

The Death of Pope Francis

Pope Francis, history's first pontiff from the Global South, has died at age 88 following a months-long respiratory illness, setting the stage for a high-stakes secretive election to determine his successor. "The Bishop of Rome, Francis, has returned to the house of the Father," Cardinal Kevin Farrell announced early Monday (April 21) from the chapel of the Vatican guesthouse where Francis resided. "His entire life has been dedicated to the service of the Lord and His Church." "He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity, courage and universal love, especially in favor of the poorest and most marginalized. With immense gratitude for his example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we commend the soul of Pope Francis to the infinite merciful love of the One and Triune God," Farrell said.

Francis died at 7:35 a.m. local time, and the Vatican announced his death two hours later. On Monday evening, the Vatican said that Francis had experienced a cerebral stroke about 7 a.m. He then fell into a coma and died about a half hour later. The pope's death followed the busy Easter Triduum, during which he made several public appearances, although he did not lead any of this year's Holy Week services. On Easter Sunday, he met briefly with U.S. Vice President JD Vance, whose comments on immigration and theology had drawn the pope's public rebuke. At the end of the Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square, the pope appeared in his wheelchair and gave the traditional Easter blessing from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica. He spoke in a weak voice as shouts of viva il

papa! ("long live the pope") rippled through the square. He later made a tour of the square in his popemobile, drawing enthusiastic cheers.

Catholics, well-wishers and Vatican watchers had been speculating about the pope's death, whether he might resign and possible successor since he entered Rome's Gemelli hospital on Feb. 14 after several weeks of struggling to deliver speeches and experiencing shortness of breath. During this fourth — and longest — hospitalization of his papacy — the pontiff's doctors warned that Francis was a fragile patient with a history of chronic bronchitis and pulmonary issues that made his illness difficult to treat. He was discharged on March 23 after a five-week stay where he twice nearly lost his life. Despite a doctor-mandated convalescence of two months, the pope has since then made a number of surprise public appearances.

The death of the trailblazing pope leaves the Catholic Church at a crossroads. As members of the College of Cardinals — the elite body of churchmen responsible for electing the next pope — prepare to head into conclave, they will have to decide how the 2,000-year-old institution operates in the modern world.

Francis' death brings to a halt a period of rapid change in the Vatican, where women ascended into new ranks within the hierarchy, where concern for migrants and climate change superseded issues of gender and sexuality and where the church engaged all its members. But despite the breakneck speed of reform under Francis, he leaves behind an incomplete record. He never went so far as to depart from longstanding tradition which restricts the ordained priesthood to males; did not allow for gay marriage (while “respecting” the non-

sacramental union of such couples), and other traditional dogmatic and moral teachings.

The upcoming conclave will serve as a referendum on Francis' legacy and a moment of reckoning for the unfinished business he left behind — all while trying to preserve some form of unity in a global church of over 1.3 billion Catholics. While Francis left an indelible stamp on the College of Cardinals, appointing two-thirds of the men who will select his successor, there's no guarantee that they will gather in the conclave to choose a candidate in the mold of Francis. Over the course of his pontificate, Francis greatly diversified the ranks of the college, giving the cardinal's red hat to clergy from nearly 30 countries that had previously never before been represented in the select group. When the cardinal-electors assemble at the Vatican in the coming weeks, representing 70 countries around the world, many of the men will be getting to know each other for the first time. Predicting the papal successor will be a challenge because there are no political parties in the Catholic Church indicating the exact theological orientations and pastoral priorities of the cardinals, particularly those lacking major public profiles.

There is no clear favorite heading into the conclave. In fact, proverbial wisdom warns: "He who enters the conclave as pope, leaves it as a cardinal." Per Francis' wishes, his funeral is to be held in St. Peter's Square. It will mark the first funeral for a reigning pope in two decades. The funeral for Pope John Paul II in 2005 drew about 4 million mourners to Rome. The last papal funeral — that of retired Pope Benedict XVI — took place in January 2023 and marked a rare

occasion of a sitting pope, Francis, presiding over the funeral Mass of his predecessor. His funeral Mass is expected to be attended by scores of heads of state, alongside church leaders and faithful from all over the globe. Francis will then be buried at his beloved Roman Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore — the first pope to be interred outside the Vatican in more than a century and a fitting resting place for a man who prized his independence. Francis first revealed in a December 2023 interview that he intended to be buried at Santa Maria Maggiore, noting that he wanted to be close to his favorite icon of the Madonna and at a place he would go to pray before and after his international travels. The day after his election as the 265th successor to St. Peter on March 13, 2013, Francis went to Santa Maria Maggiore to pray. After his burial there, the 135 cardinals from around the world tasked with electing his successor will begin closed-door meetings to discuss the future of the church and the profile of the man they would like to next lead them.

Saint Peregrine Triduum: May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 2025

The Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary will celebrate its Annual Triduum in honor of St. Peregrine on Thursday, May 1, Friday, May 2, and Saturday, May 3.

Petitions for the Triduum and requests for the lighting of candles can be sent to the Church or brought to the Church any day of the Triduum the week of April 27th!

St. Peregrine is known as the patron saint of cancer patients, AIDS victims and others suffering from serious illnesses. Peregrine Laziosi was born in 1260 in Forli, Italy to a wealthy family. Although he was a member of an anti-papal party as a young man, he experienced a profound change of heart, much like St. Paul's conversion in its intensity. He and some companions showed up one day to heckle and otherwise abuse St. Philip Benizi, the Prior General of the Servants of Mary, who was preaching in Forli. Peregrine went so far as to strike him in the face! St. Philip, seemingly following our Lord's advice in scripture (Matt 5:39, Luke 6:29), offered his other cheek in response. This gesture so moved Peregrine that he quickly asked for Philip's forgiveness and soon thereafter converted to Catholicism, spending much time in prayer at the Chapel of Our Lady at the Cathedral. Mary appeared to him there in a vision asking him to join the Servite Order in Siena. He was received there by St. Philip! Peregrine spent the rest of his life ministering to the poor and the sick, mainly in his hometown of Forli where he established a new house for the Servites. His dedication to the faith was such that, according to tradition, he would stand constantly instead of sitting down, as a form of penance. He underwent a severe trial when he developed a cancerous sore on his leg (as we see in depictions of him such as the one below) as well as his feet. Doctors decided upon amputation as treatment. The night before the operation, Peregrine spent the night in prayer before a crucifix in a hospital chapel. He dreamt at one point there that Christ came down from the cross and healed his leg. When he woke up he and his doctor made the discovery that he was completely cured. God had truly performed a miracle on this holy man! Peregrine himself performed numerous miracles in his life. After his death in 1345, there were countless others, especially in Spain. The Church attributed to him more than 300 cures of cancer and other illnesses from 1694 to 1726 in one city there alone!

Please consider joining us for our celebration of this important triduum invoking this powerful patron. The schedule for the triduum is as follows:

May 1st – 6:00 PM -6:45 PM Confessions

7:00 PM Opening Mass with Novena Prayers

May 2nd – 12:00 Noon -3:00 PM Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

6:00 PM -6:45 PM Confessions

7:00 PM Healing Mass (Anointing of the Sick during Mass)

and Novena Prayers. Individual Healing Prayers following Mass.

May 3rd – 3:00 PM -3:30 PM Confessions

4:00 PM Closing Mass with Novena Prayers

Hors D Oeuvres Reception immediately following Mass. All are welcome!!!



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Prayer Intention for Saint Peregrine Triduum

Please light candle for the following intention during the Saint Peregrine Triduum (Please include \$5.00 for candle)
