

Pope Francis Resisted Revenge Over 18th-Century Clement XIV

Pope Francis, the first Jesuit pontiff, explained on Saturday how he resisted the temptation to get revenge on Pope Clement XIV, who suppressed the priestly order in the 18th century.

The Society of Jesus, as the **Jesuits** are officially called, are a legendary religious order known for intellectuals, educators and missionaries who take a special vow of obedience to the pope.

Over the centuries, the order has faced moments of tension in its relations with the **Vatican**. They hit a low point under Pope Clement XIV, who suppressed the order in 1773 with a document known as “Dominus ac Redemptor.”

Clement was seeking to placate monarchs in a number of European states who were worried about the Jesuits’ increasing influence. The order was restored to the Vatican’s good graces by Pope Pius VII in 1814.

Francis told journalists at a special audience for the media that after his election on Wednesday night, some cardinals had jokingly suggested he should name himself Pope Clement XV.

“That way you can take revenge on Clement XIV for suppressing the Society of Jesus,” Francis quoted one cardinal as joking with him shortly after he was elected.

The journalists roared with laughter.

Earlier he explained that he had chosen the name Francis after St. Francis of Assisi, who is associated with austerity and helping the poor in the 13th century.

Pope Francis, giving his clearest indication yet that he wants a more austere **Catholic Church**, said on Saturday that it

should be poor and remember that its mission is to serve the poor.

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