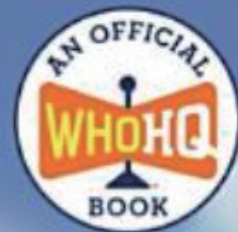


Foldout
map inside!

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The *New York Times* Best-Selling Series



Where Is the Vatican?

by Megan Stine



Where Is the Vatican?



by Megan Stine

illustrated by Laurie A. Conley

Penguin Workshop

For my dear friend Betsy and her children and
grandchildren: Geoff, Anne, Paula, Michael,
Delaney, Kendall, Garrison, and George—MS

For Brian, for his endless support—LAC

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Printed in the USA.

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2019030855

ISBN 9781524792596 (paperback)
ISBN 9781524792602 (library binding)

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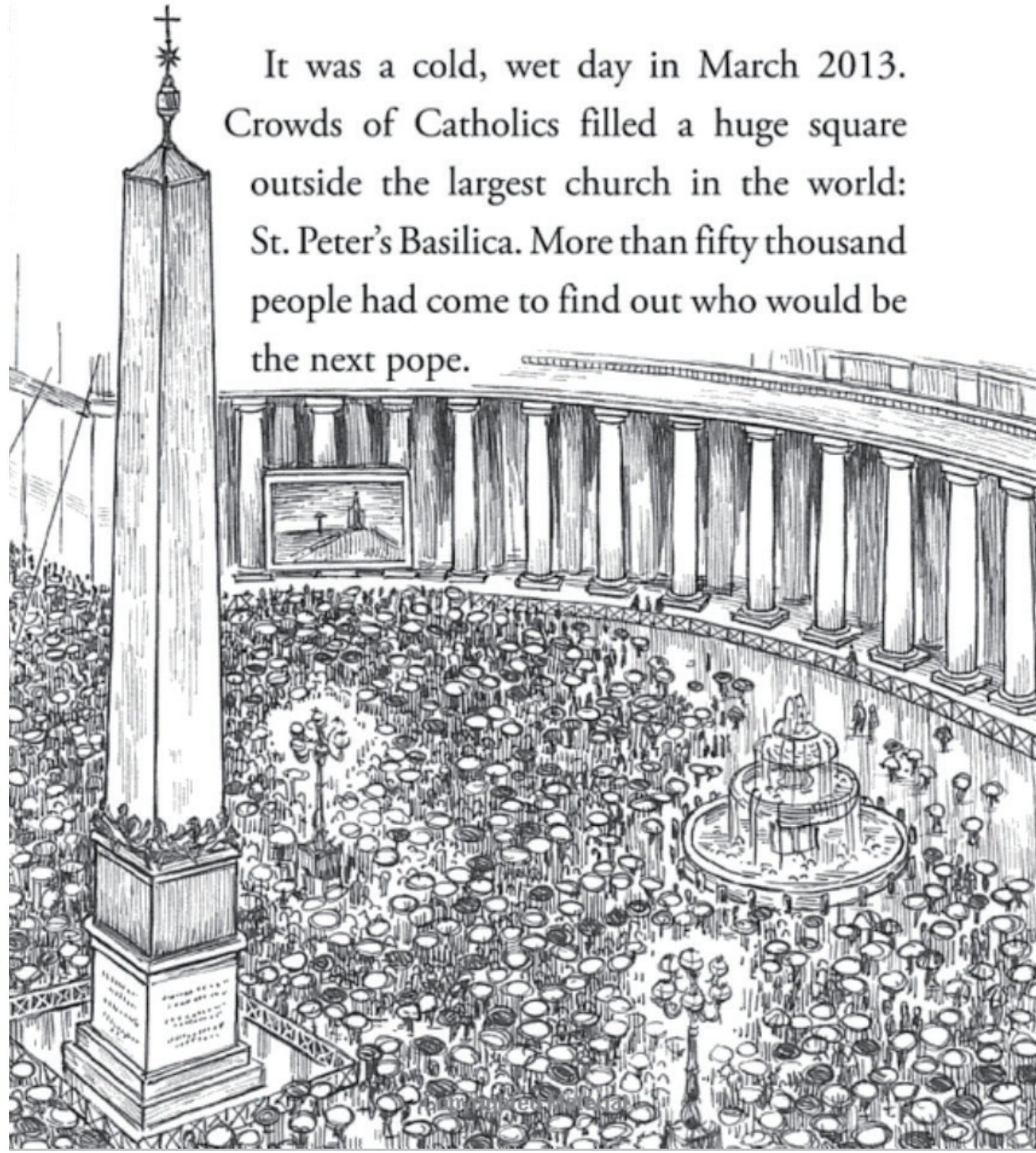
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Where Is the Vatican?

