

Apostolic Vicariate

Subjects: Religion

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An apostolic vicariate is a form of territorial jurisdiction of the Catholic Church centered in missionary regions and countries where a diocese has not yet been established. It is essentially provisional, though it may last for a century or more. The hope is that the region will generate sufficient numbers of Catholics for the Church to create a diocese. In turn, the status of Apostolic vicariate is often a promotion for a former apostolic prefecture, while either may have started out as a mission *sui iuris*.

Keywords: territorial jurisdiction ; missionary ; diocese

1. Institution

An apostolic vicariate is led by a **vicar apostolic** who is usually a titular bishop. While such a territory can be classed as a particular church, according to canon 371.1 of the Latin Code of Canon Law, a vicar apostolic's jurisdiction is an exercise of the jurisdiction of the Pope — the territory thus comes directly under the pope as "universal bishop", and the pope exercises this authority through a "vicar". This is unlike the jurisdiction of a diocesan bishop, whose jurisdiction derives directly from his office.

Like any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, an apostolic vicariate may be administered by the bishop of a neighbouring diocese, or by a priest appointed transitionally as an apostolic administrator. As in a regular diocese, the vicar apostolic may appoint priests as vicars exercising limited jurisdiction over the apostolic vicariate. Normally, however, an apostolic vicariate is administered by a titular bishop of its own. When someone who does not qualify or has not been ordained as bishop is appointed *ad interim*, he may be styled **Pro-apostolic vicar**.

An apostolic vicariate is to be distinguished from an apostolic prefecture, a similar type of territory whose chief distinction from an apostolic vicariate is that its prefect is not a titular bishop, but a mere priest. The latter is not organised enough to be elevated to apostolic vicariate. The less developed instance is the mission *sui iuris*, which other than the ones mentioned before is not a particular church, although it shares some similarities to one; at its head, an *ecclesiastical superior* is named. The usual sequence of development is mission, apostolic prefecture, apostolic vicariate and finally diocese (or even archdiocese). See also apostolic exarch for an Eastern Catholic counterpart.

The apostolic vicariate is distinguished from a territorial abbacy (or "abbey nullius") — an area not a diocese but under the direction of the abbot of a monastery.

2. List

2.1. Current Apostolic Vicariates

Africa

- Apostolic Vicariate of Alexandria of Egypt
- Apostolic Vicariate of Awasa, Ethiopia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Benghazi, Libya
- Apostolic Vicariate of Derna, Libya
- Apostolic Vicariate of Donkorkrom, Ghana
- Apostolic Vicariate of Harar, Ethiopia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Hosanna, Ethiopia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Ingwavuma, South Africa
- Apostolic Vicariate of Isiolo, Kenya
- Apostolic Vicariate of Kontagora, Nigeria
- Apostolic Vicariate of Makokou in Gabon

- Apostolic Vicariate of Meki, Ethiopia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Mongo, Chad
- Apostolic Vicariate of Nekemte, Ethiopia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Rodrigues, Mauritius
- Apostolic Vicariate of Rundu, Namibia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Soddo, Ethiopia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Tripoli, Libya

The Americas

- Apostolic Vicariate of Aguarico, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of Aysén, Chile
- Apostolic Vicariate of Camiri, Bolivia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Caroní, Venezuela
- Apostolic Vicariate of Chaco Paraguayo, Paraguay
- Apostolic Vicariate of Darién, Panama
- Apostolic Vicariate of El Beni, Bolivia
- Apostolic Vicariate of El Petén, Guatemala
- Apostolic Vicariate of Esmeraldas, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of Galapagos, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of Guapi, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Inírida, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Iquitos, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of Jaén in Peru/San Francisco Javier
- Apostolic Vicariate of Leticia, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Méndez, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of Mitú, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Napo, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of Ñuflo de Chávez, Bolivia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Pando, Bolivia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Pilcomayo, Paraguay
- Apostolic Vicariate of Pucallpa, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Ayacucho, Venezuela
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Carreño, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Gaitán, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Leguísimo-Solano, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Maldonado, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puyo, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of Requena, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of Reyes, Bolivia
- Apostolic Vicariate of San Andrés y Providencia, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of San José de Amazonas, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of San Miguel de Sucumbíos, Ecuador
- Apostolic Vicariate of San Ramon, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of San Vicente del Caguán, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Tierradentro, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Trinidad, Colombia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Tucupita, Venezuela
- Apostolic Vicariate of Yurimaguas, Peru
- Apostolic Vicariate of Zamora, Ecuador

