PORTUGAL

RELIGIONS AS A PERCENT OF POPULATION

Roman Catholicism 89.3 percent
Other 2.9 percent
None 7.8 percent
(1998 public opinion poll)

COUNTRY OVERVIEW
The Republic of Portugal (35,553 square miles) is located on the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the West and Spain on the East. Its capital, Lisbon, had a population of about 700,000 in 2000. Other large cities are Porto (300,000), Vila Nova de Gaia (250,000) and Amadora (176,000). The nation consists of 18 districts and two autonomous regions: the archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira in the Atlantic Ocean, off the west coast of Africa. The total population of Portugal was estimated at 10,048,000 with an annual growth rate of about 0.18% (July 2000 est.).

Four main rivers that originate in Spain flow west to the Atlantic Ocean through Portugal: the Douro, the Tagus, the Sado and the Guadiana. The river valleys support a variety of agriculture, and vineyards dominant in the Douro and Tagus valleys. The lower hill slopes are used for growing olives, whereas the upland and coastal plains are used for grains and livestock.

The majority of the population speak Standard Portuguese, which is based on the Southern or Estremenho dialect (Lisbon and Coimbra); other dialects are Beira, Galician, Madeira-Azores and Brazilian Portuguese. Galician is spoken in the northern provinces of Entre-Minho-e-Douro and Trazoz-Montes, which is intermediate between Portuguese and Spanish. Also, several minority languages are spoken: Calo and Romani Vlach among the Gypsies; Mirandesa, related to Austurian and Leonés, in northeastern Portugal and the southeast tip of the Tras Os Montes area on the Spanish border; and other languages among immigrant populations: Spanish, Arabic, Chinese (Yue), English, French, Italian, German, and several Eastern European and West African languages.

The history of Portugal parallels that of Spain, both of which are on the Iberian Peninsula. Before the Roman conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 202 BCE, the territory was settled by a variety of ancient peoples: Cro-Magnon Man, the Basques and Tartesians (considered to be first aboriginal peoples), the Celts (who also occupied parts of France, Great Britain and Ireland), the Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Carthaginians (the latter three from the Mediterranean basin). After the Roman legions expelled the Carthaginians from the peninsula, they struggled for two centuries with the Celtiberians (the descendants of previous immigrants), in a series of wars of great ferocity and countless reprisals.

However, Roman control of the Iberian Peninsula collapsed during the early 5th century CE, after waves of Germanic “barbarians” from Central and Northern Europe conquered the peninsula and established their respective kingdoms, from 409 to 711. For more than 150 years, the Visigoths were in conflict with the Romans, the Vandals, the Franks, the Suevi and the Basques over control of the territory. In 419, the Visigoths forced the Vandals to flee and established their kingdom in Toulouse (France), but in 507, after loosing most of Gaul to the Franks, they moved their capital to Toledo in Spain. By 585 the Visigoths had conquered the Suevi in Galicia and gained control of most of the peninsula. Although the Visigoths were a minority in comparison to the Hispano-Roman population in the peninsula, they dominated the territory until 711 when the Muslim armies from North Africa invaded, conquered and occupied most of the peninsula.
Some Iberians settled down to live under Arab rule, calling themselves Mozarabs, while the rest fled to the northern mountain regions, where they established the strongholds of Astorias, Navarre, Aragón and Catalonia. During the Moslem occupation, the Visigoths and Hispano-Romans became one people with one religion and one aspiration: to reconquer their homeland and drive the Moors from the peninsula.

During the Moslem occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, from 711 to 1492, the Moors exerted a profound influence on its cultural and economic life for almost eight centuries. Moslem rule can be divided into three periods: the years of conquest and final consolidation of power under the Caliphate of Córdova, from 711-1031; the years of Reconquest of most of the peninsula by the Christian armies, from 1031-1276; and the confining of Moslems to a small area in southern Spain and the final triumph of the Christian kingdoms, from 1276-1492.

The kingdom of Portugal established its independence during the Reconquest as a by-product of the southern thrust of the armies of Castile and León against the Moors who established their final stronghold in the mountain kingdom of Granada, along the southern coast of the peninsula. One of the French recruits who fought with the Christian armies against the Moslems was Henry of Burgundy (1109-1185), known as Afonso Henrikes, who married an illegitimate daughter of King Alfonso VI of Castile and León and was appointed Count of Portucalense (Portugal) in 1139, as a vassal of the Castilian kings. Coimbra was Portugal’s first capital city from 1139-1290.

The House of Burgundy, thus established, ruled for more than three centuries over the emerging Kingdom of Portugal. The successive Counts of Portugal fought two major battles, one for independence from the Kingdom of Castile and the other against the Moslems, who were driven from Lisbon in 1147. Spain recognized Portugal’s independence in 1143 and the Pope did so as well in 1179. The Portuguese armies of Alfonso III (ruled from 1248-1279) drove the Moslems from the southern province of Algarve in 1249, thereby consolidating the modern state of Portugal.

The 12th century saw the rise of Military Orders, which supposes recognition on the part of both Church and State. The Knights Templars, organized in Palestine in 1118 by French Catholic Crusaders who sought to liberate the Holy Land from the Moslem armies, helped the first king of Portugal, Afonso Enriques (1109-1185), to conquer the southwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors, who had controlled most of the peninsula since 711. In return, the Templars were granted ecclesiastical authority over the lands liberated from the Moors. For over 200 years the Templars provided their services as soldier-monks and civil engineers to various Iberian nobles to help defend their territories and expand commerce by building cities, fortifications, roads and bridges.

