

## Mission Atlas Project

### Snapshot

### The Holy See

**Country Name:** The Holy See (Vatican City)

**Country Founded in:** 1929

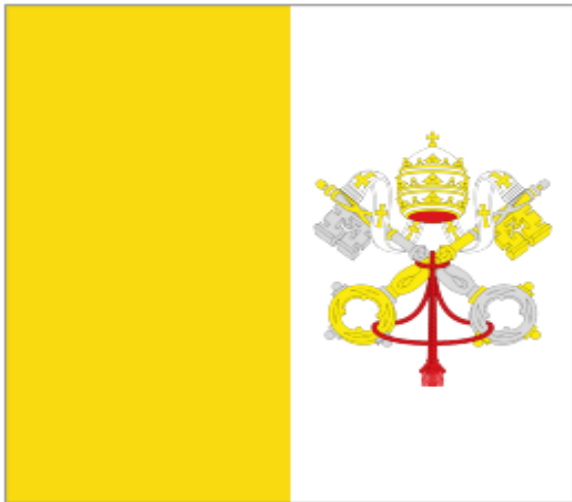
**Population:** 932 (July 2006 est.)

**Government Type:** Ecclesiastical (an independent state ruled by the Bishop of Rome, the Pope)

**Geography/location in the world:** Southern Europe; an enclave of Rome, Italy

**Number of people groups:** Unknown

**Picture of flag:**



### Religion Snapshot

**Major Religion (%):** Roman Catholicism (100%)

**All religions (%):** No others

**Government interaction with religion:** Ecclesiastical government

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/vt.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761551674/Vatican\\_City.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761551674/Vatican_City.html)

## Mission Atlas Project

### Western Europe

### The Holy See

#### Basic Facts

**Note:** It is important to distinguish between the Holy See and Vatican City.

**The Holy See:** “the composite of the authority, jurisdiction, and sovereignty vested in the Pope and his advisers to direct the worldwide Roman Catholic Church. As the central government of the Roman Catholic Church, the Holy See has a legal personality that allows it to enter into treaties as the juridical equal of a state and to send and receive diplomatic representatives.”

(<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3819.htm>)

**Vatican City:** “a sovereign city-state...governed by the Bishop of Rome (the Pope); the sovereign territory of the Holy See...the governmental capital of the Catholic Church.”

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holy\\_See](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holy_See))

In this report, I used “Holy See” when referring to political or religious issues and “Vatican City” when referring to more tangible things, such as demographics, economics, geography, etc. For example, the Holy See, not Vatican City, is a diplomatic entity. However, people are said to be citizens of Vatican City, not of the Holy See.

#### Demographics

The population of Vatican City holds steady at around 1,000. In July 2006 the population was estimated at 932 and almost all of these lived within the walls of the city. Official citizenship is granted *ius officii*, meaning that it is given to those who are appointed to work at the Vatican. Citizenship may also be granted to an employee’s spouse and children. Most residents of Vatican City are dual-citizens to their home countries so that, when Vatican citizenship is revoked when employment ends, they may simply return home. Residents of Vatican City include dignitaries, priests, nuns, and guards. An additional 3,000 lay workers are employed to keep the city running.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761551674/Vatican\\_City.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761551674/Vatican_City.html)

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3819.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican\\_city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_city)

#### Language

Latin is the official language of the Holy See but Italian is the language of Vatican City as it is used for most conversations, publications and broadcasts. German is spoken among the Swiss Guard.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican\\_city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_city)

## Society/Culture

It is difficult to characterize the culture of Vatican City. Its citizens are mostly church officials or dignitaries and are primarily male, although there are two orders of nuns living within the Vatican's walls. They come from countries all over the world.

While day to day life in almost every culture in the world revolves around work, family, and other daily tasks, daily life inside Vatican City revolves around tourism and pilgrimages. Special Masses, led by the Pope, occur weekly and on religious holidays. Tourists and pilgrims are expected to behave respectfully. A strict dress code is enforced within the walls of the City. Sleeveless shirts, shorts/skirts that come above the knee, and hats inside Saint Peter's Basilica are some of the restricted items. Every person entering the Basilica must go through a dress code check point.

