

An illustration of St. Peter's Basilica in the background, featuring its large dome and classical architecture. In the foreground on the right, there is a large stone statue of St. Peter, shown from the back, wearing a white papal hat and a long white robe. The scene is set in a courtyard with a green lawn and a blue sky.

Pope Francis

The Pope



The Pope, meaning 'Father', is the head of the Roman Catholic Church and Bishop of Rome.

He is believed to be the successor of Saint Peter, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. The Pope is also known as the Vicar of Christ, servant of the servants of God and Supreme Pontiff.

Election of a New Pope

The new Pope gets his job by being elected by cardinals. In the hierarchy of the church, cardinals are the rank immediately below the Pope. An election takes place when a Pope dies or resigns, but a majority is needed. The voting takes place inside the Vatican's Sistine Chapel.

When someone receives the majority of the votes and the new position is accepted, the ballot papers are burned without the straw, creating white smoke and alerting crowds that there is a new Pope.

If nobody gets 2/3 of the votes, wet straw is mixed with the paper ballots and burned, sending black smoke up through the chimney, indicating to people that a new Pope hasn't been decided yet.



The 266th Pope



Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected as the 266th Pope in 2013. He speaks German, Spanish and Italian and is a humble man who rejects luxury. He strongly believes in helping the poor.

Quick Facts

- born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 17 December, 1936
- studied chemistry at university
- had a lung removed at the age of 22
- ordained as a **Jesuit** priest at 32
- became a bishop in 1992
- became Archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998 but still took public transport and chooses to live in modest accommodation
- became a cardinal in 2001
- first non-European Pope
- first Jesuit Pope
- lives in Vatican City, Rome, Italy.

Jesuit – Roman Catholic order of religious men who live simple lives and carry out missionary, educational and charitable work.

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Pope Francis



During his first appearance on the balcony of Saint Peter's Basilica, he wore a simple white cassock instead of the more elaborate garments worn by his predecessors.

Once elected, the Pope chooses a new name known as the 'papal name'. This name gives people an idea about how he will lead the church. Pope Francis is the first ever Pope to be named Francis, out of respect for Saint Francis of Assisi.

Saint Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis of Assisi gave up all material goods to live a simple life of poverty. He preached to people about the life of Jesus and was also known for his love of nature. It is thought that he could tame wild animals.

Saint Francis was a dedicated follower of the Catholic Church. He was declared a saint two years after his death.



Duties



Examples of Pope Francis' public duties:

- weekly blessings for tourists and **pilgrims**
- leading religious celebrations inside St Peter's
- appointing new bishops and meeting with them at least once every five years
- receiving visits from heads of state
- travelling all around the world with a mission to spread faith and understanding

Pilgrim – a person who travels to a sacred place for religious reasons.

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Coat of Arms



Each Pope has a coat of arms which is a way of representing things that are important to them.

Pope Francis believes it is important to ask for forgiveness and to forgive others, take care of those who are less fortunate and be close to God. He doesn't see importance in material goods, and thinks people should only own life's essentials.

The sun and 'IHS' mean that Pope Francis belongs to the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits).

The keys represent Saint Peter.

The motto means 'to be shown mercy and chosen'.

The star and the spikenard (an ancient plant associated with St Joseph), tell us how devoted Pope Francis is to the Holy Family.





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