

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE *Conclave?*



A conclave happens when cardinals come together to choose a new pope. The cardinals who are eligible to vote (electors) travel to Rome from all over the world for this special moment.

How Many Cardinals Are There Today?

- Total Number in the College of Cardinals: **252**
- Total Number of cardinal electors: **135**
- Total Number of non-electors: **117**

Living Cardinals According to the Pontificate of Their Creation:

- **St. John Paul II**
 - » 36 Non-electors
 - » 5 Electors
- **Benedict XVI**
 - » 40 Non-electors
 - » 22 Electors
- **Francis**
 - » 41 Non-electors
 - » 108 electors

What's Inside the Conclave?

As the cardinals begin to gather in Rome for the start of the conclave, the world turns their attention to this incredibly fascinating and important event. Not only are the cardinals coming together to elect a new pope, but they also come together to discuss the current state of our Church and the hopes they have for our future. The rarity of this ceremony, along with its secrecy, adds to the intrigue. But where does this all take place? How did the conclave first begin?



Sistine Chapel

The Sistine Chapel has been the site of every papal election since 1878. Michelangelo's famous frescoes adorn the ceiling of the magnificent chapel. The large windows are blacked out for the duration of the conclave to ensure that the cardinals are isolated from the outside. When the Master of Papal Liturgical Ceremonies exclaims, "*Extra omnes!*" (which means, "Everybody else, out!"), the doors are shut and no one enters or exits the chapel as the voting commences.

How Long Will It Last?

The past several conclaves have lasted only a few days.

Pope	Days	Ballots
Francis	2	5
Benedict XVI	2	4
John Paul II	2	8
John Paul I	1	4
Paul VI	2	6
John XXIII	3	11
Pius XII	1	3

Where Do the Cardinals Sleep?

During the conclave, the cardinals remain near the edge of Vatican City in a guesthouse named Domus Sanctae Marthae, where they can either walk or travel by bus daily to the Sistine Chapel for the voting sessions.

What About the Smoke?

Prior to the start of the conclave, a chimney is installed on the roof of the Sistine Chapel. The stove is placed in the back corner, ready to burn the ballots of the cardinals and announce the new papal elect. On the first day of the conclave, only one vote is cast. After that, four rounds of voting occur on a daily basis. If balloting is not successful (less than a two-thirds majority), black smoke can be seen from the chimney. If balloting is successful (with a two-thirds majority and the candidate accepts), white smoke is released from the chimney, signaling that the Church has a new pope.

