

Pontiff Stresses Making Available Vatican Library

Vatican City [RNS] — The availability to scholars and researchers of the Vatican Library's "inestimable patrimony" of manuscripts and books was stressed by Pope Paul in an address marking the 525th anniversary of its foundation.

The Apostolic Vatican Library, one of five at the Vatican, was organized, according to tradition, in the year 1450 — a Holy Year — by Pope Nicholas V, who is considered the "first founder."

Today, the Vatican Library houses some 70,000 manuscripts,

more than 770,000 books, and 7,500 "incunabula" books produced from movable type before the year 1500.

Speaking to Cardinal Antonio Samore, Librarian and Archivist of the Holy Roman Church and members of the staff at a special

exhibition in the library, the Pope emphasized that its "inestimable patrimony" was collected to be "available to scholars."

"This availability for public use," he said, "and the great services rendered by the facility

constitute the raison d'etre of the library."

"The Vatican Library is open to scholars of every stripe," he went on, "and, in striving to remain up to date, will fulfill its traditional function of serving all" who wish to take advantage of its riches.

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