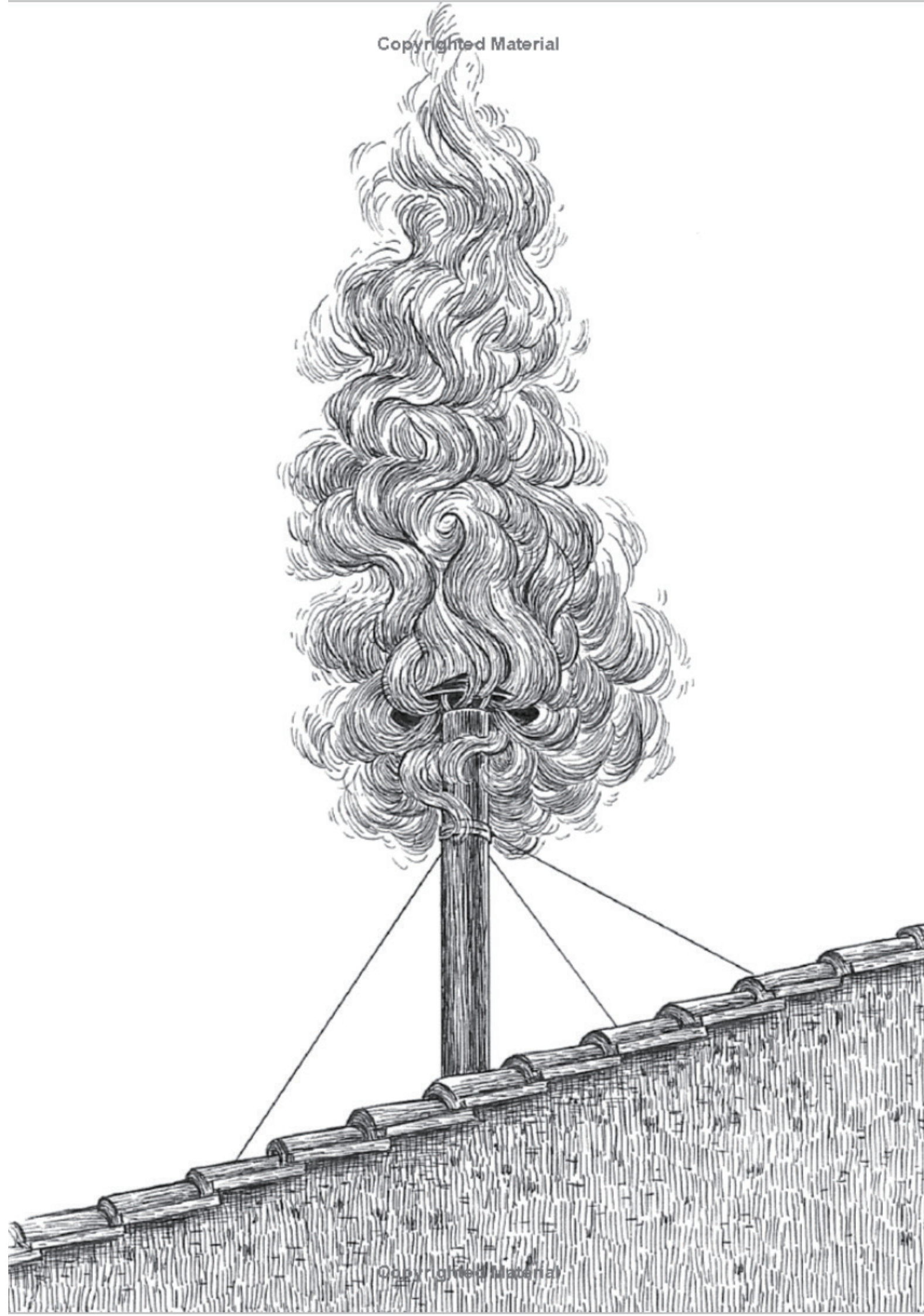
It was a cold, wet day in March 2013. Crowds of Catholics filled a huge square outside the largest church in the world: St. Peter's Basilica. More than fifty thousand people had come to find out who would be the next pope.



The answer depended on a vote that was taking place inside a chapel beside the huge church. One hundred fifteen cardinals were locked inside to vote for the new pope. (Cardinals are the most important Catholic priests after the pope.) To be elected pope, one of the cardinals had to receive two-thirds of the votes. The cardinals wrote the name of the person they were voting for on a piece of paper. They kept their votes secret by disguising their handwriting. After being counted, the ballots were burned and smoke drifted up from the chapel.

The results of the votes are always announced to the world in a puff of smoke. White smoke means that a new pope has been elected. Black smoke means that no one has gotten enough votes yet.

On the first day of voting, no one was chosen. Black smoke billowed out of the chapel chimney. The same thing happened the next morning—black smoke. The cardinals would have to vote again.