After the demise of the Templars in 1312 (the Order of Extinction was issued by Pope Clement V), King Dionysius or Dinis I (1261-1325) reorganized the Portuguese branch of the Templars as the Order of Christ (The Order of the Knighthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ) in 1318, and they continued their business as usual. The famous Prince Henry the Navigator became a Governor of the Order of Christ (1420), and many of the ships that sailed from the port of Lisbon bore the flag of the Order of Christ.

The ancient Portuguese Military Orders are among the oldest in existence since their origin dates to the 12th through the 14th centuries. These Religious-Military Orders were founded during the severe conditions of the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Moorish invaders, called the Crusades of the West, which was the longest of all European wars. The Order of the Hospitalers of St. John of Jerusalem (1132), the Order of Calatrava (1158), the Order of Saint Benedict of Aviz (1170), and the Order of Santiago (Military Order of Saint James of the Sword, 1173) were all established in Portugal. These Military Orders and their exploits created the cornerstones for a vast literature of mystical nationalism that speculated about the real aim of Portuguese discoveries. See the section on CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES for further information.

After the Portuguese defeated the Castilians in the battle of Aljubarrota in 1385 with the help of English recruits that strengthened its armies, English influence dominated the nation for several centuries. The House of Burgundy was overthrown and the Aviz dynasty was established in 1385 under John (João) I, who signed the Treaty of Windsor in 1386, which ensured a lasting alliance with England. This alliance was strengthened by the marriage of John I of Portugal to the daughter of John of Gaunt of England.
The reign of John I (1385-1433), called John the Great, marks the rise of Portugal to power as an independent nation. He established order throughout his kingdom, fought off the Spaniards and attacked the Moslem armies in North Africa, capturing Ceuta in 1415. His many successes as a ruler were augmented by the accomplishments of his son, known as Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460). Henry assembled a staff of geographers, map makers, and ship designers and builders; borrowed funds from kings, bankers and merchants; and launched a series of maritime expeditions that established Portugal’s maritime empire in Africa, and eventually in Asia and the Americas. The Order of Christ was involved with Henry's expeditions of discovery, and Henry invested a considerable part of the Order's revenue in these expeditions: brothers of the Order colonized Madeira and the Canaries in 1425, and then the Azores in 1445.

In 1497, Vasco da Gama (also a member of the Order of Christ) and his fleet of four ships and 168 men sailed down the west coast of Africa and around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, and then explored the eastern coast of Africa and the west coast of India before returning to Portugal after a voyage of more than two years. The Order of Christ established and defended many of the Portugues trading posts, and became wealthy in land and in trade, both in the colonies and in the homeland.

In 1500, the Portuguese explorer, Pedro Álvares Cabral, was blown off course as he sailed south along the west coast of Africa and strong winds brought him to the east coast of South America, where he discovered the territory known today as Brazil, which includes almost half of the southern continent. Brazil later became Portugal’s principal colony with the imprint of the Portuguese language, culture and religious heritage. The Portuguese later established colonies in Africa (Guinea, Angola and Mozambique), India (three small possessions on the west coast, including Goa), the island of Macao in China, and part of the island of Timor off the north coast of Australia.

The Portuguese initiated the Atlantic slave trade in the 1440s, bringing black Africans back to Lisbon and to the southern provinces of Portugal. Slavery dated from ancient times in both Europe and Africa, but the enslavement of black Africans by Europeans was new: for three centuries (1550 to 1850) Europeans transported their human cargo from Africa to the Americas. More than 10 million Africans survived this forced passage, with about 3 to 4 million going to Brazil alone.

Portugal, in contrast to Spain, boasts no impressive monarchs as does its neighbor to the East. The history of the House of Aviz in Portugal is a tale of tragic disintegration and eventual disastrous failure. John I, a brave warrior and capable administrator, was followed by Alfonso V (1438-1481) who wasted his resources in a series of African adventures while being overshadowed by the popularity of Henry the Navigator. The throne of Portugal then passed to John II (1481-1495) who stripped the power of parliament, liquidated the wealth of many powerful nobles, quarreled with the Vatican, and took advantage of Spain’s expulsion of the Jews in 1492 by inviting thousands to settle in Portugal and collecting “generous fees” for his hospitality. Then followed Manoel I (1495-1521) and John III (1521-1557), the latter of whom installed the Office of the Holy Inquisition in 1536 and brought in the Jesuits in 1540. At the time of his death in 1557, the Portuguese Kingdom was in a low state of affairs.

Thereafter followed a series of stormy regencies, including the ten-year rule of young King Sebastian (1568-1578), considered to be an “ill-balanced religious fanatic” who was preoccupied with defending the Catholic Faith against the Moslem infidels. He scraped together an armada of 500 ships and an army of 20,000 soldiers and led his troops into battle against the Moslems in North Africa, where his army was defeated and he “disappeared” (and was presumed death) at the famous Battle of Alcazar-Kebir in Morocco in 1578. The only survivor of the House of Aviz was the elderly Cardinal Henry, brother of John III, who was unable to hold the kingdom together and block the imperial designs of King Phillip II of Spain. After Henry’s death in 1580, Spain’s Phillip II sent his armies to Portugal to crush the opposition and bribe the nobles, thereby making himself the King of Portugal. This joint rule lasted for 60 years (1580-1640), called the “Spanish Captivity,” and signaled the end of Portugal’s glory days.

