

REGULATIONS FOR SCHOLARS  
IN THE  
BIBLIOTECA APOSTOLICA VATICANA



VATICAN CITY  
2016-2017

# PREAMBLE

## I. Nature of the Vatican Library

The Vatican Library is the Library of the Pope. It was established, in accordance with the intention of Nicholas V, “*pro communi doctorum virorum commodo*” (Brief of April 30, 1451); its actual founder, Sixtus IV, also saw it as serving “*ad decorem militantis Ecclesiae, fidei catholicae augmentum, eruditorum quoque ac litterarum studiiis insistentium virorum commodum et honorem*” (Bull of June 15, 1475).

In the centuries following its foundation, the Vatican Library was made accessible to eminent scholars. It was eventually opened to all qualified scholars in 1883 under Leo XIII (Cf. letters *Saepenumero considerantes*, August 18, 1883, and *Augustum sanctissimumque munus*, October 1, 1888), who eased the admission process and at the same time also opened the Vatican Secret Archives to scholars.

The Library stands in close relation to the “governance and ministry exercised by the Holy See” (John Paul II, January 15, 2000). It is one of those institutions of ancient origin which, “though not properly a part of the Roman Curia, nonetheless provide useful and necessary services to the Supreme Pontiff, to the Curia and to the Universal Church, and which are associated in some way with the Apostolic See.” In accordance with this status, the Library is governed “by laws of its own, both in regard to its constitution and to its administration” (Apostolic Const. Pastor Bonus, June 28, 1988, art. 186 and 190).

The Vatican Library is the inalienable property of the Supreme Pontiff, and it is by his sovereign will that it is open to consultation. Therefore, it is not a public institution. It is a library specialized in the philological and historical disciplines; it also has historical holdings in the fields of theology, law and science. It is reserved for scientific research based on the study of manuscripts, printed books, coins and medals, prints, and other graphic and cartographic materials.

## II. Responsibilities of the Vatican Library

The primary task of the Vatican Library, as an institution of both conservation and research, is to keep and conserve as carefully as possible the cultural treasures which have been entrusted to it. Further responsibilities include:

1. increasing its holdings of manuscripts, printed books and coins through acquisitions, exchanges and donations, in accordance with the materials already present in the collections and with the purpose of the institution;
2. studying and promoting knowledge of these materials through the work of the Library’s regular and extra staff, and by means of publications.
3. making available to qualified scholars from around the world, with all necessary caution, both the originals and reproductions of the various types of documents and objects preserved in the Library, and providing for these scholars all possible and appropriate scientific and technical assistance to their research, continually updating the instruments and aids which are helpful or necessary for their work.

From these responsibilities arises the commitment of the Library to create an environment which allows scholars to adequately study the material which is entrusted to them. The Library is entirely free to select scholars, prior to admission and thereafter, based on their observance of these Regulations for Scholars. It considers the ideal environment for study and research to be one which is characterized by strict silence and by respect for persons, as well as for the place which welcomes them.

The following Regulations are intended above all to assure scholars the working conditions appropriate to a place of study and research. Therefore, scholars are exhorted to read them carefully and to respects the norms scrupulously.

Consultation of material may be restricted due to a temporary unavailability of the requested documents (due to restoration, disinfestation cycle, exhibits, etc...), or because the requested document has not yet been inventoried, or due to poor condition of the document, or for other reasons at the discretion of the Prefect of the Library. All materials are to be consulted and studied *in situ* only, in the appropriate reading rooms.

# REGULATIONS FOR SCHOLARS

## I. Admission

Qualified scholars from around the world, particularly professors and researchers from universities and other institutions of higher education, and other learned persons known for their writings and scholarly publications, are admitted without distinction of race, religion, origin or culture. The admission's pre-conditions are the availability of space and adequate training, documented and attested by an accredited academic institution. According to a long-standing tradition, inquirers are requested to indicate the nature of their research project.

Customarily, university students are not granted admission. Exceptions may be made for graduate students preparing a doctoral thesis or studying for the degree, e.g. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), as well as for undergraduate students who have a specific need to consult manuscripts or other materials preserved only in the Vatican Library. Students must provide a guarantee letter indicating that their institution accepts liability for their actions, and the Library reserves the right to verify that they possess the competence and experience necessary to handle the precious materials with the required care.

