

HOLY FATHER FRANCIS RETURNS TO THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER

As a mark of respect following the demise of the venerated pontiff, three days of state mourning will be observed across India on 22nd and 23rd of April and on the day of the funeral

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

Bells tolled in church towers across Rome after the announcement, which was read out by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the Vatican camerlengo, 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," Farrell said.

Francis entered Gemelli hospital on Feb. 14, 2025, for a respiratory crisis that developed into double pneumonia and, at 38 days, became the longest hospitalisation of his papacy.

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POPE FRANCIS
1936-2025

A HEALER AND A CHANGEMAKER

■ Born in Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio – the future Pope Francis – was the eldest of five children of Italian immigrants

■ He credited his grandmother Rosa with teaching him how to pray

■ He said he decided on the priesthood at 17, entering the diocesan seminary four years later

■ In 1958, he switched to the Jesuit order. He was named head of the Jesuits in Argentina in 1973 at age 36

■ Francis changed church positions on the death penalty, declaring it inadmissible in all circumstances, and modified its stand on nuclear weapons by saying their possession was immoral

■ He also approved an agreement with China on bishop nominations that had vexed the Vatican for decades, and charted new relations with the Muslim world by visiting the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq

■ He emphasised the church should be a refuge for those on society's fringes: migrants, the poor, prisoners and outcasts

■ He was known for his outreach to LGBTQIA+ Catholics, and famously said, when asked about a purportedly gay priest, "Who am I to judge?"

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WHAT HAPPENS NEXT AT THE VATICAN

WHO'S IN CHARGE NOW?

After the death of the Pope, the camerlengo, or chamberlain, must certify the death and seal the papal apartment. He runs administrative and financial duties of the Holy See until a new Pope takes over. The largely ceremonial job of camerlengo is currently held by Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the Irish-born American head of the Vatican's laity office.

Nearly all prefects of Vatican offices lose their jobs when a pope dies, but a few stay on, including the foreign minister and the master of liturgical ceremonies, who plays a key role in assembling the conclave.

The dean of the College of Cardinals summons the cardinals for the funeral, presiding at the Mass before the conclave begins. That position is currently held by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the retired head of the Vatican's office for bishops.

Francis has chosen to be buried in St. Mary Major Basilica, where his favourite icon of the Virgin Mary, the Salus Populi Romani, is located.

WHAT'S THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS?

The death of a pope begins a precise sequence of events that includes the confirmation of death in the pontiff's home, the transfer of the coffin to St. Peter's Basilica for public viewing, a funeral Mass and burial. Interment must take place between the fourth and sixth day after his death. After the funeral, there are nine days of official mourning, known as the novendiali.

During this period, the cardinals arrive in Rome. To give everyone time to assemble, the conclave must begin 15-20 days after the sede vacante is declared, although it can start sooner if the cardinals agree.

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'A moment to thank God': Goa Church on Pope's demise

Cardinal Ferrao calls pontiff inspiring & compassionate Shepherd of Church

AGENCIES, PANJIM: The Church in Goa termed the demise of Pope Francis as "sad news for the universal church," asserting that it was "a moment of giving thanks to God" for providing the leadership of "this great man".

Archbishop of Goa and Daman Archbishop Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrao said, "His vision to transform the Church into a synodal community, one that listens, discerns, journeys together and embraces inclusivity, has left an indelible mark on the Church at all levels."

Pope Francis's unwavering commitment to the Church and his dynamic endeavours in promoting peace, inter-religious dialogue, social justice and care for creation will be long remembered and cherished, he added.

"His untiring efforts to bring the Love of God to those on the peripheries, offering hope to the dejected and opening the healing

face of the Church to the wounded will go a long way in presenting the true Face of our Lord Jesus Christ," the Archbishop said in a statement released to the media.

"I, along with all the faithful of this Archdiocese, deeply mourn the loss of this inspiring and compassionate Shepherd of the Church. May his soul find eternal peace in the loving arms of our heavenly Father," Archbishop Ferrao added.

"It is sad news for the universal church. But at the same time, it is a moment of giving thanks to God. God has led the church for the last almost 12 years now with the leadership of this great man, a man of god. That is why it is also a moment for the church to thank God," said Fr Henry Falcao, Director of St Joseph Vaz Renewal Centre at Old Goa.

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Catholic Bishops body declares 9-day nationwide mourning period

MARGAO: Following Pope Francis's death, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) has announced a nine-day mourning period nationwide.

The Archbishop of Goa and Daman Filipe Neri Cardinal Ferrão, who is also the CCBI president, has issued a circular to all members of the Latin Catholic Church in India, requesting special prayers and Requiem Masses for the Pope's soul. Church bells will be tolled as a sign of grief. The circular emphasised Pope Francis's legacy and his efforts to promote fellowship and inclusivity within the Church. Cardinal Ferrão has requested dioceses to gather priests, religious, and lay faithful for Requiem Masses. The statement also acknowledges Pope Francis's canonisation of five Indian saints during his time as Pope.

