

**News and Current Events :: Vatican goes hi-tech to stop spies**

Vatican goes hi-tech to stop spies - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/4/13 19:43

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THE Vatican is to place an "electromagnetic force field" around the conclave to choose the next pope to prevent "electronic intrusion".

The conclave, which starts on Monday afternoon after a morning Mass at St Peter's, will be held in the Sistine Chapel under Michelangelo's frescoes, where conclaves have been held for centuries.

However, for the first time, the 115 cardinal electors will be lodged not in the cramped corridors of the adjoining Apostolic Palace but in a new residence, St Martha's House.

Under new rules laid down in 1996 by the late Pope, they are forbidden to carry electronic devices such as mobile telephones or computers or to use radios and televisions.

The Vatican is taking no chances. The cardinals will be frisked by guards supervised by the papal chamberlain, Cardinal Eduardo Martínez Somalo of Spain. "We live in an age of spy satellites and sophisticated directional microphones," one official said.

Andrea Tornielli, papal biographer and Vatican watcher, said: "The secret services of various countries are extremely interested in knowing how the voting will come out and how the final choice was arrived at. The Vatican started to take preventive measures some time ago."