The state of Vatican City has the highest per capita crime rate of any country in the world because of its small population but huge tourist industry. The crime rate within the walls of the city is 20 times higher than that of Italy. Crimes committed in Vatican City are typically nonviolent. Hundreds of tourists are pick-pocketed each year by other tourists. Since the perpetrators are also visitors of the Vatican they are rarely caught. Some 90% of crimes committed in Vatican City are never solved. Violent crimes do happen, although not often. In 1998 a member of the Swiss Guard shot and killed his commander and his commander's wife before turning the gun on himself.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican\\_city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_city)  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2639777.stm>

## Government

The Holy See rules over Vatican City. The Pope is the Head of State. He also has ultimate executive, legislative, and judicial authority so he is also the Head of Government. The Pope is elected to his position by a council of Cardinals but is effectively a monarch; he has absolute authority over the administration of Vatican City and the Holy See. Therefore, the government of Vatican City and the Holy See could be called ecclesiastical.

The Pope has a cabinet, called the Roman Curia, consisting of the Secretary of State, nine Congregations, three Tribunals, 11 Pontifical Councils, and many other offices that oversee church affairs at the highest level. The Roman Curia rules the Holy See under the umbrella of the Pope's authority. The Secretary of State provides leadership to Curial groups, including the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (oversees church doctrine) and the Congregation for the Evangelization of People (oversees missionary activities).

There are three tribunals governing judicial matters—the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Roman Rota, and the Apostolic Signatura. These tribunals deal with ecclesiastical matters and matters that have been appealed to the Church's highest authority including marriage annulments. The Apostolic Penitentiary also hears cases regarding matters of conscience, absolutions, and indulgences.

The Pontifical Commission for the State of Vatican City oversees the city's administration. Their power is delegated power, however, and they ultimately answer to the Pope. The Swiss Guard, a voluntary military force, maintains security in Vatican City although Saint Peter's Square is also under the jurisdiction of the Italian police force. Vatican City has its own post office, supermarket, bank (ATM

machines within Vatican City are the only machines in the world that operate in Latin), train station, electrical plant, and publishing company. The city also issues its own coins and stamps.

The Pope remains in office from the time of his election until he dies. At that point the College of Cardinals convenes to appoint the next pontiff. The appointment process is shrouded in secrecy; no one knows much about what goes on behind the closed doors of the conclave. We do know that it is customary for the nominations to be limited to the Cardinals who are present and that the Cardinal receiving 2/3 plus one of the votes is elected.

The Holy See is an official diplomatic entity, maintaining diplomatic relations with 174 countries. It is also a member of the European Union and the Order of Malta and in 2004 moved from permanent observer status in the United Nations to full membership with all rights except voting.

Vatican City is administered by the Governor of Vatican City, also called the President of Vatican City. His duties are similar to a mayor's.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holy\\_See](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holy_See)  
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<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3819.htm>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican\\_city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_city)  
*WorldMark Encyclopedia of Nations*

## **Economy**

The economy of the Holy See is quite unique. It is a noncommercial economy so its revenues come from a variety of places. Roman Catholic dioceses around the world donate a portion of their offerings to the Holy See. This practice is known as Peter's Pence. The Holy See also has investments that return large amounts of interest and its merchant bank also makes a profit. Vatican City also sells stamps and makes large amounts of money from its tourist business (souvenirs and entrance fees into museums). Finally, the products from the Vatican's extensive publishing operations are sold all over the world. The Holy See's revenues in 2005 were almost \$250 million.

Vatican City issues its own coins. Before January 1, 2002 Vatican City produced its own Vatican lira, comparable with Italian Lira. Euro coins and bills were introduced on January 1, 2002 and are now highly sought by collectors because of their rarity.

The finances of the Holy See and the budgets of different departments are coordinated by the Prefecture for Economic Affairs. Ultimate administrative authority over all of the Holy See's financial matters rests in the hands of a committee of 15 cardinals. This committee is chaired by the Secretary of State.

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/vt.html>  
[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761551674/Vatican\\_City.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761551674/Vatican_City.html)  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3819.htm>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican\\_city](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_city)

## **Literacy**

The literacy rate of Vatican City is 100%. This is not surprising given the fact that Vatican City's population is comprised of high church officials, clergymen, and dignitaries.

