### LEGACY OF MARCUS AURELIUS



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When he returned to Rome to implement legal and administrative reforms, Marcus Aurelius sold his personal possessions to help relieve the effects of famine and plague. He helped the poor by cutting taxes and founding schools, orphanages, and hospitals.

When Marcus Aurelius was Emperor, Christianity was not the state religion of Rome. <u>St. Peter's Basilica</u> would not be <u>built</u> for another millennium. The beautiful altars, <u>ceilings</u> and <u>churches</u> of the Christian faith were <u>not part</u> of <u>the Roman Forum</u>. No Pope wielded <u>religious power</u> in Rome when Marcus Aurelius was Caesar. (Follow this link to the current Pope's <u>private study</u>.)

Furthermore, Marcus Aurelius was not as generous toward Christians as he was toward the Empire's poor. Believing they threatened the imperial way of life, Marcus Aurelius persecuted Christians.

In 176, thinking he would extend the Empire's northern border to the Wisla (Vistula) River, Marcus Aurelius returned to the Danube frontier. He was soon a sick man. He died of <a href="mailto:the plague">the plague</a> in <a href="Mindobona">Vindobona</a> (today's Vienna) on March 17, 180 and was buried in <a href="Hadrian's Masoleum">Hadrian's Masoleum</a> (known today as the <a href="Castel Sant'Angelo">Castel Sant'Angelo</a>). He never reached the Vistula.

One of his final acts dramatically harmed the Empire he had worked so hard to protect. Instead of adopting a capable man to succeed him - as <u>the previous</u> four Emperors had done - Marcus Aurelius appointed his son, Commodus. It was a terrible mistake.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LEGACY-OF-MARCUS-AURELIUS-Gladiator

#### See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LEGACY-OF-MARCUS-AURELIUS-Gladiator

#### Media Stream



#### Illustration of St. Peter's Basilica

Image online, courtesy the Vatican's website (known as *Christus Rex*). PD

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Illustration-of-St.-Peter-s-Basilica



### Drawing of the Building of Vatican

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress website.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Drawing-of-the-Building-of-Vatican

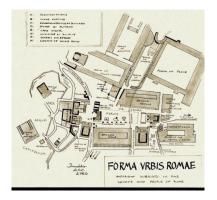


### Painted Ceiling at the Sistine Chapel

Image online, via the U.S. Library of Congress.

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### Roman Forum - Drawing of the Ancient Site

Image online, courtesy the Rockburn Elementary School website.

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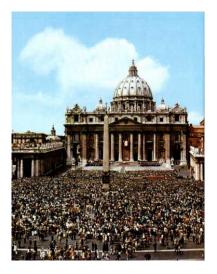


### Roman Forum - Remaining Ruins

Image online, courtesy RomeTour.co.uk

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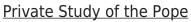


#### Crowds at the Vatican

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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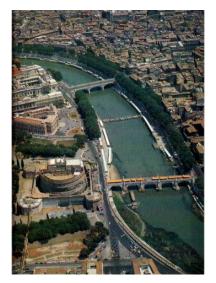




 $\underline{Image\ online},\ courtesy\ of\ nation states.net\ website,$ 

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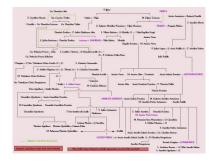
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Private-Study-of-the-Pope



## Castel Sant'Angelo

Image online, courtesy the Vatican website, <a href="mailto:christusrex.org">christusrex.org</a>.

View this asset at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Castel-Sant-Angelo0">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Castel-Sant-Angelo0</a>



# **Geneology of Roman Emperors**

Image online, courtesy the <u>University of Calgary</u> website.

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 $\underline{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Geneology-of-Roman-Emperors}$