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Vatican Museums I

Lead: The smallest independent nation-state in the world was created in 1929. The 110 acres of Vatican City house the spiritual and administrative headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: With a steady population of about 1,000 residents - clergy, lay people, 100 Swiss Guards and their families - Vatican City is the official residence of the pope and is the governing and religious heart of Roman Catholicism. Its unique status

as an independent state resulted from the Lateran Treaty of 1929 in which the papacy gave up its ancient claims to vast areas of central Italy, the so-called Papal States, in exchange for a section of Rome that would be completely sovereign territory -- Vatican City.

The term "Vatican" is derived from an ancient Latin term -- predating Christianity -- which was the name of the marshy areas of the West or right bank of the Tiber River. Vatican Hill is located in northwestern Rome overlooking the river and is separated from the rest of the city by high stone walls built during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Tradition has it that St.

Peter, the first Bishop of Rome, was executed on Vatican Hill by the Emperor Nero and buried nearby. Long a sacred site of Christendom, the first Basilica – another Latin term which was the name given to early Christian houses of worship - was built on the site during the fourth century by the Emperor Constantine. The present St. Peter's was constructed during the sixteenth century with a dome designed by Michelangelo. Popes have resided there since 1377 – when the headquarters of the Church returned from Avignon in the South of France after the so-called Babylonian Captivity.

Over the centuries the papal

residence was expanded and other administrative structures were added around St. Peter's. Today this collection of buildings, with over 1400 rooms, is known as the Vatican Palace. It houses museums and galleries, a vast library, and an incredible collection of archives. Next Time: Treasures beyond imagination.

Research assistance by Ann Johnson and celebrating 15 years of the broadcast of A Moment in Time, at the University of Richmond this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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