

POPE FRANCIS: 1936 - 2025

# 'WHO AM I TO JUDGE'

ANDREAS SOLARO / POOL / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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Twelve pages on the life and legacy of Pope Francis I

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# A HUMBLE POPE WHO EMBRACED CHANGE

NICOLE WINFIELD

VATICAN CITY • Pope Francis, history's first Latin American pontiff, who charmed the world with his humble style and concern for the poor but alienated conservatives with critiques of capitalism and climate change, died Monday. He was 88.

Bells tolled in churches from his native Argentina to the Philippines and across Rome as news spread around the world after the announcement, which was read by Cardinal Kevin Farrell from the chapel of the Domus Santa Marta, where Francis lived.

"At 7:35 this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the home of the Father. His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of his Church," said Farrell, the Vatican camerlengo, who takes charge after a pontiff's death.

Francis, who suffered from chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, was admitted to hospital on Feb. 14, for a respiratory crisis that developed into double pneumonia. He spent 38 days there, the longest hospitalization of his 12-year papacy.

He made his last public appearance on Easter Sunday — a day before his death — to bless thousands in St. Peter's Square. Beforehand, he met with U.S. Vice President JD Vance.

Francis performed the blessing from the same loggia where he was introduced to the world on March 13, 2013 as the 266th pope.

From his first greeting that night



Pope Francis participates in Easter celebrations at the Vatican on Sunday.

TIZIANA FABI / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

— a remarkably normal “Buonasera” (“Good evening”) — to his embrace of refugees and the downtrodden, Francis signalled a different tone for the papacy, stressing humility over hubris for a Catholic Church beset by scandal.

The Argentine-born Jorge Mario Bergoglio brought a breath of fresh air into a 2,000-year-old institution that had seen its influence wane during the troubled tenure of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI.

Francis was elected on a mandate to reform the Vatican bureaucracy and finances but went further in shaking up the church without changing its core doctrine. “Who am I to judge?” he replied when asked about a purportedly gay priest.

Stressing mercy, Francis changed the church's position on the death penalty, calling it inadmissible in all circumstances. He also declared the possession of nuclear weapons, not just their use, was “immoral.”

In other firsts, he approved an agreement with China over bishop nominations that had vexed the

Vatican for decades, met the Russian patriarch and charted new relations with the Muslim world by visiting the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq.

He reaffirmed the all-male, celibate priesthood and upheld the church's opposition to abortion, equating it to “hiring a hit man to solve a problem.”

But he added women to important decision-making roles and allowed them to serve as lectors and acolytes in parishes. He let women vote alongside bishops in periodic meetings.

While Francis did not allow women to be ordained, the voting reform was part of a revolutionary change in emphasizing what the church should be: a refuge for everyone — “todos, todos, todos” (“everyone, everyone, everyone”). Migrants, the poor, prisoners and outcasts were invited to his table far more than presidents or powerful CEOs.

“For Pope Francis, (the goal) was always to extend the arms of the church to embrace all people, not to exclude anyone,” said Farrell.

*The Associated Press*

# Francis bent the papacy to his will

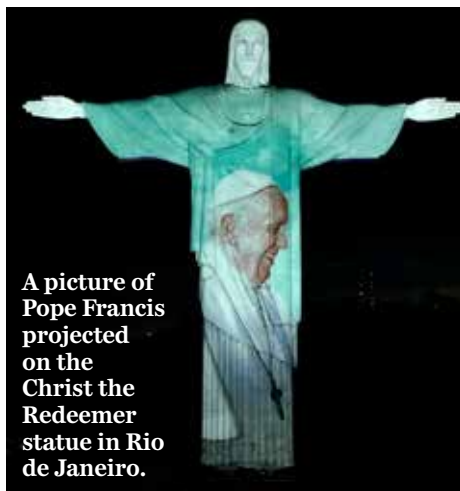
FATHER RAYMOND J. DE SOUZA

The real achievement of Pope Francis was not often remarked. It was that he managed to do the job at all, sometimes well, sometimes less so. But after two historic predecessors, the great fear was the office would overwhelm the man.

