

Speculation Grows as List of Potential New Popes Emerges

There are no official candidates in the election for pope, which will begin when 115 cardinal electors file into the Sistine Chapel for their conclave on Tuesday.

The cardinals will stay in the conclave, cut off from the outside world, until they elect a successor to Pope Benedict. Conclaves usually last about three days.

Several names are frequently mentioned in Rome as “papabile” (potential popes). This list of the names most often cited is alphabetical, not in order of their chances.

- Joao Braz de Aviz (Brazil, 65) brought fresh air to the Vatican department for religious congregations when he took over in 2011. He supports the preference for the poor in Latin America’s liberation theology, but not the excesses of some of its advocates. Possible drawbacks include his low profile.
- Timothy Dolan (USA, 63) became the voice of U.S. Catholicism after being named archbishop of New York in 2009. His humour and dynamism have impressed the Vatican, where both are often missing. But cardinals are wary of a “superpower pope” and his back-slapping style may be too American for some.
- Peter Erdo (Hungary, 60) ranks as a possible compromise candidate if the conclave’s European majority do not back an Italian but are wary of a pope from overseas. His two terms as head of a European bishops council and strong links with African church leaders could garner strong support from two important voting blocs.
- Sean O’Malley (USA, 68) has been touted as a “clean hands” candidate since he was named to three U.S. dioceses in a row to settle sexual abuse scandals.

Appointed to Boston in 2003 after a major crisis there, he sold off archdiocesan properties and prompted protests by closing down little-used churches.

- Marc Ouellet (Canada, 68) is effectively the Vatican's top staff director as head of the Congregation for Bishops. He once said becoming pope "would be a nightmare". Though well connected within the Curia, the widespread secularism of his native Quebec could hurt him and even friends say he is not charismatic.
- Gianfranco Ravasi (Italy, 70) has been Vatican culture minister since 2007 and represents the Church to the worlds of art, science, culture and even to atheists. This profile could hurt him if cardinals decide they need an experienced pastor rather than another professor like Benedict as pope.
- Leonardo Sandri (Argentina, 69) is a "transatlantic" figure born in Buenos Aires to Italian parents. He held the third-highest Vatican post as its chief of staff in 2000-2007. But he has no pastoral experience and his job overseeing eastern churches is not a power position in Rome.
- Odilo Scherer (Brazil, 63) ranks as Latin America's strongest candidate. Archbishop of Sao Paulo, largest diocese in the largest Catholic country, he is conservative in his country but would rank as a moderate elsewhere. The rapid growth of Protestant churches in Brazil could count against him.
- Christoph Schoenborn (Austria, 68) is a former student of Pope Benedict with a pastoral touch the retired pontiff lacked. The Vienna archbishop has been a rising star since editing the Church's catechism in the 1990s. But some cautious stands on reform and strong dissent by some Austrian priests could hurt him.
- Angelo Scola (Italy, 71) is archbishop of Milan, a springboard to the papacy, and is many Italians' bet to win. An expert on bioethics, he also knows Islam as head of a foundation to promote Muslim-Christian

understanding. His dense oratory could put off cardinals seeking a charismatic communicator.

- Luis Tagle (Philippines, 55) has a charisma often compared to that of the late Pope John Paul. He was also close to Pope Benedict after working with him at the International Theological Commission. He has many fans in the Church but only got his red hat in 2012. Conclaves can be wary of young popes who could have long reigns.
- Peter Turkson (Ghana, 64) is the top African candidate. Head of the Vatican justice and peace bureau, he is spokesman for the church's social conscience and backs world financial reform. He showed a video criticising Muslims at a recent Vatican synod, raising doubts about how he sees Islam.

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