

Official Vatican communications have confirmed the passing of Pope Francis. This news was reported through an official document issued by Vatican Camerlengo Cardinal Kevin Farrell on April 21 at 7:35 in the morning. In the official statement, the Pope expressed the phrase "He has returned to the house of God," which was conveyed to the faithful as a reinforcement that his life serves as a profound example for humanity—a legacy rich in displays of faith, unity, and emotion.

Pope Francis (whose real name is Jorge Mario Bergoglio), who passed away at the age of 88, was regarded as one of the most important spiritual leaders for many people around the world. His maturity, faith, and exceptional love for humanity are remembered with deep gratitude in many countries and communities. This tragic event prompts a renewed reflection on his life, his strength, and his creative spirit.

Rituals and Transition Procedures

Following the confirmation of the Pope's death, in accordance with Vatican customs, a series of significant rituals and symbolic ceremonies are carried out. In the first step, Cardinal Farrell confirms the final state of the Pope's body and seals his private chamber; this includes actions such as the removal of the "Fisherman's Ring" (one of the symbols of the papacy) along with other mutable symbolic items. In this way, Pope Francis—dressed in his white cassock—is commemorated through his last private meetings, services where prayers are offered in public squares, and specially organized Catholic masses.

Concurrently, the Pope's body is adorned with the appropriate papal vestments in red and white and is placed in a specially designated space. Throughout the day, masses, prayer services, and memorial events are held in his honor in the Vatican and across different parts of the world. These ceremonies are intended to reinforce the spiritual unity and collective faith of the Catholic community.

The Nine-Day Mourning Period — "Novendiale"

Starting from the day his passing was confirmed, the Vatican initiates a profound nine-day period of mourning (referred to as "Novendiale"). During this period, daily masses and prayer services are held throughout all segments of the Catholic community, recalling the religious truths, spiritual reflections, and high social values. Moreover, on both national and international levels, this period is observed by religious leaders, state dignitaries, and believers around the world who express their sorrow, faith, and hope in memory of Pope Francis. [6]

Election of the New Pope and the “Sede Vacante” Period

After the nine-day mourning period concludes, the congregation of high-ranking cardinals of the Catholic Church meets to begin the process of selecting a new Pope—the papal conclave. During this period, where only cardinals under 80 years of age participate, through several rounds of active voting and heartfelt discussion, the aim is to elect a new spiritual leader. Consequently, a temporary phase known as “sede vacante” (vacant seat) is established within the Church’s governance, and all preparations for electing the new Pope are put into motion.

The Legacy of Pope Francis and the Repercussions of His Life

Pope Francis is remembered not only as a spiritual leader but also as a symbol of modernity, justice, and a life rooted in faith. The life story of Jorge Mario Bergoglio—born on December 17, 1936, in Argentina—spanning his early years, his education at Jesuit schools, and his subsequent emergence as the head of the Catholic Church, has indelibly touched people’s hearts across the globe. Furthermore, the challenges he faced regarding his health—his personal losses and continuous struggles—by no means diminished his spiritual strength and love for people; rather, they became an inseparable part of his remarkable spiritual journey.

Conclusion: Grief, Dedication, and the Priority of the Future

This tragic event demonstrates that the Catholic community preserves its spiritual heritage and certain enlightening values as though it were one family. The nobility he embodied, his belief in living with faith, and his sincere commitment to providing material help to others indicate that the new spiritual leader will strive to continue these values in the future. At this time, across the world, among thousands of believers and state leaders, memorials are held to honor Pope Francis, and spiritual preparations are underway for the transition to a new era.

Additional Information: The ancient rituals and symbolic mourning ceremonies represent not only the traditions of the Catholic Church but also express a deep spiritual unity, faith, and a sense of togetherness. Through these events, the remembrance of the departed spiritual leader is expressed, and a transitional process is initiated that paves the way for the election of a new leader. Moreover, the process of choosing a new Pope is regarded internationally as an important step toward realizing new ideas and advancing noble values.