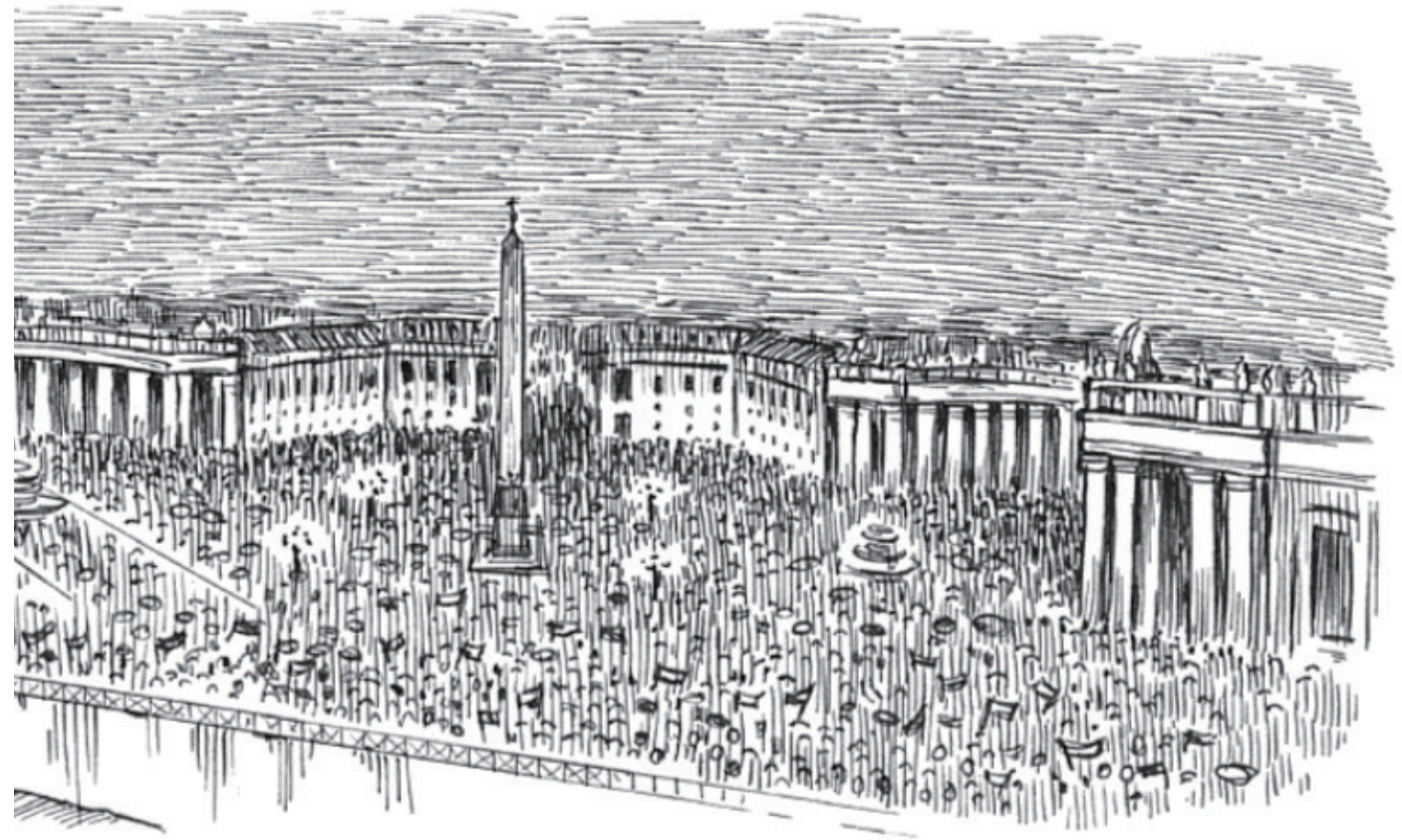




Rain began to fall. Still, the crowds remained, waiting under umbrellas into the night.

Finally, on the evening of March 13, a plume of white smoke floated up into the air. The crowd burst into joyous cheers. They waved flags from countries all over the world. Then bells began to ring and ring, announcing that a new pope had been chosen.

By the time Pope Francis appeared on the balcony overlooking the square, the rain had



stopped. He spoke humbly to the crowds, asking them to pray for him. He knew he had a big job ahead of him.

Being pope meant he would head the Catholic Church, all the world over. As pope, he would also be the leader of a country. It is the smallest country in the world, located entirely inside the city of Rome, Italy.

The country is called Vatican City.

CHAPTER 1

A Safe Place for Christians

How did Vatican City become the smallest country on earth?

The answer lies in the story of Christianity—a story that began more than two thousand years ago when Jesus was alive.