In general, the 16th and 17th centuries were a period of decline for Portugal, economically, politically, socially and spiritually. Spain’s quarrels (the Thirty Years’ War, 1620-1650) with the English and the Dutch cut off Portuguese trade with other nations, and the Dutch, in turn, attacked Portugal’s colonies to obtain direct access to their commercial products. Although the Dutch were eventually driven from Brazil (1654), most of Portugal’s Asian colonies were permanently lost, and Portugal was never again a great world power.
In 1640, Portugal took advantage of Philip IV’s preoccupation with a rebellion in Cataluña to revolt and throw off the Spanish yoke, thereby restoring its independence under John IV (1640-1656). King Alfonso VI (1656-1667), who was weak in mind and body, was marginalized by his brother, Peter II (1667-1706), who served first as regent and then as king. Peter II revived the alliance with England by means of the Treaty of Methuen in 1703, which provided mutual trade advantages; Portugal reluctantly entered the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) against Louis XIV of France.

Absolutism reached its height in the 18th century under the reigns of John V (1706-1750) and Joseph (1750-1777), when Sebastian Joseph Carvalho, the Marques of Pombal, was the de facto ruler of Portugal. He sought to introduce aspects of the Enlightenment in education, to achieve government centralization, and to revive agriculture and commerce by means of mercantilism. However, his policies upset the balance of power and produced a rebellion, which the Marques of Pombal put down harshly. After a long political and religious contest with the Jesuits, he expelled them from Portugal in 1759. Following the disastrous earthquake, fire and tidal wave of 1755 that destroyed Lisbon, the Marques of Pombal undertook the rebuilding of this city along well-planned lines. Lisbon perches on steep hills overlooking the Tagus (Tejo) River, the largest river on the Iberian Peninsula, flowing from Spain into the Atlantic.

Most of the Marques of Pombal’s reforms were overturned during the reigns of Maria I (1777-1816) and her son, John VI (1816-1826). The alliance between Portugal and England led to a conflict with France, and in 1817 Napoleon I marched on Portugal and the nation suffered the consequences of the Peninsular War. The royal family fled to Brazil in 1807, but John VI did not return to Portugal until after a liberal revolution succeeded in 1820. He accepted the liberal Constitution of 1822, and forces loyal to him put down a rebellion led by his younger son, Dom Miguel. Meanwhile, in Brazil, his eldest son, Pedro I, became the emperor of an independent Brazil in 1822.

The rest of the 19th century was marked by continual conflicts (revolutions, coups and counter-coups) between heirs to the Portuguese throne and between political factions: royalists, moderates and radicals. However, after 1850, the activities of moderates and radicals laid the groundwork for a series of reforms during the reigns of Peter V (1853-1861) and Louis I (1861-1889), which included penal laws, a civil code and commercial regulations. In 1906, due to the inefficiency and corruption of the parliamentary process, Charles I (1889-1908) established a dictatorship under João Franco, but King Charles and his heir apparent were assassinated in 1908. King Manuel II came to the throne in 1908 but a republican revolution in 1910 forced his abdication. The Constituent Assembly of 1911 formally decreed the abolition of the Portuguese monarchy and the government became a parliamentary democracy.

The 20th century witnessed the continuous struggle between Conservatives and Liberals, and, later, Socialists and Marxists were added to the political mix. A republican government was established in 1910 with Teófilo Braga as president, which brought some political stability but did not cure Portugal’s chronic economic problems. After the outbreak of World War I, Portugal was at first neutral but later joined the Allies (1916). There followed a decade of political and economic turmoil that led to a military coup in 1926, which brought General Carmona to the presidency. He was succeeded by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in 1932, who established one of the longest dictatorships in modern European history (1933-1974). After Salazar suffered a stroke, Marcello Caetano ruled as premier from 1968 to 1974, when a leftist military coup overthrew the Caetano government and established a military junta under Gen. Antonio de Spínola, but he was forced to resign in September of 1974.

The new government was dominated by leftist elements of the Armed Forces Movement and a power struggle ensued between moderates, Socialists and Marxists during 1974 and 1975. Between 1975 and 1986, the Socialists and moderates gained the upper hand in successive and competing governments, but it was the Social Democratic Party under Aníbal Cavaço Silva that finally won an undisputed majority in Parliament, and Socialist leader Mario Soares was elected as the nation’s president in 1986. Political and economic stability was restored and Portugal was admitted to the European Community, now known as the European Union.

Since then the Social Democrats and the Socialists have alternated in power. The current President is Jorge Fernando Branco de Sampaio (Socialist Party) who was initially elected in 1996 and reelected in January 2001, with 56 percent of the popular vote.

Part of this general history is covered in the History section under Roman Catholicism.
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

The 1976 Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice; the Constitution forbids discrimination based on religion. Although the government is secular, it has a Concordat with the Vatican (signed in 1940 and amended in 1971).

The 2001 Religious Freedom Act created a legislative framework for religious organizations that have been established in Portugal for more than 30 years, or those recognized internationally for at least 60 years. The Act provides recognized religious organizations with benefits previously reserved for the Roman Catholic Church, which include: full tax-exempt status, legal recognition for marriage and other religious rites, chaplain visits to prisons and hospitals, and respect for their traditional holidays.