Pope John Paul II, already canonized, was spoken of by Francis himself as “the Great” — a title given only to Pope Leo the Great (440-461) and Pope Gregory the Great (590-604). John Paul, one of the dominant figures of the 20th century, is amongst those few popes who will be remembered centuries after his death. Likewise, his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, a rare case of a towering theologian seated on the papal throne, will be studied for generations hence. They were unusual; most popes, maximally prominent during their lives, fade quickly after their deaths.

In 2013, the question was whether any successor could truly succeed. The demands of the modern papacy were such that Benedict abdicated under the increasing burden of age. Even the most accomplished of men might be crushed by the burden. But Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, the first Latin American pope, was not at all overwhelmed.

From the first, he bent the ancient office to his will, refusing to wear the customary ceremonial garb on the balcony, refusing to use the papal car (he hopped on the cardinals’ shuttle



BRAZIL'S SANCTUARY OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER / AFP

bus) and then refusing to live in the papal residence (he took quarters in the Vatican hotel). He was confident and charted his own course.

No office — even one established by Jesus Christ — can endure if it requires only superheroes to fill it. Pope Francis brought the office back down to size after 35 years of giants, John Paul and Benedict.

The humble Pope was massively popular at the outset, paying his own hotel bill after the conclave, calling the newspaper vendor back home to cancel his subscription, inviting a garbage scavenger he had befriended to his inaugural Mass in St. Peter's Square. A more familiar papacy emerged — Francis gave lengthy press conferences while airborne on trips, engaged a parade of journalists, providing material for a constant stream of stories, and published some two dozen interview books.

All that made the papacy not only humble in style, but smaller in impact. Often enough, Francis became only another voice in the noisy digital environment. Last year and this year, he released what were billed as “first-ever autobiographies.” Both sank without making a significant splash.

The rhetorical shrinking began at the outset when, just months into his papacy, Francis made his most famous statement, in what would become the signature theme of his pontificate: “Who am I to judge?”

To certain more traditional Catholic ears, the answer was obvious: The Pope. Popes judge. As Jesus did, frequently enough with great severity — “throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The verb “to pontificate” exists for a reason. It's what popes do.

To more worldly ears, Francis was cause for rejoicing. The age of non-judgmentalism had found an unlikely hero in, astonishingly, the Roman Pontiff. The laudations sounded around the world, especially because the context of “who am I to judge?” was a question about homosexuality. Pope Francis didn't change Church teaching, but his manner and mode of teaching was a change from his predecessors. It was widely welcomed with enthusiasm.

Time magazine named him Person of the Year before his first anniversary; as did the gay magazine *The Advocate*. In contrast, John Paul had been pope for 16 years and brought down the Iron Curtain before Time gave him similar recognition in 1994. The secular world, and the various quarters of liberal Christianity, were euphoric. Finally, the pope they had fervently desired had arrived, a pope who would not pontificate.

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ALBERTO PIZZOLI / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

### Candles and messages of healing for Pope Francis while he was at Gemelli hospital in Rome in late February.

Francis was more complicated than that.

In point of fact, he delivered judgments on a wider array of topics than his predecessors, and in much more vivid language. Abortion, he said, was “like hiring a hitman.” Gender theory was the “ugliest ideology of our time.” “This economy kills,” he said of financial markets. Regarding his closest collaborators in the Vatican, he identified “curial diseases” to which they were prone — and then proceeded to list more than a dozen of them, including “spiritual Alzheimer’s,” “rivalry and vainglory,” “existential schizophrenia,” “indifference to others” and a “lugubrious face.”

No pope in living memory spoke like that.

And none of his predecessors spoke so specifically on policy matters, preferring to restrict themselves more to principles than practical

application. Pope Francis released a major encyclical — the highest form of papal teaching — specifically to influence the 2015 Paris climate conference. He objected to the immigration policies of President Donald Trump and various European conservative political parties. He made no secret of his sympathy for Palestinians relative to Israelis, calling every day the Catholic parish in Gaza since the Hamas war began. And he advised Ukraine to have the courage to embrace the “white flag” in the face of Russia’s invasion.

