

Inside the Mysterious Ceremony: Cardinals Sworn to Secrecy in Papal Conclave

As the papal conclave begins today, Catholic cardinals are vowing to secrecy over who they will chose to be the next Pope.

As 131 cardinals gather at the Sistine Chapel to elect a new pope as the head of the Catholic church, many are wondering what direction the conclave will go. Will the newly elected pope be of a more traditional or liberal theology? And perhaps one of the greatest questions of all: what happens in these secret meetings?



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In a video posted to X, the swearing in of the members of the conclave began where they each said, "And I [given name] Cardinal [surname], so promise, pledge and swear. So help me God and these Holy Gospels which I touch with my hand."

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The oath is a powerful reminder that this is no ordinary election. For the Catholic community watching worldwide, this process carries immense spiritual weight.

VATICAN CITY— @Card_R_Sarah and @cardinalrlburke, both Traditionally orthodox in their views of the Church and Liturgy, just swore the following:

"Et ego [given name] Cardinalis [surname] spondeo, voveo ac

iuro. Sic me Deus adiuvet et haec Sancta Dei Evangelia, quae manu mea...

– Bree A Dail (@breeadail) May 7, 2025

Prior to the beginning of the conclave, all those who are part the event must give an oath of “absolute silence,” which includes after the pope’s election.

Everyone from cardinals to cleaners has now taken an oath of secrecy ahead of the conclave.

Administered by Cardinal Farrell, the oath binds all involved—clergy and laity—to absolute silence, even after a new pope is elected.

– CatholicVote (@CatholicVote) May 6, 2025

During each round of voting by the cardinals, the results are made known to the outside world through smoke—either black or white. Black smoke means no decision has been made. But white smoke—rising like a holy signal in the sky—means a new pope has been chosen.

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The ballots from each vote are burned, and special chemicals are added to produce the color. But the mystery remains: who will become the head of the Catholic Church into the next season?

Some observers wonder whether the future pope will uphold traditional teachings or embrace more progressive reforms. Will he prioritize evangelism and global missions, or focus on internal church reform and doctrinal clarity? While such questions stir public interest, the cardinals are instructed

to remain silent, pray fervently and let the Holy Spirit guide the outcome.

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For now, the world will wait. The smoke that rises from the Sistine Chapel chimney—black for no decision, white for a new pope—will signal when the new leader of the Catholic Church is revealed.

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