Scholars (already holding a valid admission card), who intend to consult numismatic materials, must notify the Director of the Numismatic Department of their visit in advance.

Admitted scholars receive an admission card which allows them to access Vatican City through Porta Sant'Anna. The card is personal and may not be given to others. Loss or theft of a card must be immediately reported to the Admissions Office of the Library, together with a copy of the report submitted to the competent authorities. A replacement card may be issued, in case of loss, theft or damage of the original card, for a fee of **€20,00**.

By accepting the admission card and signing the form provided by the Admissions Office, the Scholar agrees to comply with these Regulations, a copy of which he receives with the card.

For admission to the Library, the following documents are required:

- 1.a letter of introduction (particularly for first-time applicants) or a document attesting the applicant's academic qualifications, of which the Library keeps the original or makes a copy;
- 2.a valid identification document (which includes the person's address), of which the Library keeps a copy;
- 3.at its own discretion, the Library may require a guarantee letter (for students it is always required).

## II. Obligations of the scholars towards the Library

Scholars admitted to the Library are required to:

- 1.observe these Regulations;
- 2.carry their card at all times within the Library;
- 3.treat all materials, particularly manuscripts and old printed books, with the utmost care and extreme delicacy, protecting these precious materials from any type of damage;
- 4.provide the Library with a copy of any publications relating to materials consulted or received by way of reproduction.

## III. General Library Regulations

### 1. General Behavioral Rules (sanctions are provided for in some instances)

Scholars admitted to the Library are required to observe strict silence not only in the reading rooms, but within the entire premises, conversing only in the Library's courtyard or in the coffee bar. It is forbidden to disturb in any way the study and work of other scholars, e.g., by talking out loud or by using any kind of noisy equipment.

Scholars must have a **decent and respectful clothing**, convenient to the dignity of an ancient institution of culture and study. We would like to remind you, in this regard, that the Library, being within the Holy See, is subject to a number of specific rules relating to the person's decency, out of respect for the place and to those who work there. Also, being open to scholars from every country, we must also respect each and every culture and religion, especially in cases where certain behaviors or dressing choices can be a sign of lack of sensitivity or lack of respect towards others.

Mobile phones must be turned off upon entering; it is absolutely forbidden to use any electronic means of communication within the Library.

All scholars are required to conduct themselves in a manner befitting the decorum of the Library. Inappropriate behavior by individuals or groups, which is not suited to the dignity of the institution, is forbidden.

**It is not permitted to take photographs, films, sound recordings, or any other type of reproduction.** It is absolutely forbidden to bring any kind of photographic or filming equipment, portable telephones with digital camera

features, recorders, dictaphones, digital scanners and other devices which would allow reproduction of the Library's materials, environment or structures.

It is strictly forbidden to bring and use scissors, knives, razor blades, razors, matches, adhesive paper, adhesive tape, glue, ink bottles, correction fluids, and generally, any kind of liquid, substance or other object which could damage the collections of the Library. Scholars are obliged to comply with the instructions of Library staff without discussion.

Readers are not permitted to consume **food or snacks inside the Library building**; **Smoking** (including smoking of electronic cigarettes) is permitted only in the courtyard.

Access to the manuscript depot and other stacks where books are stored is prohibited to the public. In addition, it is not allowed to enter any area where there are staff offices or to use equipment or materials belonging to Library staff, unless duly authorized. Finally, in order to access the Secret Archives from the Library or vice versa, the main entrance of each of the two Institutions must be used.

## 2. Access to the Library

**Upon arrival**, scholars admitted to use the Library must:

- *at the Reception Desk:*
  - a) present their card to the porter who will electronically record their arrival;
  - b) receive from the porter the electronic key number for their locker;
  - c) place in the locker all personal belongings and those which are not pertinent to studying.
- *in the Reading Room (Manuscripts, Printed Books or Periodicals):*
  - a) electronically register their arrival at the distribution desk;
  - b) enter their name in block capitals on the daily register, opposite their key number;
  - c) choose the place where they intend to sit;
  - d) return to the distribution desk and enter the number of the place they have chosen next to their name.

