

Obtaining tickets to papal events

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

For people who have a visit to Rome on their itinerary, it may come in handy knowing how to get tickets to a papal Mass and how to attend the pope's Wednesday general audience.

Tickets to these events are free, but mandatory, so here are some ways to track them down:

1. The [U.S. Bishops' Office for United States Visitors to the Vatican](#) offers efficient and friendly service for securing tickets to most papal events.

The tickets should be requested at least 10 days in advance of the Wednesday general audience or the Mass the visitor would like to attend.

Send ticket requests by e-mail to visitorsoffice@pnac.org or by fax to (39-06) 679-1448. The office telephone number is: (39-06) 6900-1821.

The office is located near the Trevi Fountain on Via dell'Umilta 30. Tickets for the Wednesday audiences are distributed at the office Tuesday afternoons from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. The office will advise visitors about the pickup date for tickets to papal Masses.

2. Write directly to the Vatican for tickets by using [this pdf form](#). Send the filled-out form by fax to (39-06) 6988-5863 or put it in an envelope for the Pontifical Household, Vatican City State 00120, Europe.

After the request is made, the tickets can be picked up the afternoon before the audience between 8 a.m. and about 6 p.m. or on the morning of the audience from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Bronze Doors under the colonnade in St. Peter's Square. [Click here to see where to find the Bronze Doors](#).

3. If you are already in Rome and haven't sent in a request, you may be able get a small number of tickets (max. 9) directly from the Swiss Guards [at the Bronze Doors](#) starting from three days before the Mass or general audience. Hours are from 8 a.m. to about 6 p.m.

Be warned that these tickets can run out and you will need a reservation if you need more than 10 tickets or you want to attend the very popular Christmas or Easter Mass.

No money-back guarantees: Unfortunately, having a ticket does not guarantee you get a seat or access to St. Peter's Basilica or the Paul VI hall when they become full to capacity. Events held in St. Peter's Square can accommodate about 80,000 people and you can stand in the outer edges of the square without a ticket.

Earlier the better: Because attendance has mushroomed since Pope Francis' election, getting there 1-3 hours in advance is advisable, especially when the audience moves into the smaller Paul VI hall in the winter months.

No tickets are required to go to the Sunday Angelus address in St. Peter's Square at noon.

Best place to be for a glimpse of the pope? Get situated anywhere near one of the large white wooden barricades if you want a chance to see the pope up close as he passes by in the popemobile.

If you bring your small children in the hopes of a papal kiss, be sure to have them wear hats and sunscreen to protect them from the harsh sunlight that beats down on the square.

Dress code: Visitors should remember that there is a strictly enforced dress code for entering St. Peter's Basilica — shoulders must be covered, even if with just a shawl, and shorts are not allowed. Women's pants, skirts or dress must reach the knees. The rules are relaxed for a general audience outdoors in St. Peter's Square.

For more info: on papal blessings, buying papal photos and visits to St. Peter's tomb, check out our [the CNS Pilgrim's Page](#); look here for more on [papal events, tips and Vatican tours](#); and here for [the official schedule of papal Masses for 2013](#).