In foreign policy, so to speak, his impact was limited. His advocacy of the climate change agenda and liberal migration was ardent, but his papacy ended with both losing popularity and suffering policy reversals.

Regarding tyrants, he never found the same voice he had on other issues. Ukrainians were frustrated that he found it difficult to condemn

Russia’s aggression by name. The persecution of Catholics in China intensified, but Francis never said a word. In Venezuela and Nicaragua, the regimes openly declared war on the Catholic Church — the latter expelled Mother Teresa’s nuns and threw bishops in jail without trial — and the first Latin American pope could not muster a robust response.

The things he didn’t say about China and Russia angered conservatives. The things he did say about Church practice — on blessings for same-sex couples, for example — encouraged liberals, but over time they lamented that words — not concrete reforms — seemed to be his limit.

Toward the end, Pope Francis became a figure of affection more than admiration. Conservatives objected to his liberalizing tendencies; liberals objected that they remained only tendencies.

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Yet the affection remained for a modest pastor who had a heart transparently open to the suffering and the afflicted, those on the margins and the “peripheries” — a word he introduced into Catholic vocabulary, an echo of Jesus’s command to feed, clothe, and visit the “least of my brethren.”

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (I Corinthians 14:8)

Pope Francis was wary of the certain trumpet. In his autobiography published in January 2025, the concluding lines — a sort of final testament — reveal his suspicions of certainty.

“It is no good a person saying with total certainty that they have met God,” he writes. “If someone has answers to all the questions, this is proof that God is not with them. It means that they are a false prophet, someone who exploits religion, who uses it for themselves. The great guides of God’s people, like Moses, always left space for doubt.”

There will now be a conclave to elect Francis’s successor. Last year’s eponymous movie features an address to the cardinals by the dean of their college.

“There is one sin which I have come to fear above all others: certainty,” says Cardinal Lawrence, played masterfully by Ralph Fiennes in *Conclave*. “Certainty is the great enemy of unity. Certainty is the deadly enemy of tolerance. ... Our faith is a living thing precisely because it walks hand in hand with doubt. If there was only certainty and no doubt, there would be no mystery and, therefore, no need for faith. Let us pray that God grants us a pope who doubts.”

That Pope Francis in real life and the papal desideratum of the movies



JOHN MOORE / GETTY IMAGES

#### **A portrait of Pope Francis at a Catholic mass in Buenos Aires on March 2.**

would apparently agree explains why so many Catholics were disturbed by him. He was quite sure that they needed disturbing, to be shocked, if need be, out of a complacency that empties the Cross of Christ of its power (cf. I Corinthians 1:17). The cross of Jesus — indeed the entirety of Christ’s ministry — was profoundly disturbing to the contented clerical caste of the day.

That same capacity to disturb explained why Pope Francis was so beloved by those usually more hostile to the papal office.

At conclave time, the eyes of the world turn to Rome, the Eternal City. In Evelyn Waugh’s historical novel, *Helena*, he creates a marvellous conversation between Constantine, the first Christian emperor of Rome, and his mother, the empress dowager, known as St. Helena. Constantine is fretting about the Eternal City, then only a thousand years old. He was

planning to move east, to establish Constantinople on the Bosphorus, a capital in his own image.

“I hate Rome,” says Constantine. “I think it’s a perfectly beastly place. It has never agreed with me. Even after my battle at the Milvian Bridge when everything was flags and flowers and hallelujahs and I was the Saviour — even then I didn’t feel quite at ease. Give me the East where a man can feel unique. Here you are just one figure in an endless historical pageant. The City is waiting for you to move on.”

The city has now moved on from Francis, Bishop of Rome, as it has for two millennia.

How will he be remembered?

Fondly, but not as one whose passage made a lasting impression. He, more than those before him, gave his judgments to passing things. Passing things pass. The city and the Church move on.

