

Vatican seeks answers on low turnout for pope

May 21, 2009 08:29 EDT

JERUSALEM (AP) -- Roman Catholic officials want an explanation from Israel for the poor turnout at Pope Benedict's open-air mass in Jerusalem last week.

The Vatican's ambassador to the Holy Land says church officials are conducting an "inquiry" into reports that people with tickets were turned away at the entrance.

About 5,000 worshippers were expected at the mass. But no more than 3,000 people arrived.

Worshippers were required to have tickets to enter, and due to heavy Israeli security, they had to arrive hours ahead of time.

Monsignor Antonio Franco, the papal nuncio to the Holy Land, says it's premature to blame Israel for the logistical problems. But he says he will press the Israelis for answers.

An Israeli police spokesman says the event went smoothly from a security perspective, and says he doesn't know why people did not attend.

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