

1776: vatican city, papal states essay sample



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Vatican City, though relatively small, is swiftly growing and incessantly changing. Located inside the city of Rome within Italy, the Vatican, often referred to as the Holy See, is the world's smallest state. (Holy See (Vatican City)) Vatican City is not only the world's smallest independent state, however the workings of its administration and economic affairs are exceptional, similar to its non-commercially based economic construction, which does not conform to any model. Its exceptionally inimitable physical features continue to maintain an immense impact towards the country's people and its great mixtures of customs and mores. (Vatican: The Holy See) Vatican City is the last remnant of the Papal States, which has been shaped by its long history, a history shaped by numerous forces, forces that continue to shape the way of life, and religion in the small state of The Vatican.

Established in 1929, The Vatican is landlocked within the walls of Southern Europe, and is an enclave of Rome and is the last remnant of the Papal States; a group of territories in central Italy attained over the centuries by the Catholic Church and governed by the pope. (Vatican: The Holy See)

It rests on a small hill in northwestern Rome on the west bank of the Tiber River. The little state is shaped roughly like a triangle and is enclosed by a high stone wall. (Scott) Three gates give entry. It is surrounded by medieval beauty and Renaissance walls that divide it from the city beyond. Within its walls is a vast complex of courtyards, gardens, and magnificent buildings, the largest and most striking of which is the vast arched Saint Peters Basilica the leading church of Roman Catholicism. (Scott) Thanks to the temperate; mild, rainy winter weathers about half of the state's area is covered by the healthy growing and very attractive Vatican gardens. (Holy See (Vatican

City)) The area's boundaries follow a city wall that was originally constructed to protect the Pope. Beyond its territorial boundary however, the Lateran Treaty of 1929 grants the Holy See extraterritorial authority over 23 sites in Rome and five outside of Rome, including the Pope's summer residence, the Pontifical Palace at Castel Gandolfo. (Holy See (Vatican City)) Under the treaty, the Catholic Church relinquished all claims to the Papal States in return for financial compensation and dominion over the Holy See within the state of Vatican City. (Scott)

Before 1860 the Papal States, lead by the Pope, governed the majority of Central Italy. The papacy has a very long and complex history, dating back to medieval times. Over the centuries, succeeding popes came to rule in Papal States across Europe, particularly in France as well as taking direct power of much of Italy in a worldly as well as spiritual capacity for 1000 years.

Mercenaries and international armies were hired to look after and defend their lands. By 1860, however, most of the Papal States had been absorbed into the Kingdom of Italy with the city of Rome last to capitulate in 1870.

(Marcus) Subsequent to Rome becoming part of the Italian kingdom, in the next ten years, position of the Pope and Catholic Church became an irregularity. Even though legitimately they considered themselves captive, the Pope and his obligations were largely recognized and they were composed in the Vatican grounds. It was the Lateran treaty of 1929, mentioned earlier, that renowned the Vatican State.

The treaty was agreed upon between Benito Mussolini, King Victor Emmanuel III and Pope Pius XI. (Marcus) All parties approved of the fact that it was not to be associated, or thought of, as a last vestige of the Papal

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States. Approximately about a little more than 800 citizens of Vatican City either reside within the Vatican's walls or serve in the Holy See's diplomatic corps in embassies called "nunciatures"; a papal ambassador is a "nuncio" around the world. (Marcus) The Vatican electorate consists roughly of two groups: clergy functioning as representatives of the Vatican as a state or of the Catholic Church; and the Swiss Guard. A good number of the 3,000 lay workers who consist of the greater part of the Vatican work force live outside the Vatican and are citizens of Italy, whereas a few are citizens of other nations. (Behnke 15) As an end result, virtually one hundred percent of the City's definite citizens are Catholic. Catholicism is the state religion and all the places of worship inside Vatican City are Catholic.

There is a strong conviction of heaven and hell and in equivalent rewards or punishments for one's actions on earth and a belief in a supreme triune God, and various saints are honored. The final judgment and resurrection of the dead are tenets of the faith. Religious Practitioners such as the Catholic clergy are the major religious practitioners and can only administer the seven sacraments, depending solely on their rank. Bishops have the ability to ordain other priests. Rituals are also practiced, Vatican City is a treasure trove of extraordinary buildings and shrines. Saint Peter's is the site of Peter's tomb and is built over the original basilica. (Behnke 47) Saint Peter's Square is known around the world, and the pope often addresses the world from the square. It is also the site of countless of his public masses. The religious calendar of the Catholic Church is as well followed, along with the many rituals suitable to that calendar. The belief of the Catholic Church in a life after death, the existence of Purgatory, and the effectiveness of prayers

for the dead are also important and are certainly practiced. (Vatican City (Holy See))

The Vatican is surely the home of the Catholic Church. The Church power that became known as the Rome of the emperors declined and gave movement to a profusion of artistic expression and shaped the destiny of the city for a thousand years. As capital of the Catholic Church, this tiny walled city-state is a place where some people go to find a work of art;

Michelangelo's frescoes, rare ancient Roman marbles, or Bernini's statues.

(Fodor 76) St. Peter was martyred and buried here, and it became the residence of the popes who succeeded him. The papal palaces, next to the great basilica of St. Peter's are home to the Sistine Chapel and the eclectic collections of the Vatican Museums, as well as being the residence of the pope. (Eyewitness Travel, Italy 415) The Vatican museums are renowned for awe-inspiring rooms decorated by Raphael, sculptures such as the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoon, paintings by Giotto, frescoes by Raphael, and the celebrated ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. (Fodor 76) The Vatican continues to draw millions of people and art lovers to witness the extravagant beauty of St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museums, and the Sistine Chapel.

The Vatican is recognized under international law and enters into certain international agreements, but, strictly speaking, it is not a civil state operating under civil laws, but an absolute monarchy in control of the Roman Catholic Church, ruling according to the Apostolic Constitution of 1967.

(Behnke 47) It is as the Holy See rather than the State of the Vatican that the country sends and receives diplomatic representatives to and from around the world. The government leader, normally a cardinal or archbishop whose

engagement and influence is presented by the Pope, is the secretary of state. He supervises over the Pontifical Commission, or cabinet. (Vatican City (Holy See)) The legal system governing church matters is founded in canon, or ecclesiastical, law but judicial matters outside the Church are dealt with by the Italian judiciary in Rome. (Vatican City (Holy See)) Political parties do not exist within the state, but all cardinals under the age of 80 are capable of voting and taking part in electoral issues within the Church.

Internally, the Swiss Guard has been responsible for the personal safety of the Pope since 1506, but in reality, its function is ceremonial and policing of the state is left to the Civil Guard. (Steves 488) There is no military arm, and Italy takes accountability for defense and protection. There are no taxes, no restrictions on the import or export of funds, and no customs or excise duties payable in the Vatican City. (Vatican City (Holy See)) Employees of the Vatican pay no income tax and no customs duty on gasoline or goods that they buy in the Vatican. Non-Italians enjoy allowances on their monthly salaries.

For centuries the Vatican was the unchallenged centre of the Western world. Its symbolic significance and its enduring international role, as both a religious and a diplomatic force, have put this tiny city-state on the map. (Insight Guide, Italy153) It has undergone significant barriers and has been exceptionally inclined by its history and physical geography. The Vatican is composed of an assortment of distinct regions and is rich in history and priceless cultural treasures and its unique geographical location makes for its effortless inclusion in the itinerary of any visitor to Rome.

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