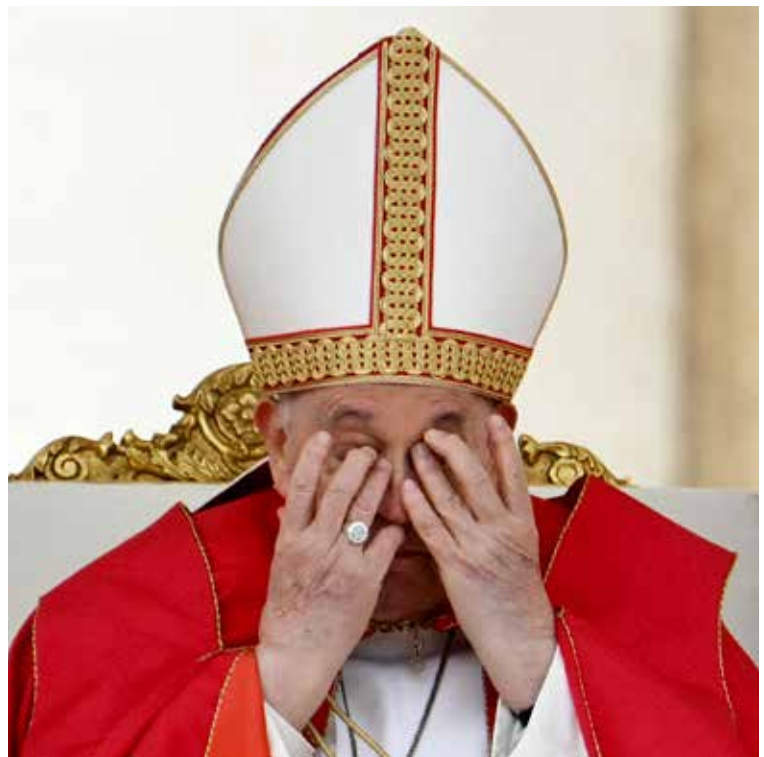
*National Post*





PHOTOS BY ALBERTO PIZZOLI / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

**Pope Francis greets the crowd at St. Peter's Square in November 2024, above, and again on Dec. 25, 2024, below left. Below right: Pope Francis presides over the Palm Sunday mass at the Vatican on March 24, 2024.**



In the first chapter of his autobiography, *Hope*, Pope Francis served readers a reminder that his passionate defence of migrants and refugees originated in deeply personal as well as theological roots.

Although he is hailed as the first Argentinian pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, his extended family emigrated to the South American country from the Calabria region of Italy in 1922, only 16 years before the future pope's birth on Dec. 17, 1936.

Francis devoted the opening of his life story to that migrant's tale. In doing so, he brought attention to the twist of fate that made his own existence possible. His grandparents, along with their son, Mario, had their hopes of sailing to South America on the SS *Principessa Mafalda* in October 1927 dashed. Between Italy and Argentina, the *Mafalda* went down at sea with a loss of between 300 and 600 lives.

"That shipwreck was the Italian Titanic. (The) story was told in my family. It was told in my barrio, my neighbourhood. It was sung about in the popular songs of migrants on both sides of the ocean," Francis writes in *Hope*, which was released in January 2025.

Had Mario and his immigrant parents been among the victims, later memorialized in story and song, there would have been no Jorge Mario Bergoglio to be chosen by the conclave of cardinals in 2013 as Pope Francis, the Vicar of Christ on Earth.

"That is why I'm here now. You cannot imagine how many times I have found myself thanking Divine Providence," Francis wrote.

The metaphor of the shipwreck

# Memoir illustrates the 'messy' challenges he faced

PETER STOCKLAND

narrowly avoided and bad luck begetting greater good fortune clearly extended beyond Francis. The Barque of St. Peter, an out-of-fashion seafaring term for the world's largest Christian denomination and its 1.3 billion adherents, is now seen in various states of repair. One is that it's making a vital course correction. Another is that it's becalmed and running low on provisions. A third has it listing dangerously to the port side.