## 3. Leaving the Library

When leaving the Library (even if they intend to return later in the same day), scholars must:

- *in the Reading Room:*
  - return the manuscripts or printed books in use from the stacks and ask for the exit authorization from each of the Reading Rooms where they have requested materials; **or**, if they have no materials from the stacks to return, they may request the exit authorization from any of the Reading Rooms;
- *at the Reception Desk:*
  - a) show any books of their own which they are carrying with them;
  - b) remove their personal belongings from the locker;
  - c) electronically register their departure with the porter.

# IV. Regulations for the Reading Rooms

## 1. General Rules

Assistance is provided for scholars in the reading rooms. The Reading Rooms (Manuscripts, Printed Books and Periodicals) are equipped with surveillance cameras and tracking devices which will identify any irregular passage (e.g. into the stacks) by scholars, as well as volumes which are moved from one reading room to another or illegally removed from the Library. Each Reading Room has its own specific regulations.

Scholars are required to bring with them only such items that are strictly necessary to their research. When they register their arrival, they should notify the Reading Room staff of any materials not belonging to the Library.

Scholars are personally responsible for the safety of the material which is entrusted to them; they must examine the material upon receiving it and immediately advise the staff in the reading room of any existing damages. This is a preventative measure intended not only to safeguard the collections of the Library, but also to limit the reader's liability. If the reader does not notify the staff of any damages, it will be assumed that he has received the work in good condition. In case of damage or loss, he will be expected to bear the full cost of replacement and/or restoration. The Library reserves the right to determine the measures to be taken to ensure that it is reimbursed by scholars who are responsible for such damages.

The observance of silence in the Reading Rooms will be enforced as an absolute *conditio sine qua non*.

In all of the Reading Rooms, it is strictly forbidden to bring overcoats, umbrellas, purses, briefcases and file folders. Portable personal computers (without their case) are permitted, as well as the strictly necessary amount of paper, open folders, magnifying glasses, and measuring tapes (soft plastic or cloth).

In addition to the general prohibitions which have already been stated (e.g. food, beverages, cellular phones), the following are not permitted:

- **reserving and occupying a reading place for longer than necessary;**
- **improper use of the Library's furnishing, equipment and rooms;**
- **studying or consulting a manuscript or printed book in groups of two or more persons;**
- **consulting materials entrusted to another scholar or passing one's own materials to others;**
- **consulting materials with soiled hands;**
- **writing, even in pencil, using manuscripts, printed books, or any other Library documents as support;**
- **marking or underlining, even in pencil, manuscripts, printed books or other materials;**
- **tracing bindings, watermarks, or any other material.**

For the use of special reading equipment (Wood's lamp, watermark, microfilm or microfiche readers, CD-ROM, etc...) scholars must ask the Reading Room Staff. Use of these equipment are, of course, reserved for the consultation of microfilms, microfiches, CD-ROMs, etc. belonging to the Library.

## **2. Manuscript Reading Room**

Use of the Manuscript Reading Room is restricted to scholars who intend to study manuscripts, not for those consulting only printed books. A scholar may request to consult manuscripts from a terminal in the Reading Room, using their admission card.

Only erasable pencils may be used in the Reading Room. The use of fountain and ball-point pens, highlighters, markers, colors and any other type of writing instrument leaving indelible traces, is forbidden.

It is not permitted to remove a manuscript from the Reading Room or bring it from the Manuscript Reading Room into the adjoining "Inventory" room.

For materials kept in the Manuscript Stacks: scholars may request to see three manuscripts in the morning (requests to be made between 8:45am and 12noon) and two in the afternoon (requests to be made between 2pm and 4pm.). Materials kept in the Archival Section must be requested before 12noon. Requests for manuscripts should be appropriately timed. In particular, once the request for manuscripts has been made, the reader should not leave the Reading Room for longer than it might reasonably be expected for the manuscript to arrive from the stacks. Each scholar may have at his disposal no more than three manuscripts at a time; only after two manuscripts have been returned, the request for two more manuscripts may be made. Only one manuscript may be taken to the scholar's desk at a time; however, in case of special needs, such as direct text collation or comparison of scripts, one may ask permission to take more than one manuscript at a time to the desk.

