

# Vatican Library to be closed to public for three years

VATICAN CITY - The Vatican Library is closing its doors to the public for the next three years for renovation.

Starting July 14, the library will be closed until September 2010 in order to carry out "major structural renovation of one wing of the library," the library's vice prefect, Ambrogio Piazzoni, told Catholic News Service.

The library's ever-growing and massive collection of ancient and modern volumes had put too much stress and strain on its 16th-century building, he said May 4. Workers will have to reinforce the floors and walls of one of the library's halls, making public access to the reading rooms impossible, he said.

All renovation projects that could be done without disturbing visiting scholars "have already been done. Now the big problem is left," he said. It involves revamping an entire wing.

Founded in 1475, the Vatican Library is now home to almost 2 million books and manuscripts. About 100 scholars visit the library every day.

After the library closes this summer, scholars will still have access to the library's collections by ordering copies in digital, photographic, photocopied or microfilm formats, Mr. Piazzoni said.