



Did you know that the Vatican has an escape tunnel?

Did you know there is an 800-meter long corridor connecting Vatican City with the Castel Sant'Angelo which has served as an escape route for popes?

Vatican City has many incredible sites and treasures to encounter, both big and small, and there is so much more to discover beyond the obvious!



Overview of Passetto Di Borgo

Atop the old Vatican wall between St. Peter's Basilica and the Castel Sant'Angelo is the *Passetto di Borgo*, a passageway that is 800 meters long—that's over a mile! On the outside, this corridor looks like a typical city wall—but it actually holds a passageway that the pope can get through if he's ever in danger.

In 1494, under Charles VIII, France invaded Italy during the Italian War of 1494-1498. When Charles VIII's troops descended on Vatican City, Pope Alexander VI passed through the *Passetto* to avoid danger.

The latest papal escape through the *Passetto* was during the Sack of Rome in 1527. Pope Clement VII avoided 20,000 troops from the Holy Roman Empire under Charles V. Most of the Swiss Guard were killed defending the Pope during this invasion, but Clement VII survived, thanks to this secret tunnel.



Inside the Passetto Di Borgo

The *Passetto* deteriorated over time after the Sack of Rome and remained closed to the public. However, in honor of the Great Jubilee Year in 2000, the *Passetto* was renovated. Today, the *Passetto* is open for visitors during the tourist season in the summer.

The Vatican contains many fascinating hidden treasures and other sites that reflect our rich history. Many of these treasures were hidden during the Early Church when Christians were persecuted for their faith and were later discovered by talented and determined archaeologists. *The Fisherman's Tomb* tells the story of one fascinating excavation that led to the discovery of the relics of one of the most vital figures in Church history: St. Peter, our first pope. To discover the story of this fascinating uncovering, [check out John O'Neill's *The Fisherman's Tomb: The True Story of the Vatican's Secret Search*, sold here.](#)