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/vt.html>

## **Land/Geography**

Vatican City is located in Italy, more specifically in Rome. It is surrounded by Rome on all sides and is the smallest country in the world, comprised of only 110 acres. Vatican City is in northwestern Rome, just west of the Tiber River.

Since it is located in Rome, Vatican City naturally shares Rome's climate. Winters are typically mild and sunny and summers can be very hot. Extreme temperatures, however, are tempered by breezes blowing in from the Mediterranean Sea.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761551674/Vatican\\_City.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761551674/Vatican_City.html)

## History

Vatican City has not always been as noble a location as it is now. A portion of Vatican Hill and the surrounding valley served as a burial ground in ancient Roman times; the other portion was used as a circus where chariot races and other competitions were held. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Roman Emperor Constantine built a basilica on the hill over what was believed to be the burial site of Saint Peter, regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as the first pope.

In 1309, French authorities convinced the papacy to move from Rome to Avignon, France; it remained there until 1377. This was a dark period for the Roman Catholic Church. The papacy became a puppet of the French government and corruption crept in. In 1377, the papal court moved back to Rome and the pope took up official residence in the Vatican Palace (this residence had been used previously by church officials who were in Rome on church business). The government of the Papal States, territory in Italy granted to the church, was also housed there. They began expanding Saint Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Palace and did extensive work on the grounds and surrounding buildings. However, despite the improvements, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the papal court moved to the Quirinal Palace, not located in the Vatican area.

When Italy was unified in 1870 the new Italian government seized control of the Papal States. The government offered the papacy financial compensation for the loss of their land but, for 50 years after the unification of the Italian peninsula, the popes refused to recognize the new government. They remained inside the Vatican, living in a self-imposed prison. This issue was finally resolved by the Lateran Treaty of 1929. In the treaty, the Italian government agreed to recognize Vatican City as an independent, papal state and to compensate the Holy See for its earlier loss of territory if the Holy See would recognize the Italian government. All popes since that time have lived in Vatican City.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761551674/Vatican\\_City.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761551674/Vatican_City.html)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon#Avignon\\_and\\_its\\_Popes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon#Avignon_and_its_Popes)

## Christian History

The Christian history of Vatican City and the Holy See is essentially the same as its history. As the center of the Roman Catholic Church, Vatican's City's history has always been wrapped up in the history of the Catholic Church.

Today the Roman Catholic Church is not only the world's largest Christian Church but is also the largest organized body of any religion in the world. The 2004 *Statistical Yearbook of the Church* reported 1,098,366,000 members worldwide. That's 1 in 6 of the world's population.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church)

## Religions

## **Non-Christian**

No known groups

## **Christian cults and sects**

No known groups

## **Catholic/Orthodox Churches**

Vatican City is the hub of the Roman Catholic Church, the world's largest Christian Church, and thus the "capital city" of the Holy See, the seat of jurisdiction of the pope. Hence Roman Catholicism is not just *the* religion of the state of Vatican City; it is also the state's primary business.

## **Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostal**

No known groups

*WorldMark Encyclopedia of the Nations*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church)

## **People Groups**

It is difficult to pinpoint specific people groups in Vatican City. Peoplegroups.org does not have a listing for Vatican City. Joshuaproject.org lists "Italian/other" as the only people group. We know that there are Italians living there as well as Germans, given that the current Pope is German. There is also a small Swiss population because of the Swiss Guards. The rest of the population, however, is in constant turnover. Visiting scholars, clergymen, and dignitaries are always flowing in and out of the walls of the Vatican.

## **Missiological Implications**

It is highly unlikely that any missionary units from any organization would be sent to Vatican City. If they were they would probably be focusing on tourist ministry, targeting the millions of tourists that file through the Vatican each year. Prayer for all Catholics, especially those who are tending toward biblical Christianity.

## **Links**

<http://www.vatican.va/> (note the independent Web domain "va")

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholic\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church)

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761551674/Vatican\\_City.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761551674/Vatican_City.html)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon#Avignon\\_and\\_its\\_Popes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avignon#Avignon_and_its_Popes)

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Holy\\_See](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holy_See)

[http://bav.vatican.va/en/v\\_home\\_bav/home\\_bav.shtml](http://bav.vatican.va/en/v_home_bav/home_bav.shtml)