However, the Catholic media and officials of the Roman Catholic Church have strongly opposed groups like the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (from Brazil), which they consider to be a Christian sect, and its attempt to purchase a large movie theater in 1995-1996 in Oporto, which was opposed by Oporto’s City officials and by leading members of the Catholic community. In 1996, the UCKG also had its contract canceled to broadcast on a national, private TV network, a contract that began in March of 1994 with a 30-minute daily show.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1 DATE OF ORIGIN IN PORTUGAL

Christianity arrived in the territory known today as Portugal in the first century CE (see the article on Spain for details), while it was part of the Roman Empire.

2 NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS IN PORTUGAL

About 8,930,000 adherents, or 89.3 percent of the total population in 1998.

3 HISTORY

The diocese of Lisbon (primacy) was erected in the 4th century, together with the dioceses of Braga and Porto in northern Portugal and Évora in the south-central region. After the Visigoth conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the early 5th century, a theological controversy was the main cause of discord between the Visigoths, who had accepted the Arian version of Christianity while dwelling in Central Europe, and the Romanized Iberians who adhered to the orthodox position of the Bishop of Rome. The Visigoths remained Arian Christians until 589, when King Reccared of Toledo formally renounced this “heresy,” accepted the Nicene Creed of 325, and pledged his loyalty to the Pope at the Third Council of Toledo (589). Thereafter, the Portuguese adhered to the Roman Catholic Faith.

From 711 to 1492, the Moslems controlled the Iberian Peninsula. After the violence of the conquest, the Moors allowed the Christians and the Jews to practice their respective religions with a great deal of tolerance. However, this period of development and prosperity came to an end in the 10th century, when the Christian crusaders in the northern peninsula seized the opportunity to rebel against their Moorish rulers, after internal quarrels caused Moslem-controlled Iberia to splinter into rival kingdoms after 1031. During the next four centuries great changes occurred on the Iberian Peninsula as Christian forces began the process of Reconquest, which led to the creation of an independent Spanish nation under the powerful royal houses of Castile and Aragón, and Portugal withdrew to pursue its national destiny. In 1104, the new archdiocese of Braga was erected in a diocese founded in the 4th century in the province of Portugal.

Although Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church predated the establishment of the Portuguese state in 1139, at that time the Church and State were united in a lasting and mutually beneficial relationship. King Alfonso Henriques (1139-1185) declared Portugal a vassal state of the Vatican, and granted the Church vast lands and privileges in the territories conquered from the Moors by the Religious-Military Orders. The Church became the nation’s largest landholder and, for a time, its power came to rival that of the nobles, the military orders and even the monarchy. However, the Portuguese monarchy asserted its authority over the Church and named its bishops with Papal approval.

There were three major medieval religious reform movements in the Iberian Peninsula, which reflected those in Latin Christendom as a whole. The first was the Cluniac (910, in France) and papal reform of the 11th century. The second was the monastic reform movement of the 13th century: the Cistercians (1119, France), Dominicans (1216,
Spain), Franciscans (1219, Italy), Carmelites (1226, Palestine) and Augustinians (1243, Italy). Most of the new 13th century orders were composed of mendicant friars (rely on alms for their support), who came into close contact with the people and emphasized preaching and social service. Although they encouraged learning and played a major role in development of the universities, some of the mendicant orders also amassed property and became identified with the privileged and unconcerned among the clergy.

The last reform movement took place in the late Middle Ages and was somewhat diverse and disunified. One of its first manifestations was the attempt by members of the Castilian Catholic hierarchy in the 1370s and 1380s to purify morals, expand education, and encourage the monarchy in the hope that it would use its authority over other sectors of the Church. A monastic movement of spiritual and moral revival, known as the Observancia, stimulated new interest in evangelical preaching among the mendicant orders. The rise of the Jeronymite order in the second half of the 14th encouraged a more contemplative and internalized religion. Late medieval spiritual renewal, although certainly not involving most of the clergy and the parishioners, was expressed in new ideals of piety and antisacramental mysticism and in a growing vein of apocalyptic thought. In addition to the Jeronymites, the Carmelites and reformist Franciscans were active in trying to encourage spiritual growth and social change. These elements played a major role in the subsequent Catholic reform movement during the late 15th and early 16th centuries in the Iberian Peninsula.

The reign of the excommunicated king Alfonso II (1211-1223) witnessed a religious revival that challenged the general laxity of both clergy and laity in Portugal. The Franciscans, invited to Portugal by the king’s sister (1220s), soon won the affection of the people, but they were received with little cordiality by the secular clergy and the other religious orders (Benedictine, Cluniac and Cistercian), which saw their financial interests damaged. In a papal bull of Gregory IX (1233), he complained of the hostility shown to the Franciscan friars by the bishops and secular clergy in Portugal. At Oporto the bishop ordered the Franciscans out of town and sacked and burned their convent, but many citizens sided with the Franciscans who, later, were able to return to the city. The Franciscan Order soon spread over the countryside, where convents were built for them by wealthy citizens, members of the royal family selected their churches as burial places, and the popes bestowed bishoprics on their friars and assigned them delicate missions.

The Franciscans and Dominicans entered Portugal in the early 13th century, in 1211 and 1217 respectively. The Dominicans, by virtue of their austere morals, poverty and humility, obtained a welcome that was second only to that given the Franciscans. The next to enter was the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1540, which was placed in charge of all public education during the later 16th century. The Jesuits, who became heavily involved in scholarship, science and exploration around the world, established their first House of Studies in Coimbra, Portugal.