The manuscript being read or studied must always stand on the lectern and the pages should be held open by inserting the rods provided into the base of the lectern. Hands and fingers must never rest on the manuscript to follow the lines while reading, however the card provided on the lectern may be used.

The manuscript's pages should be turned slowly and with extreme care to preserve them from further wear and should not be turned with a pencil in hand, nor should writing paper, notebooks, other manuscripts, printed books or other objects be placed on top of the manuscript.

If a scholar needs to leave his place at the table, it is suitable to close the manuscript. For conservation purposes, the Library reserves the right to provide for consultation one of the various types of reproductions of its materials which are available, rather than the original documents. The manuscripts belonging to the **Riserva** may be requested by filling out the appropriate form and providing a written justification.

Scholars may bring printed books from the open shelves of the Printed Books Reading Room and from the Inventory Room into the Manuscript Reading Room and use them at their desk. In the place of the printed book being used, one of the cardboard place markers (which are provided at each desk) must be inserted to indicate by whom the book is being used. Scholars who do not respect this rule, which is helpful to everyone, will have their cards temporarily suspended.

If a reader wishes to consult printed books from the stacks in the Manuscript Reading room, he must register electronically at the distribution desk of the Printed Books Reading Room and enter his name in block capitals in the daily register there.

## **3. Printed Books Reading Room**

For the consultation of printed books up to the XVII century included, only the use of erasable pencil is permitted and it is therefore forbidden the use of fountain and ball-point pens, highlighters, markers, colors and any other type of writing instrument leaving indelible traces.

In the Printed Books Reading Room, up to six (6) books may be taken directly from the open shelves and taken to the desk chosen by the reader. One of the markers provided showing the number of the desk being used by the person, should be inserted on the shelf where a book has been removed. Scholars who do not respect this rule, which is

helpful to everyone, will have their cards temporarily suspended. Scholars must not return books to their places on the open shelves, but should leave them on their own desks upon departure. Books from the open shelves may not be reserved for the following day.

Books from the stacks may be requested at the distribution desk by filling out the appropriate form. No more than five books per day may be requested, and all requests are to be made before 12noon.

Upon request, a maximum of five (5) books may be kept for the scholar until the Friday of the week following the date of the request (or, in certain cases, for a longer period).

A scholar may consult no more than three (3) printed books at a time. Incunabula, books which belong to the **Riserva** and other particularly precious items must be consulted at the desks nearest the distribution desk. Such materials, if they are kept in the Reading Room for the scholar, must be returned to the stacks every Friday.

It is strictly forbidden to bring books from the Printed Books Reading Room to the Periodicals Reading Room, and vice versa.

#### **4. Periodicals Reading Room**

In the Periodicals Reading Room, up to six (6) volumes may be taken directly from the open shelves and placed on the desk chosen by the scholar. One of the markers provided showing the number of the desk being used by the person, should be inserted on the shelf where a book has been removed. Scholars who do not respect this rule, which is helpful to everyone, will have their cards temporarily suspended. Scholars must not re-shelve the books, but should leave them on their desks. Books from the open shelves may not be reserved for the following day.

Books from the stacks may be requested at the distribution desk by completing the appropriate forms. A maximum of five (5) books may be requested per day, and all requests are to be made before 12noon.

Upon request, a maximum of five (5) books may be kept for the reader until the Friday of the week following the date of the request (or, in certain cases, for a longer period). Each reader may consult no more than three (3) volumes at a time.

### **V. Security Regulations**

Library staff is authorized to give instructions to the scholars, and the scholars are obliged to follow such instructions. The Library has installed surveillance devices and reserves the right to carry out security checks, including asking scholars to make available personal objects for inspection (e.g., purses, closed bags, briefcases, etc...) either upon entering or exiting the Library.

