



Math for the people, by the people.

Pietro Mengoli

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Pietro Mengoli (1625 or 1626 - 1686) Italian mathematician, lawyer, priest, author and educator.

Baptized in the Roman Catholic faith, Mengoli was ordained a priest in 1660 and said Mass in Bologna until his death. Taught by Bonaventura Cavalieri, Mengoli succeeded him as chair of the University of Bologna. In 1644 he posed the Basel problem, which remained unsolved until Euler tackled it in the next century, unaware when he confirmed the correctness of the Wallis formulae that π was also involved in it, nor did his successful work on the sums of the reciprocals of the triangular numbers help him solve the problem.

Unlike Pietro Cataldi, Pietro Mengoli preferred to teach and write in Latin rather than in a modern language. Besides mathematical topics, Mengoli also wrote on atmospheric refraction and musical harmony.