

TICKETS TO SEE THE HOLY FATHER

The Holy Father holds a General Audience every Wednesday in Vatican City at 10:30. Public liturgies celebrated by the Holy Father include Canonization and Beatification Masses, as well as Masses for Solemn Liturgies, such as Christmas, New Year's Day (Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God), Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday.

For participation in the Holy Father's Wednesday General Papal Audiences, "biglietti", or ticket invitations, are issued by the Vatican the morning prior to the Audience and can be picked up at the Visitors' Office on Via dell'Umiltà, 30, on Tuesday afternoons prior to the Audience, from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday mornings at 8:30. The Visitors' Office does not deliver tickets and are not open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Ticket invitations for the Papal Masses, if held on a Sunday, are usually available by the Thursday or Friday prior to the Mass. When you pick up your tickets they will give you a brief introduction to the Papal event and answer any questions you may have, including location, time, length and nature.

To get tickets for the Holy Father's events please have your request arrive at the Visitors' Office at least two weeks in advance for proper processing. In your requests to the Vatican for Pilgrims, indicate any special service to the Church. Groups are encouraged to give the name of their parish, school, or organization, and group leader's name, and they will request the group be publicly announced at the Audience.

Choirs who wish to sing for the Holy Father for one-half minute are kindly requested to give advance notice of their request.

NEWLYWEDS: A special section at the Holy Father's Wednesday General Audiences is reserved for couples who have been married in the Catholic Church for two months or less. Practicing Catholics may send a letter to the Visitors' Office, written by their priest, indicating their names, the date of their marriage, and the name of the Catholic Church in which they were married, to be seated in this section. **To be admitted by the ushers, the newlyweds must bring with them a Catholic Sacramental marriage certificate.** They are also encouraged to wear their wedding attire for the audience.

They try to honor all requests. Ticket invitations are gratis, a gift of the Holy Father, and there is no charge for the Visitors' Office service.

On Sundays and Holy Days at noon, the Holy Father appears at the window of his study to lead pilgrims in a Marian Prayer and to impart his blessing. During the summer months, the Holy Father imparts this Sunday blessing in the courtyard of his summer residence, at Castle Gandolfo.

Tickets are not required to attend the Holy Father's Sunday Angelus (or Regina Caeli, during the Easter Season) Prayer and blessing. Those desiring to receive this blessing can simply be in St. Peter's Square by noon on Sunday.

Dress Code: Dress in good taste. Shoulders must be covered. Shorts are not permitted, and skirts should fall in length below the knee. A head covering is not necessary, however, in the summer sun it may be helpful.

To get a schedule for the Holy Father's events and to request tickets, please contact the Bishop's Office for US Visitors to the Vatican at: visitorsoffice@pnac.org

SCAVI TOUR

Given the unique location of the Vatican necropolis, a visit to these excavations is a privilege accorded to visitors by the Excavations Office and depends entirely on the space available and the preservation needs of the necropolis.

Due to the need to give careful attention to the conservation of this irreplaceable historical-archaeological site, wherein is preserved the original Grave of St. Peter, only about 250 visitors per day are permitted in the necropolis.

Groups are arranged by language and are composed of about 12 participants. Only those who are **15 years of age or older** are permitted to make the visit. **No exceptions whatsoever can be made.**

On account of the significant and repeated difficulties that the Excavations Office has had with third-party requests for tickets (i.e. through travel agents, etc.), the Office will ONLY make reservations DIRECTLY for those individuals who will actually be visiting the necropolis.

NO third-party applications will be processed.

As the dates which you have requested are approaching, a further response to your e-mail [than the above automated response] will be sent if you are placed into one of the groups. This message will contain the date and time of the visit to which you are assigned. It may take one to two months to receive this reservation e-mail. It will contain all further instructions necessary. **You must respond to this reservation message and submit your payment in order to secure your placement on the visit.** You will generally pay with a credit card via the Internet. Upon processing your payment, the Excavations Office will send you an electronic receipt.

If you do not receive a receipt within several days, please inform their Office, as they may not have received your payment.

Confirmations for visits will ONLY be sent to those who will actually be visiting the excavations.

Purses and small handbags are permitted in the excavations. **Large bag and backpacks** are not permitted in the excavations at all. St. Peter's Basilica offers a *free bag check service* located in the lower right façade of the Basilica. Large bags and backpacks must be deposited there **prior to coming to the Excavations Office.**

Photography, with or without flash, is **NOT** permitted in the excavations.

Visitors should **dress** in a way befitting a holy place.

Those who do not observe these norms will not be permitted to visit the necropolis.

Reservations are only accepted in writing (by e-mail: scavi@fsp.va, by fax: (011-39-06) 6987-3017, or directly in the Excavations Office).

With your request to visit the excavations, please provide the following information:

- The **exact number** of visitors
- **Their names** (*in case of groups, the composition and provenance of the group is also needed [e.g. university, parish, etc.]*)
- **Language** desired for the visit
- The **dates available** during which the Office can arrange the visit (the precise time of the visit will be determined by the Excavations Office).
- **Contact Information** (an e-mail address, fax number, or full postal address) so the Excavations may advise you about your visit.

When a visit is possible, the Office will send a proposed date and time. If the proposed date and time are acceptable, the visitors must so inform the Excavations Office, which will then definitively confirm the visit.

When a visit is not possible:

Given the limited number of groups possible, *not all requests can be answered positively.*

- On occasion, due to the vast number of requests received and the time needed to process them, it may **not be possible for the Office to even respond** to an application prior to one's arrival in Rome. In such cases, the Excavation Office regrets that a visit will **not** be possible.

Office Hours – The Excavations office is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Rome time), except Sundays and Holidays (3:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Eastern time).

The visitor must always confirm reservations in the way and during the time period given by the Excavations Office in positive responses to requests.

Visitors need to be at the Excavations Office (without large bags and backpacks) at least five minutes prior to the beginning of the tour.

The Excavations can be reached through the Holy Office Gate to the Vatican (through the colonnade to the left, on Via Paolo VI). The Swiss Guard will direct the visitors to the Office.