The Jesuits were expelled from Portugal in 1759 by the Marques of Pombal after they were declared guilty of having “exercised illicit, public and scandalous commerce” both in Portugal and in its colonies. Later, a Brief of Suppression, an administrative rather than a judicial order, was approved by Pope Clement IV in 1773, which led to the disbanding of the Society of Jesus and to the arrest and confinement of Jesuits worldwide for “having occasioned perpetual strife, contradiction and trouble” for the Church’s hierarchy during a period of considerable political and civil unrest, especially in Europe and the Americas. However, Pope Pius VII reestablished the Jesuit Order in 1814.

The Office of the Holy Inquisition, established in Portugal in 1536 under King John III, was finally abolished in 1821 as a consequence of the liberal revolution of 1820. The National Archive holds records of an estimated 40,000 inquisitorial processes. However, in contrast to Spain, Roman Catholicism in Portugal was less harsh and more humanized, and included widespread use of folk religious practices especially in rural areas. Even the faces depicted on the statues of the Catholic saints in Portugal were more placid, calm and pleasant in contrast to the painful and anguished faces of those in Spain.

The military coup of 1926, which initiated a 48-year rightwing dictatorship, restored many privileges to the Roman Catholic Church. Male religious orders were allowed to return to Portugal in 1929, a Concordat was signed between the Vatican and the Portuguese government in 1940, and the Catholic Church regained control of many of its convents, monasteries and schools. Although the formal church-state relationship remained severed, Roman Catholicism continues as the dominant religion of Portugal.
By 1910 numerous Catholic religious orders and institutions had been established in Portugal, which included the Franciscans, Dominicans, Missionaries of the Holy Ghost, Benedictines, Irish Dominicans, Little Sisters of the Poor, Sisters of the Third Order of St. Dominic, Franciscan Sisters, Servite Sisters, Dorotheans, Sisters of the Missions, Salesians, Sisters of St. John of God, Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, Marist Sisters, Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Portuguese Sisters of Charity (Trinas).

In 2003, the Archdioceses of Lisbon reported 64 religious orders for women and 31 for men, which were members of the National Conference of Religious Institutes (CNIR).

4 HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY LEADERS

Saint Anthony of Padua (1195-1231), the patron saint of Portugal, was born in Portugal (baptized as Fernando Bulhom who was heir to a noble title and lands), entered a monastery at age 15, became a biblical scholar, theologian, missionary, and popular preacher who served the Franciscan Order in Portugal, Morocco, France, and Italy, where he died at age 35. He took the name “Anthony” after the church where he first lived as a Franciscan, and the name “Padua” was the place in Italy that Anthony had chosen as his home base after he started preaching to the masses. Anthony preached peace in a time of feuds, vendettas and wars, saying, "No more war; no more hatred and bloodshed, but peace. God wills it."

Isabel of Portugal (called “The Holy Queen”), daughter of King Peter III of Aragon, was named after her great-aunt, Elizabeth of Hungary. She was the wife of King Dinis of Portugal and was canonized in 1625. She is mainly venerated in the church of Santa Clara in Coimbra, where her silver mausoleum is constantly visited. During her festival, the city is practically closed to cars for two or three days, to host a gigantic procession made up of hundreds of women, most of rural origin and dressed as the “Holy Queen” (with a robe and a crown), followed by the corporations of the city and the university faculty dressed in formal clothes.

+Cardinal José da Cruz Policarpio, Archbishop of Lisbon (b. 1936); he was ordained a priest in 1961 and became a bishop in 1978. In 1998, Bishop Cruz was appointed the Patriarch (Archbishop) of Lisbon, and in 2001 he became a Cardinal.

5 MAJOR THEOLOGIANS AND AUTHORS

Ven. Bartholomew of Braga (1514-1590) was born Bartholomew Fernandez at Verdela, near Lisbon; he was later known as a Martyribus out of veneration for the church in which he was baptized. He entered the Dominican Order in 1527 and was ordained in 1529. On the completion of his studies, he taught philosophy in the monastery at Lisbon, and then for about twenty years he taught theology in various houses of his order. In 1551 he received the Master's degree in Salamanca. In 1558, he accepted the appointment to the archiepiscopal See of Braga, for which he had been chosen by Queen Catherine, and in 1559 received episcopal consecration. Bartholomew took part in the General Council of Trent in 1561 and was highly esteemed due to his theological learning and the holiness of his life, and he exercised great influence in the discussions, particularly those with regard to the decrees on the reform of ecclesiastical life. In 1564 he returned to his see, and in 1566 held an important provincial synod in which various decrees were passed for the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline and the elevation of the moral life of clergy and people. The archbishop then devoted himself most zealously to the task of carrying out the reforms of the Council of Trent as well as the decrees of his own provincial synod. In 1582, he received permission to resign his see and withdrew to the monastery of his order at Viana, where he spend his last days. He was declared “venerable” in 1845 by Pope Gregory XVI.

6 HOUSES OF WORSHIP AND HOLY PLACES

In 2000, there were 4,350 Catholic churches in Portugal, some of which were built in the 16th century at the height of the Portuguese colonial period. Almost every town in Portugal has a Catholic church on the main square or on a hilltop overlooking the village.