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CONNECTING BEYOND BORDERS



Pope Francis meets refugees on the occasion of World Day of Migrants and Refugees in September 2023



Pope Francis shares a laugh with former US President Barack Obama at the Vatican in Rome



Pope Francis according a warm welcome to Prime Minister Narendra Modi



The Holy Father met with the then US Vice President Joe Biden after his inaugural Mass at the Vatican

All eyes on the possible successor to Pope Francis

PTI, VATICAN CITY: According to Vatican rules, any baptised Catholic male is eligible to become the next Pope, though only cardinals have been selected since 1378. The winner must receive at least two-thirds of the vote from those cardinals under age 80 and thus eligible to participate.

Pope Francis, who died Monday, appointed the vast majority of electors, often tapping men who share his pastoral priorities, which suggests continuity rather than rupture. Let's take a look at some of the possible candidates:

Cardinal Peter Erdő: The 72-year-old Archbishop of Budapest and primate of Hungary, was twice elected head of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences, in 2005 and 2011, suggesting he enjoys the esteem of European cardinals who make up the biggest voting bloc of electors.

Cardinal Reinhard Marx: The 71-year-old Archbishop of Munich and Freising, was chosen by Francis as a key adviser in 2013. Marx later was named to head the council overseeing Vatican finances during reforms and belt-tightening.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet: The 80-year-old, of Canada, led the Vatican's influential bishops office for over a decade, overseeing the key clearinghouse for potential candidates to head dioceses around the world.

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A Pope and an avid soccer fan

PTI, ROME: From meetings with Diego Maradona to the passion for his beloved Buenos Aires club, San Lorenzo, Pope Francis was an avid soccer fan. And a promoter of sports in general.

Pope Francis died Monday at 88 and the soccer and sports world immediately paid homage.

All sports events scheduled for Monday in Italy were postponed to mourn Francis, including four top-flight soccer matches. A minute of silence will be observed before all sports events this week, the Italian Olympic Committee said.

"Italian soccer joins in the mourning of millions of people following the death of Pope Francis. He was a great example of Christian caring and dignity in the face of suffering and he was always attentive to the sports world and particularly soccer, of which he was a fan," said Italian soccer federation president Gabriele Gravina.



Pope Francis with Diego Maradona

Pope Francis' passion for soccer became known almost immediately after he was elected pope in 2013 when San Lorenzo tweeted a photo of him holding up the club's crest. He was a card-carrying member of the club, with San Lorenzo ID No.

88235. San Lorenzo, one of the oldest teams in the Argentine Football Association, performed well after Pope Francis was elected as the 266th pope in March 2013. San Lorenzo is nicknamed the Saints.

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SOCCER IN HIS DIVINE HEART

■ Pope Francis was a card-carrying member of the Buenos Aires soccer club San Lorenzo, with ID No. 88235

■ San Lorenzo, one of the oldest teams in the Argentine Football Association, is nicknamed the Saints. It performed well after Francis was elected Pope in March 2013

■ A planned new San Lorenzo stadium is to be named after Pope

■ In Italy, there were also suggestions that Pope Francis supported Juventus since his family came from the Piedmont region where the Turin club is based

■ Francis met his fellow Argentine Maradona twice as Pope. When Maradona died in 2020, Francis remembered the soccer great in his prayers

TRIBUTES POUR IN

“Deeply pained by the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. In this hour of grief and remembrance, my heartfelt condolences to the global Catholic community

— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

“He stood by the downtrodden and the marginalised, spoke fearlessly against inequality, and inspired millions across faiths with his message of love and humanity. My thoughts are with the Catholic community in India and around the world

— Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha

“A great man has left us. I had the privilege of enjoying his friendship, his counsel and his teachings, which never failed, not even in times of trial and suffering

— Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy

“Our heavy hearts have been somewhat eased, however, to know that His Holiness was able to share an Easter Greeting with the Church and the world he served with such devotion throughout his life and ministry

— King Charles III, King of the United Kingdom

“He knew how to give hope, ease suffering through prayer, and foster unity

— Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine

“From Buenos Aires to Rome, Pope Francis wanted the Church to bring joy and hope to the poorest. For it to unite humans among themselves, and with nature. May this hope forever outlast him

— Emmanuel Macron, President of France

“His solidarity with refugees, his calls for climate action, and his insistence on global peace and equality set him apart as a champion of justice in the modern world

— Micheál Martin, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland

“Rest in Peace Pope Francis. May God Bless him and all who loved him

— Donald Trump, President of the United States

“Today, the prayers of more than a billion people – from all nations and every walk of life – go with Pope Francis to his rest. He urged us to remember all we hold in common, and he asked the world to hear the cry of the earth, our common home. Francis was close to the people of Australia

— Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia

“I join millions around the world in grieving the death of His Holiness Pope Francis. His leadership... was courageous, yet always came from a place of deep humility

— Sir Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom