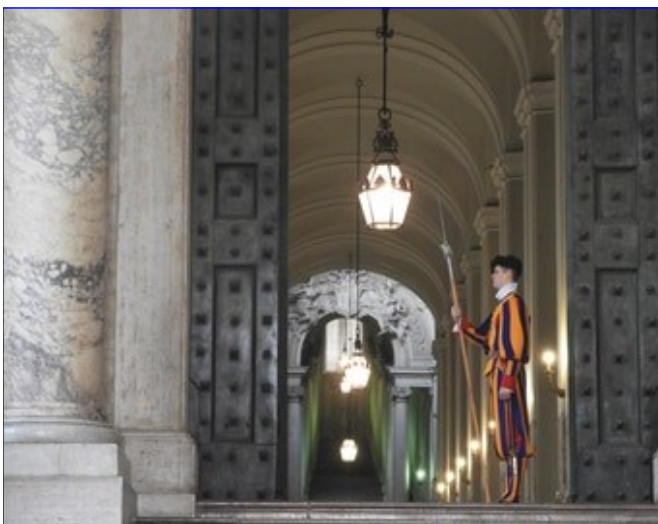
Home to St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the world and the Vatican Museums that holds some of the most famous art in the world, it is of no doubt that the Vatican City is a place of great cultural significance. The Vatican Library holds a collection of great historic, scientific and cultural value. In 1984, the Vatican was added to the list of UNESCO

World Heritage Sites. It is the only country to have made it to the list. The Vatican is also considered to be the de facto custodian of the Latin language. By virtue of being a theocracy, religion is an integral part of the country.



Language

Italian is the official language of Vatican City; it is the language used in official documents and for administrative and diplomatic affairs. Earlier, during the Roman Empire and the era of Papal States, Latin was the main language spoken in the area of the present Vatican City. While Italian is the lingua franca, the Holy See uses Latin as its official language. French is also sometimes used as a diplomatic language. In the Swiss Guard, Swiss German is used for giving commands, but the individual guards take their oath of loyalty in their own languages.



Early History

1 AD - 5 AD

Until the 1st century AD, the toponym Ager Vaticanus was used. After that, another toponym, Vaticanus, appeared, signifying a considerably smaller area: the Vatican hill, today's St. Peter's Square, and probably today's Via Della Conciliazione. In 326, the Constantinian basilica was built over what was thought to be Saint Peter's tomb. As a result of the basilica's activity, the surrounding area became more inhabited. During the papacy of Pope Symmachus in the 5th century, a palace was built onsite.



Papal States

756 - 1870

Popes progressively gained a secular role as administrators of Rome's vicinity. They ruled the Papal States, a series of territories in the Italian Peninsula, from 756 until 1870. The popes did not live at the Vatican for most of their reign. For nearly a thousand years, they lived in the Lateran Palace on the opposite side of Rome. They lived in Avignon, France, from 1309 to 1377. They decided to live at the Vatican when they returned to Rome. In 1583, the Popes moved to the Quirinal Palace until the capture of Italy in 1870, when they returned to the Vatican.



Roman Question and the Lateran Treaty

1870 - 1929

After a perfunctory resistance by the papal soldiers, the Pope's holdings were placed in jeopardy in 1870 when Rome was captured by Piedmont-led forces who had united the rest of Italy. The "Roman Question" related to the Pope's status between 1861 and 1929. The Lateran Treaty between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy was signed on February 11, 1929, by Prime Minister and Head of Government Benito Mussolini and Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri. The treaty established the separate state of Vatican City and confirmed the special status of Catholic Christianity in Italy, which took effect on June 7, 1929.



World War II

1939 - 1945

Under the leadership of Pope Pius XII, the Holy See, which administered Vatican City, followed a policy of neutrality during World War II. Despite the fact that German troops held Rome following the Armistice of Cassibile in September 1943 and the Allies from

1944, they both treated Vatican City as neutral territory. Unless expressly agreed upon, the US military exempted Catholic pilots and crews from air raids on Rome and other Church holdings. With the exception of Rome and, possibly, the Vatican, no Catholic US pilot or aircrew denied a mission within German-controlled Italy.

Post-war History

Post-1945

During the war, Pius XII refrained from appointing cardinals. There were numerous significant openings by the end of World War II, including Cardinal Secretary of State, Camerlengo, Chancellor, and Prefect for the Congregation for the Religious. Pius XII appointed 32 cardinals in early 1946, after announcing his intentions in his Christmas letter the year before. Italian environmental groups and politicians condemned the construction of a new guest house near St Peter's Basilica in 1995. The plans strained relations between the Vatican and the Italian government for a while.



Governance

What is the Holy See?

The Holy See is the name given to the Roman Catholic Church's government, which is led by the pope, who is also the bishop of Rome. As a result, the Holy See's jurisdiction extends to all Catholics worldwide. It has been based in Vatican City since 1929 when it was founded as an autonomous state to allow the pope to exercise its universal authority. Although the Holy See and Vatican City, the independent territory over which the Holy See has sovereign authority, are intimately linked, the two entities are separate and distinct.

Government of Vatican City

The Supreme Pontiff and, in his name, the Pontifical Commission for the Vatican City State, which also perpetuates the basic norms, issue the clauses. Both are issued in a special addendum to the Holy See's Official Bulletin, Acta Apostolicae Sedis. The Cardinal President of the Pontifical Commission for the Vatican City State, who bears the title of 'President of the Governorate' in this position, has executive authority. The Governorate's organization is based on the President's Directorates and Central Offices. The Pontifical Commission and the President of the Governorate might enlist the help of the General Councillor and the State Councillors in creating legislation and other matters of key significance.

Economy of Vatican City

The Vatican City State economy is supported by the sale of stamps, coins, souvenirs, entrance fee to the Vatican Museums and publications sales. Other industries in Vatican include printing, the production of mosaics, and staff uniform manufacturing. There is a pharmacy in Vatican.

The Institute for Works of Religion or Vatican Bank, is a financial agency in the Vatican. It has multilingual ATMs and is the only one in the world to offer instructions in Latin.

Flag

Yes, Vatican City has its own flag. The papal or Vatican City flag is a two-part yellow (towards the shaft) and white cloth with the decussate keys loaded in the middle and the Triregno atop; the shaft is topped with a spear ornamented with a cockade in the same colours as the flag and trimmed with gold. In ancient times, the Papal State's flag was yellow and crimson, the Senate's and Roman people's customary colours.



Vatican City Facts

- Vatican is a country within a city. It has a 2-mile border within the city of Rome.
- It is the smallest country in the world.
- The Vatican prints its own stamps and issues its own passports and license plates.
- Vatican Museums, housed in the Vatican City, is the fifth largest museum in the world.
- It took over 120 years to complete the St. Peter's Basilica.
- The Pope has absolute executive, legislative, and judicial powers within the city.
- It is one of the only two countries in the world that has no law for divorce, the other being the Philippines.
- Vatican City is the only country in the world that is also a UNESCO Heritage site.