The village of Fatima, located in west-central Portugal in the province of Santarém, has one of the most famous Marian shrines in the world today. Although the town had no historical significance in ancient times, in 1916 and 1917 a series of apparitions of angels and the Virgin Mary were allegedly witnessed by three young children, which changed the destiny of this small town. Soon thousands of pilgrims flocked to the site of the apparitions in an
isolated ravine, called Cova da Iria, where a small chapel was later built in honor of the Virgin of Fatima. In 1930, after investigating the events of 1916-1917, the Vatican “authenticated the apparitions” and approved the building of the great Basílica of Fatima, which was paid for by donations from Catholics around the world. Pilgrims celebrate the various apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13 and October 13 of each year, as well as on June 10 when thousands of children gather for the “Pilgrimage of the Little Children.” Over two million pilgrims visit the shrine yearly, according the Church authorities.

The first national pilgrimage to Fatima took place in 1927. The building of the Basílica of Fatima was begun in 1928 and it was consecrated in 1953. In 1930 papal indulgences were granted to the pilgrims, who make frequent recitations of the rosary and express devotion to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the 50th anniversary of the first vision, on May 13, 1967, a crowd of pilgrims estimated at more than 1,000,000 gathered in Fatima to hear Pope Paul VI say Mass and pray for world peace. He was accompanied by Lucia dos Santos, one of those who had received the visions, now a Carmelite nun.

Another holy place is a church built in St. Anthony of Padua’s honor (Santo António à Sé) in Lisbon. The stonewalls of that underground shrine bear hundreds of written statements of endearment and thanksgiving to the saint, a kind of holy graffiti in a host of languages. The present church, built in 1812, was financed by alms collected by the children of Lisbon. In the church itself, dozens of candles (votives) are lit beneath a painting of St. Anthony, while petitions and thanksgivings are tucked into the picture’s frame. Floral offerings are arranged in front of this image as well. Pope John Paul II has visited and prayed at the site where Fernando Bulhom was born, according to tradition. This saint, called Antóninho (Little St. Anthony), is woven into the daily life of even secular citizens of Lisbon and other Portuguese cities.

**WHAT IS SACRED**

The concept of what is sacred among Roman Catholics in Portugal is in keeping with similar practices in other Catholic countries of Europe and the Americas, where there are numerous shrines and sacred places, including caves, grottos, lakes, rivers, lagoons, crossroads, hills and mountains. Many of these were sacred places for the earliest inhabitants of the various regions prior to Roman colonization, but were clothed with Catholic symbols and renamed in honor of the Virgin Mary, Christ or a Catholic saint.

**HOLIDAYS/FESTIVALS**

National religious holidays in Portugal include: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Corpus Christi Day, All Saints Day (November 1), Immaculate Conception Day (December 8), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (December 24-25).

Religious festivals abound in Portugal. One is held on June 12, the eve of the feast of St. Anthony of Padua; it is marked by a costume parade on the broad expanse of the Avenida da Liberdade (Liberty Avenue) in Lisbon. Along the parade route, bonfires are built and everybody cooks a meal; grilled sardines with sangria are popular. On the feast day itself, June 13, many couples marry. Traditionally, the town hall sponsors the weddings of poor couples and provides a reception for them; over 2,000 of these so-called brides of St. Anthony are wed at the town hall in 2001.

Each village and region has its own patron saint and annual festivals, but the most popular ones are: St. Isabela, St. Eulalia of Barcelona and St. Eulalia of Mérida, St. Catarina, St. Quiteria, St. Anne, St. Mary Magdalene, St. John the Baptist, St. Macarias, St. Bartholomew, and St. Matthew.

**MODE OF DRESS**

Historically, the women of Portugal dress very conservatively in keeping with local Catholic traditions, especially those of the older generation, whereas the members of the various Catholic religious orders for men and women have their own traditional dress codes.

**DIETARY PRACTICES**

In general, there are no special dietary practices among Roman Catholics in Portugal; the variations in diet that exist are due to local customs and practices within the various regions of the country.
Many Portuguese Catholics show greater loyalty to their favorite saints than they do to more formal church observances. It was not unusual that the Church tolerated and sometimes encouraged forms of popular religiosity as a way of maintaining adherence to Roman Catholicism. But Church officials did not condone other aspects of traditional folk religion, such as witchcraft, magic and sorcery. Particularly in the isolated villages of northern Portugal, belief in the “evil eye,” witches, evil spirits and werewolves was widespread, even in the 1990s. Although Catholic Church authorities disapprove of these ancient pre-Christian practices, they seem powerless to do much about them.

The traditional Roman Catholic rites of passage are practiced in Portugal: baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage and the last rights.

Although 89.3 percent of the population in 1998 claimed adherence to the Catholic Church, less than 30 percent were active in weekly church activities, such as the Mass and Confession. There are some striking regional differences within the Catholic Church in Portugal, with a higher percentage of the population in the North attending Mass regularly than in the anti-clerical South. However, nationwide, Mass attendance is lower in the cities and larger towns than in rural areas.

In September 2000, Cardinal José da Cruz Policarpo, the Catholic Patriarch of Lisbon, issued a public apology to the local Jewish community for the suffering caused by the Roman Catholic Church through the Office of the Holy Inquisition, especially during the 16th century, when tens of thousands of Jews were forced to convert to Catholicism or be expelled from the country, while many others “suffered intolerable acts of violence” at the hands of the inquisitors. After reading a short declaration of guilt and repentance at an international religious gathering, called “Oceans of Peace: Religions and Cultures in Dialogue,” held in the historic center of Lisbon, the Cardinal embraced three Jewish rabbis and other representatives of the nation’s Jewish community.