The debate over the metaphor intensified on Feb. 14, 2025, when Francis was hospitalized in Rome with double pneumonia. The implication of an 88-year-old human being bedridden and unable to breathe properly was obvious cause for concern. The usual Vatican fog that described the condition as "complex" only fed death-watch fever.

"It's pure reason that the older you get, each time you go into hospital with a major illness, the less likely you're going to come out," said Luke

Stocking, interim director of the major Canadian Catholic social justice agency Development and Peace.

Stocking is among the Catholics called to assess Francis's legacy. He believes history will judge it positively overall. Critics might target a papal penchant for "messiness" or for certain "symbolic gestures" that tended to lead nowhere, appeared as grandstanding, or entirely backfired, he acknowledged.

"But those things speak to me, and to a lot of us, within Development and Peace and the wider Church, as showing simplicity, closeness, a more pastoral way of being the Church. The point Francis always makes is that it's about the mission of announcing the Gospel. His vision of the Church is the people of God walking together, and I think that's most important."

He notes the environmentally oriented 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'* brought secular attention to the Church until secularists realized Francis meant an understanding of "nature" far beyond tree-hugging, shrub-cuddling, or being BFFs with Bambi. For the faithful, it and other encyclicals of the Francis era brought refreshed, contemporary vocabulary to traditional understanding of "the interconnectedness and indivisibility of our relationship to the Earth, to God and to each other," Stocking said.

That interconnection, he agreed, has been integral to Francis's reawakening of the Christian conviction amid the choice between ideas and humans, when we should always choose the human.

"Sometimes choosing humans over ideas can lead to messiness, but at the core of our faith is a person, not an idea. Jesus is not an idea. The Incarnation is a person."

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DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

**Jorge Mario Bergoglio, right, in 2005, when he was still a cardinal.**

“Being president of a Catholic university throughout his papacy has allowed me a particular view of the Pope’s way of connecting with younger people, of making them feel valued in the faith, and knowing the Church wants to hear their voice,” Turcotte said.

But while he lauds Francis for his outreach to other faiths as well, Turcotte suggested it’s too early to judge the Pope in terms of measuring what he has accomplished against the hope he generated at the conclave a dozen years ago.

“For ultraconservative Catholics, he was too radical. For liberal Catholics, (he) was not going far enough. The reality is he aimed to be a balancing force and, above all, a connector. In the end, I believe we’ll come to see Pope Francis was more of a traditionalist than he is given credit for.”

McGill University’s Douglas Farrow, a professor of theology and ethics, as well as a holder of the Kennedy Smith Chair in Catholic Studies, agrees that one of Francis’s legacies will be divided loyalties. But he isn’t convinced that will be the faithful’s fault for misunderstanding the Franciscan papacy. Rather, Farrow said, it’s integral to the Pope’s nature.

“He is a man of contradictions. He came in (to the papacy) saying to young people, ‘Go and make a mess.’ He’s leaving as an old man who has followed his own advice and made a mess. Even his parting gift of an enormously large College of Cardinals is likely to be quite a mess when it meets (to choose the next pope),” Farrow said.

He disputed a common claim that the problem lies in Francis’s weak-

ness as a theologian or, as one senior Canadian cleric said to me privately: “You know, he’s an idiot. Well, not so much an idiot as a Jesuit. They like to make a mess.”

Farrow believes that judgment ultimately underestimates Francis’s intentionality.

“It’s not like he (was) bumbling around. He (had) a pretty shrewd mind. He (had) his own quite idiosyncratic understanding of theology, the human person, and the Church — and he messed with other people’s understanding of all those. But (was) his own (understanding) actually coherent? I don’t think so.”

Like a ship’s captain stranded between two shores, Francis’s theology was “incompatible at key points” with the tradition of the Church: “Therefore, it’s inevitably incoherent because he’s sitting in the chair that is responsible to maintain that tradition,” Farrow said.