Asia

- Apostolic Vicariate of Aleppo, Syria
- Apostolic Vicariate of Anatolia, Turkey
- Apostolic Vicariate of Beirut, Lebanon
- Apostolic Vicariate of Bontoc-Lagawe, Philippines
- Apostolic Vicariate of Brunei Darussalam, Brunei
- Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan, Philippines

- Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo, Philippines
- Apostolic Vicariate of Luang Prabang, Laos
- Apostolic Vicariate of Nepal, Nepal
- Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain & Saudi Arabia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Paksé, Laos
- Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- Apostolic Vicariate of Puerto Princesa, Philippines
- Apostolic Vicariate of Quetta, Pakistan
- Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose in Mindoro, Philippines
- Apostolic Vicariate of Savannakhet, Laos
- Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates & Yemen
- Apostolic Vicariate of Tabuk, Philippines
- Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay, Philippines
- Apostolic Vicariate of Vientiane, Laos

Europe

- Apostolic Vicariate of Thessaloniki, Greece
- Apostolic Vicariate of Istanbul, Turkey

2.2. Historical Apostolic Vicariates

(incomplete)

Inactive apostolic vicariates (and/or former names, often promoted to diocese) are in *italics*. Eastern Catholic (mostly Byzantine Rite) apostolic vicariates are in **bold**.

Africa

- *Apostolic Vicariate of Bomadi*, Nigeria
- *Apostolic Vicariate of the Congo*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Dahomey*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of French Congo*, or Lower Congo
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Francistown*, Botswana
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Kamerun*, Cameroon
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Kenia*, Kenya
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Kimberley in Orange*, South Africa
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Mauritius*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Victoria Nyanza*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Sahara*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Senegambia*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Shire*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Sudan* or Central-Africa
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Unyanyembe*

The Americas

- *Apostolic Vicariate of Alaska*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of San José de Amazonas*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Athabasca*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Beni*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Bluefields*, Nicaragua
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Casanare*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Goajira*
- Apostolic Vicariate of Izabal, Guatemala
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Keewatin*
- Apostolic Vicariate of Lhasa
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Limón*, Costa Rica
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Lower California*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Machiques*, Venezuela
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Marysville*

- *Apostolic Vicariate of Mackenzie*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Montevideo*, Uruguay (erected 1830, promoted to Diocese 1878)
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Riohacha*, Colombia
- *Apostolic Vicariate of San Gabriel de la Dolorosa del Marañon* (renamed Yurimaguas), Peru
- *Apostolic Vicariate of San José del Guaviare*, Colombia
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Iles Saint-Pierre et Miquelon*, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, in 2018 merged to Diocese of La Rochelle and Sainte
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Sucumbíos*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Ucayali*, Peru (was suppressed in 1956 by erection of the three new vicariates)

Asia

- *Apostolic Vicariate of Amoy*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Batavia*, Indonesia
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Changanacherry*, India
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Ernakulam*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Kiang-nan*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Korea*^[1]
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Kottayam*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Madras*, India
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Kan-Su*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Shan-Si*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Shantung*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Patna*, India
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Shan-Si*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Shan-Tung*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Shen-Si*, China
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Tibet*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Trichur*, India

Europe

- ***Bulgarian Catholic Apostolic Vicariate of Constantinople***, former Ottoman Empire
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Gibraltar*
- ***Bulgarian Catholic Apostolic Vicariate of Macedonia***, former Ottoman Empire
- ***Apostolic Vicariate of Marča***, Croatia
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Germany*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Scotland*, UK
- ***Bulgarian Catholic Apostolic Vicariate of Thrace***, former Ottoman Empire

Oceania

- *Apostolic Vicariate of Alexishafen*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Central Oceania*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Fiji*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Marquesas Islands*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of New Pomerania*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Oriental Oceania*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Sandwich Islands*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Tahiti*
- *Apostolic Vicariate of Western Oceania*

References

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