The event symbolized an important step forward on the road to achieving greater tolerance and understanding through ecumenical dialogue among the nation’s religious leaders at the beginning of the 21st century. Conference leaders emphasized the importance of dialogue as the way to overcome mistrust and conflict in a multi-cultural and multi-religious world. Leading politicians from Cape Verde and Morocco joined Portuguese political leaders at the event.

The Portuguese government is engaged in talks with Roman Catholic officials about changing the dates of religious holidays as part of a crackdown on the cherished custom of throwing in Monday or Friday to create a four-day weekend. Having several four-day weekend holidays a year puts a dent in national production, according to government officials; Portuguese productivity stands at 60 percent of the European Union average.

The Labor Ministry, which plans on introducing changes to the Labor Law, wants to shift most public holidays to Fridays or Mondays, including four religious holidays, but Catholic authorities are resisting such changes. “It would mean rubbing out society’s symbols in the name of economics,” stated Cardinal Policarpo. Trade unions are also opposed to the government’s proposal. In addition to 12 public holidays each year, many cities and towns close down to celebrate local festivals in honor of their patron saint.

The rise of the liberal movement in the 1820s and 1830s created adverse conditions for the Catholic Church in Portugal. In 1834 the Portuguese government prohibited male religious orders, nationalized and auctioned off many church properties, and abolished many religious holidays and festivals. The Masonically-inspired First Republic (1910-1926) dissolved the Concordat with the Vatican and abolished the formal church-state relationship. The new government seized Church properties and secularized public education, while prohibited the ringing of church bells, the wearing of clerical garb in public, and the celebration of many religious festivals.
Nevertheless, the rightwing military coup of 1926, which initiated a 48-year dictatorship, restored many privileges to the Roman Catholic Church. In 1929, the male religious orders were allowed to return to Portugal, and in 1940 a Concordat was signed between the Vatican and the Portuguese government. The State reintroduced religious instruction in the public schools, the Catholic clergy regained the right to celebrate marriages, and the Catholic Church regained control of many of its lost assets: convents, monasteries and schools. Although the formal church-state relationship remained severed, Roman Catholicism continues as the dominant religion of Portugal.

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
During the early 14th century, the “Theory of the Three Ages” conceptualized by Joachim de Fiore (1132-1202) began to permeate Portuguese thought. Cistercian and Franciscan monks, along with members of the royal family, were enamored by this theory, which proclaimed the imminent rise of the Age of the Holy Ghost, followed by the Ages of the Father and the Son. In this new Age, humanity would receive a Fifth Gospel as a direct dispensation of the Holy Ghost, during which the ideal of “universal brotherhood” would become a reality. The Festival of the Holy Ghost, which evolved in Portugal during the 14th century, was based on this theory. The Empire of the Holy Ghost, would reemerged throughout Portuguese history as a mystical concept, especially under the guise of the Fifth Empire proclaimed by Sebastianism.

The disappearance of King Sebastian (ruled 1554-1578) at the famous Battle of Alcazar-Kebir in Morocco in 1578 created one of the most serious succession crisis in the history of Portugal, which resulted in the usurpation of the Portuguese throne by King Phillip II of Spain. During this period of national disappointment and frustration, a popular belief spread among the Portuguese that King Sebastian had not died in North Africa, but rather was alive and would return to reclaim his throne, reestablish Portugal’s independence and lead the nation into an age of grandeur. This messianic expectation constituted the first state of Sebastianism and fostered the emergence of diviners, fake kings and prophets who claimed title to the Portuguese throne. As hope dwindled concerning King Sebastian’s return, a second phase of Sebastianism began as a political philosophy that was propagated by, among others, the Jesuit António Vieira (1608-1697) based on biblical texts and prophecies by Bandarra (a Portuguese shoemaker and poet), concerning the Concealed One and the advent of the Fifth Empire, a kingdom both temporal and spiritual, that would appear on the earth based in Portugal. Thus, Sebastianism and the Fifth Empire became a mystical foundation for Portuguese national identity, which foresaw a glorious future for the yet unfulfilled nation.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, sour disputes were fought between Sebastianistic and anti-Sebastianistic politicians, philosophers and theologians, and Portuguese literature continued to find inspiration in this theme. Twentieth-century poets such as Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) and Teixeira de Pascoaes (1877-1952), and philosophical movements such as Renascença Portuguesa, Integralismo Lusiano and Filosofía Portuguesa, used Sebastianism in conceptualizing systems of thought that were meant to characterize a unique Portuguese vision and sensibility. However, officially, the Roman Catholic Church viewed Sebastianism, in its earlier stages, as an undesirable popular belief and, later, as a dangerous mystical philosophy and a distortion of Christian orthodoxy, which challenged the traditional authority of both Church and State.

Independently, the Lusitanian Church of Portugal was formed in 1871 as a schism within the Roman Catholic Church by traditionalists who rejected many of the declarations made by the First Vatican Council. Today, this movement is composed of only 17 congregations and approximately 1,700 members, and it is affiliated with the Worldwide Anglican Communion.