Farrow stressed he is not at all suggesting, as some diehard, self-styled traditionalist Catholic conspiracy theorists insist, that Francis set out to deliberately wreck the Barque of Peter on the reefs of liberal secularism or any other such political category.

“What he (did) is take an idiosyncratic, and even autocratic, approach to his own function as Pope, and used it to undermine the authority of (Catholic) tradition, the authority of other bishops, and left us asking, ‘Does this man really know what he’s doing?’ Ultimately, that’s a Divine judgment. But you can’t have it both ways.”

And yet Francis’s own autobiography illustrates that, in some ways, you can. His family, unable to leave, were saved to finally arrive in the land where a future pope was born.

*Special to National Post*





VINCENZO PINTO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

**In 2022, Pope Francis took in the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage northwest of Edmonton, above, greeted Antoine Eidelwein at the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City, and met the Indigenous community at Maskwacis, Alta.**



CHIP SOMODEVILLA / GETTY IMAGES



LARRY WONG / POSTMEDIA NEWS

# HOW THE POPE IS CHOSEN

CHRIS KNIGHT

At 88 years of age, Pope Francis I was the second-oldest pope to hold the title in the last 600 years. Only Leo XIII, who died aged 93 in 1903, outlived him. His death triggers the election of the 267th pope, a process known as a conclave.

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR CHOOSING A POPE?

In the days after the pope dies, eligible cardinals make their way to Rome to vote by secret ballot in the conclave, which has been held in the Sistine Chapel since 1878.

Cardinals can vote up to the age of 80. There are not supposed to be more than 120 so-called cardinal-electors, according to a ruling by Pope Paul VI in 1975, but it has not been strictly followed. In December 2024, Pope Francis created 21 new cardinals, and there are now about 140 of voting age.

Paper ballots are handed out, and each cardinal writes the name of his chosen candidate below the words, “Eligo in Summun Pontificem” (Latin for, “I elect as supreme pontiff”). Unlike politicians, cardinals cannot vote for themselves.

## WHAT DO THE CARDINALS CONSIDER WHEN VOTING?

During the conclave, cardinals offer sermons on the state of the world and the church, which indicates what qualities the next pope should have, says Megan Armstrong, a professor at McMaster University who specializes

in early modern Catholicism.

“Whoever’s chosen pope, what we see is they’ve been paying attention to what’s going on in the Church itself and the state of the world at the time,” she said.

“They’re weighing in what direction the church should be.”

Armstrong said the College of Cardinals is split between progressives and conservatives.

Francis, with his relatively liberal views of same-sex marriage and divorce, was seen as being in favour of a “listening church,” responsive to the concerns of the people. His predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, was seen as more traditional.

“We’re dealing with a very interesting moment. We’ll see the temperature of the Church by who’s chosen,” Armstrong said.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

There’s no limit. After the votes are counted, if no one has a two-thirds majority, the ballots are mixed with chemicals — potassium perchlorate, anthracene and sulphur (which used to be called brimstone) — and burned to create black smoke, which tells those outside the Vatican that no pope has been chosen.

In that case, the process repeats. Up to four votes a day can be held for up to four days in a row. The fifth day is then reserved for prayer and discussion, and then voting resumes.

When a two-thirds majority is reached, the ballots are burned with potassium chlorate, lactose and ros-

in. The resultant white smoke signals, “Habemus papam,” Latin for, “We have a pope.”

One of the longest conclaves in history was held from May 1, 1314, to Aug. 7, 1316, resulting in the election of Pope John XXII. In contrast, Pope Francis was elected after just four ballots stretching over two days in 2013.

## WHAT QUALIFICATIONS EXIST FOR BECOMING POPE?

There are only two rules, but they disqualify a lot of people. You must be Roman Catholic and you must be male. But since 1379, every pope has also come from the College of Cardinals, the same small group that votes at the conclave.

## HOW MANY CARDINALS ARE CANADIAN?

Canada has five cardinals, four of voting age: Frank Leo, Michael Czerny, Gerald Cyprien LaCroix and Thomas Christopher Collins, as well as Marc Ouellet, who turned 80 last year.