Scholars who, despite repeated warnings, continue to disrupt the orderly functioning of the Library, or do not comply with the instructions of its staff, may be asked to leave the Library. The Prefect of the Library may also decide to exclude them permanently.

The Prefecture of the Library is required to inform the competent authorities of any theft or other criminal act or behavior.

Members of the Library staff must make themselves available and recognizable at all times. They are required to intervene, spontaneously or upon the request of a scholar, in order to ensure that these Regulations for Scholars are observed, joining with the Library management in taking any preventative and punitive measures which may be deemed necessary.

### **VI. Sanctions**

Scholars who fail to follow the Library's regulations, and particularly those who repeatedly fail to meet their obligations to the Library as set out in these Regulations, may be excluded temporarily or permanently from the Library, without prejudice to any civil or criminal liability.

Particularly, those who are found to be guilty of theft, defacing, mutilating or damaging the materials entrusted to them in any way, not respecting furnishing or any other object which belongs to the Institution, will be permanently banned from the Library and referred to the judicial authorities. Permanent exclusion from the Library may also be imposed for:

- **those who write or mark in any way books or documents, even in pencil;**
- **those disrupting in any way the study and work of others;**
- **those smoking in the Library buildings;**
- **those using mobile phones where prohibited;**
- **those using devices for digital reproduction.**

It is imperative that in all above mentioned occurrences, the scholar is liable for reimbursement of the material damage.

In especially serious cases, the Library will inform other libraries of the scholar's exclusion and its related motivation.

All obligations deriving from the relationship between the scholar and the Library established at the time of his admission continue to be valid even after a scholar's card has been revoked.

## VII. Reproductions

All reproductions of Library materials must be made by the Library Photographic Laboratory. Therefore, it is strictly forbidden to:

- **use personal equipment such as cameras, digital scanners and similar means to copy or reproduce Library materials;**
- **make tracings of any materials of the Library.**

Photographic reproductions may be requested, and the Library reserves the right to grant them at its own discretion.

Orders of photographic reproductions from manuscripts, printed books and other materials, for personal study or for editorial or commercial purposes, as well as requests for permission to use materials belonging to the Vatican Library, may be placed by filling out the appropriate on-line form (<http://www.vaticanlibrary.va>), in accordance with the required procedures. For this purpose, the computers which are at the disposal of scholars in the Reading Rooms may also be used.

Photocopies will only be made from printed books published between 1601 and 2006, and only for the purpose of personal study.

## VIII. Copyright

Images of materials preserved in the Library may be published only with the written consent of the Library. Even after authorization to publish has been granted, the Library reserves the right to publish the same images, or to allow a third party to publish them.

The reader, who is always liable for the use of the reproductions that he receives, is obliged to respect the current international regulations regarding copyright and the property rights. In any case, the reproductions, whatever the medium and whatever the purpose for which they were obtained, may not be duplicated or passed on to a third party.

The reader must scrupulously observe all conditions stated on the request forms, according to the type of use for which the request is made. Specific regulations apply to the transcription and performance of hand-written musical scores preserved in the Library, even when the scores are only transcribed and not photographically reproduced. Consultation of musical manuscripts is therefore allowed for personal study only; any other use of these materials (publication, reproduction, execution, and the like), must be formally authorized by the Prefect. Upon receiving a musical manuscript (or one containing musical text), the reader is asked to sign a statement obliging him to respect these regulations.

## IX. Limitation of Liability

The Library is not responsible for personal objects or any items brought by scholars into the working area or to the lockers. It is forbidden to leave personal items with the Library porter or other staff, and to receive mail, telephone messages or calls, etc. at the Library.

The Library does not provide statements of presence in the Library.

## X. Opening Hours

The Library is open **Monday through Friday** from **September 16, 2016** to **July 14, 2017**, from **Monday to Friday**. The exact dates and days of closure are specified on the annual calendar available on line.

The **Reading Rooms** are open from **8:45am** to **5:10pm**.

The **Business Office** is open from **10am** to **12noon**; and Tuesday and Thursday from **3pm** to **5pm**.

The **Admissions Office** is open daily from **8:45am** to **12noon**; and Tuesday and Thursday from **3pm** to **4pm**.