

A VISUAL GUIDE TO THE PAPAL CONCLAVE PROCESS



Catholic Diocese of
SAGINAW



Sede Vacante

Following the death of Pope Francis on April 21, 2025, the Vatican entered a period known as Sede Vacante, meaning "The Seat being Vacant."



General Congregation

Cardinals from around the world gather in Rome for meetings called General Congregations. These sessions allow them to discuss the needs of the Church and set a date for the conclave.



Preparation

The Sistine Chapel is closed to the public and Prepare for the conclave.



The Procession

On the first day of the conclave, the cardinal electors process into the Sistine Chapel. Once inside, the doors are closed and sealed with the Latin command, "Extra Omnes" ("Everyone out!")



The Oath Itself

Each Cardinal says the oath individually (not in a group) while placing his hand on the Bible. "We, the Cardinals electors, promise, pledge, and swear to observe faithfully and scrupulously the prescriptions contained in the Apostolic Constitution Universi Dominici Gregis of Pope John Paul II, and to maintain strict secrecy concerning all matters in any way related to the election of The Roman Pontiff." e.g; "And I, Jorge Cardinal Bergoglio, do I promise, pledge, and swear. So, help me God and these Holy Gospel which I touch with my hand."



The Voting

Each cardinal writes the name of their chosen candidate on a ballot. The ballots are collected and counted. A two-thirds majority is required to elect a new pope. If no candidate achieves this, up to four voting rounds are held each day until a decision is reached.



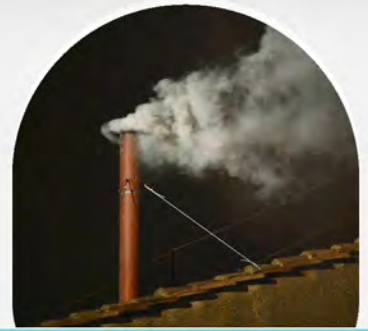
The Scrutiny

First day: Only one voting session in the afternoon.
Next days: Up to two votes in the afternoon. If after a few days (according to the rules) there's still no election, they may switch to a runoff between the two most voted candidates.



The Acceptance

The Dean asks him the traditional question, in Latin, "Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff? The elected cardinal must reply immediately. *Accepto* ("I Accept"). By what name do you wish to be called? ("*Quo nomine vis vocari?*") The new Pope Chooses his papal name then. (e.g. Jorge Bergoglio became Pope Francis.)



The Smoke

After each voting round, the ballots burned. The color of the smoke indicates the outcome.

Black Smoke:

No decision has been made.

White Smoke: A new pope has been elected. To avoid confusion, bells now accompany the white smoke to clearly signal the election of a new pope.



The Visting

After saying "*Accepto*" and choosing his name. The newly elected pope is led by the Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations and assistance to a special room called the "Room of tear" (*Sacrarium Lacrimarum*). The name Room of Tears comes from tradition many popes feel overwhelmed emotionally at that moment, sometimes weeping because of the enormous weight of the office. The new pope changes out of his cardinal clothes and puts on papal vestments for the first time.



Habemus Papam

Announcement to the world: After dressing, the new, Pope is led to the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica. The Cardinal Protodeacon comes out and announces: *Annuntio Vobis Gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam.* (I announce to you a great joy: We have a Pope). Then the new Pope steps out and gives his first blessing: *Urbi et Orbi* (to the City and to the World).

Note: Before the election and acceptance, while the Apostolic see (Roman See) is vacant, it is governed collegially by the College of Cardinals. During this time, the cardinals are authorized Only to handle ordinary affairs; they cannot make any decisions that would normally belong to the pope.

By Rev. Alberto E. Vargas, JCL, JV., Catholic Diocese of Saginaw, 5-1-2025