## HAS ANY POPE EVER RESIGNED?

Yes. In fact, Pope Francis was elected after his predecessor, Benedict XVI, stepped down in 2013. He became the first pope to do so since Gregory XII in 1415. He retained the title of Pope Emeritus until his death in 2022.

*National Post,*  
with additional reporting  
by Simona Milutinovic



# THE POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS

Who might be in line to succeed Francis? Here are a few cardinals seen as potential popes.

## **PIETRO PAROLIN**

The Italian-born Parolin, 70, is a longtime Vatican diplomat who has been its Secretary of State since October 2013 and a cardinal since February 2014. The son of a store manager and a teacher, he chaired the 2014 meeting that led to briefly thawed ties between the U.S. and Cuba, and has criticized Ireland's decision to approve gay marriage. He has criticized Israel's war in Gaza following Hamas's terrorist attack on Oct. 7, 2023.

## **FRIDOLIN AMBONGO BESUNGU**

The Congo-born Besungu, 65, has served as archbishop of Kinshasa since 2018 and was elevated to cardinal the following year. He has spoken out in favour of democracy in Congo and is seen as a staunch supporter of social justice and an opponent of the exploitation of Congo's natural resources.

## **WIM EIJK**

The Netherlands-born Eijk, 71, pursued medicine before turning to the priesthood. He was appointed cardinal in 2012 and was a part of the conclave that chose Pope Francis in 2013. He has served on the executive board of a pro-life doctors' group in the Netherlands. He is known as a conservative, firing a transgender employee and criticizing Francis's more liberal positions.



DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

## **PETER ERDO**

The Budapest-born Erdo, 72, was appointed archbishop in 2003 by Pope John Paul II. He has been called "one of the leading ecclesiastical figures of our time," and participated in the conclaves that chose both Francis and Benedict. He has spoken against divorced Catholics receiving communion. In 2015, he attempted to bring the Catholic faith to African countries under communist regimes, having experienced imposed secularism in Hungary.

## **LUIS ANTONIO TAGLE**

The Manila-born Tagle, 67, is a former archbishop of Manila and a prelate within the Evangelist denomination. He likes to go by his nickname, Chito, and is seen as progressive on social issues. He helped draft the history for the Second Vatican Council and has been a theological lecturer and speaker. In 1997, he was appointed a member of the International Theological Commission and participated as an expert at the Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops the following year. He was part of the 2013 conclave that elevated Pope Francis.

## **RAYMOND BURKE**

The Wisconsin-born Burke, 76, is an

Irish-American traditionalist who has clashed with Francis, and was evicted from some church roles and reportedly even his Vatican apartment. The former high school religion teacher was ordained as a cardinal in 1995 by Pope John Paul II. He later served as Archbishop of St. Louis. He founded the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe; her story reportedly sealed his commitment to Catholicism.

## **MARIO GRECH**

The Malta-born Grech, 68, was appointed pro-Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops in 2019, and cardinal a year later. He is supportive of reaching out to Catholics ostracized because of their sexuality or marital status. Of negative attitudes toward homosexuals and divorcees in the church, he has said "they are out of tune and they're non-Christian."

## **MATTEO ZUPPI**

The Rome-born Zuppi, 69, was appointed cardinal in 2019 and has been president of the Episcopal Conference of Italy since May 2022. In his youth, Zuppi worked with disadvantaged communities including marginalized children, elders, the terminally ill, immigrants and homeless people. He was made an honorary citizen of Mozambique for his role in helping to end the civil war in 1992, and in 2023 carried out a Ukraine peace mission at Francis's request. On June 2, 2023, he was appointed to the Vatican City State Supreme Court for a year.

*Simona Milutinovic, National Post*



LARRY WONG / POSTMEDIA

Pope Francis prays at Ermineskin Cemetery in Maskwacis, Alta., during his visit to Canada in July of 2022.