CULTURAL IMPACT ON MUSIC, ART, LITERATURE
In the early years of its existence, Portugal's proximity to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, and the pilgrim routes from the East that converged there, was an important factor in bringing first French Romanesque, and later Gothic, art and artists to the country. After the initial introduction of the Gothic by the country-dwelling Cistercians, the Dominicans and Franciscans were responsible for its wider diffusion in Portugal's urban centers.

In keeping with their austere philosophies, the churches built by these mendicant orders were at first of the utmost simplicity and almost completely devoid of decoration. However, as the carving of architectural features such as capitols and portals became more elaborate, figurative sculpture gained a foothold. Many of the early sculptors were French, but in time local workshops were established that also brought in local artists and craftsmen.
By the time St. Bernard of Clairvaux (France) died in 1153, he had founded more than 70 Cistercian monasteries. The last was the Abbey of Alcobaca, which Alfonso Enríquez, the first king of Portugal, had invited him to send monks to establish. It was the Cistercians who brought Gothic art and architecture to Portugal, and the subsequent centuries saw the full flowering of the Portuguese Gothic architectural style, between 1300-1500.

**OTHER RELIGIONS**

For most of Portugal’s long history, few non-Catholic religious groups existed in the country, and those that did could not practice their religion freely until after the 1974 liberal revolution and the establishment of the 1976 Constitution.

**Judaism.** The Jews were forced out of Portugal during the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, although a few villages of Marranos (descendents of Jews who converted to Catholicism to avoid persecution) survived in the northern regions (about 100,000 people), where their religion is a mixture of Judaism and Christianity. Until recent decades there were no synagogues or regular Jewish religious services in Portugal. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Jewish community began to grow with the arrival of embassy personnel, business people and technicians. In the early 1990s, the Jewish community numbered between 700 and 1,000 people, was concentrated in Lisbon, and many of its members were foreigners. There were two known synagogues, one in Lisbon and the other in Porto. The Lisbon City government has provided matching funds for the restoration of Lisbon’s 19th century synagogue, which is considered a building of historical significance.

**Islam.** The nation’s Muslim community (about 35,000) consists of immigrants from Portugal’s former colonies in southern Africa, and the more recent arrival of immigrant workers from North Africa, mainly from Morocco. The Lisbon City government has provided matching funds for the construction of the city’s first mosque.

**Hinduism.** There is a Hindu community of about 7,000 people who trace their origins to South Asians who emigrated from Portuguese-speaking areas of Africa and from the former Portuguese colony of Goa in India.

**Eastern Orthodox Churches.** During the period 2000-2002, over 100,000 Eastern Europeans have immigrated to Portugal, including many Eastern Orthodox believers. There are parishes of the Greek Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile in Portugal.

**Protestantism.** By the early 1990s, only about 50,000-60,000 Protestants lived in Portugal, which was less than one percent of the population. In 2000, the largest Protestant denominations were the Assemblies of God (690 congregations and 24,200 members, founded in 1967), the Manna Christian Church (51 congregations and about 14,000 adherents, founded in 1986), the Seventh-day Adventist Church (120 congregations and 8,460 members, founded in 1904), the Evangelical Methodist Church (20 congregations and 5,640 adherents, founded in 1871), the New Apostolic Church (100 congregations and 5,000 members), the Portuguese Baptist Convention (62 congregations and 4,400 members, founded in 1888), the Evangelical Christian Brethren (120 congregations and 3,750 members, founded in 1867), the Christian Congregation in Portugal (120 congregations and 3,650 members—originally from Brazil), the Anglican Church (16 congregations and 2,700 adherents, founded in 1656), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (35 congregations and 1,500 members, founded in 1871), among others. In 2000, the Protestant population totaled about 300,000.

**Marginal Christian Groups.** Two of the older groups are the Jehovah’s Witnesses (710 churches and 49,200 adherents) who arrived in Portugal in 1925, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons, with 220 churches and 24,550 adherents) that was founded in the 1980s. They have been joined more recently by the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus, founded in Brazil in 1977) in 1989, with 320 congregations and an estimated 90,000 adherents in 2000; and the Light of the World Church (size and date of founding unknown) from Guadalajara, Mexico.

**Other religions.** The following groups are known to exist in Portugal: the Theosophical Society (1921), the Portuguese Spiritist Federation (1926), the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rosaeucruz, Freemasonry, the Church of Scientology, the Gnostic Association of Cultural and Anthropological Studies, Transcendental Meditation (TM), Kadampa New Tradition Buddhism, the Lusitanian Center of Cultural Unification (1988), the Martinista Order, the New Acropolis Cultural Association, the Path of Light and Sound (Sant Thakar Singh), Perfect Liberty Kyodan, Tenrikyo, the Raelian Movement, and the Silvan Method. In addition, spiritualist groups (syncretistic religions of
African and Roman Catholic origin), such as Candomblé and Umbanda, have arrived from Brazil in small numbers. Also, there are small groups of Baha’is, Buddhists, Taoists, Zoroastrians and Chinese folk religionists.

+ Non-Religious. About 7.8 percent of the population is agnostic, atheistic or has no religious preference.

Clifton L. Holland

BIBLIOGRAPHY

-Payne, Stanley G. *A History of Spain and Portugal*. The Library of Iberian Resources Online: [http://libro.uca.edu/payne1/payne7.htm](http://libro.uca.edu/payne1/payne7.htm)

Last revised August 19, 2004