



Dear Friends,

As you know, the conclave to elect the next pope will commence tomorrow (Wednesday, May 7) with the Mass for the election of a pontiff at 4:00 AM EST, followed by the procession of the cardinals into the Sistine Chapel and their subsequent oaths of secrecy at 10:30 AM EST. You can watch those events on the [Vatican YouTube page](#), which I'd encourage if you are interested in beautiful rituals.

There has been a tremendous amount of anticipation for the upcoming conclave. The act of electing a pope is a unique event in the history of the church. Much like I did with my regular updates on the Synod last fall and the fall of 2023, this email is meant to be a good source that has catalogued a lot of great places to look for information. If you have any questions about how conclaves operate, then Fr. Tom Reese, S.J. has [answers to almost any question](#) over at *America*. Or, if you're especially interested in a comprehensive bibliography of conclave history, check out this [wonderful resource](#). Also, Michael Sean Winters at the *National Catholic Reporter* has produced a series of articles on the key questions of the conclave, which he [summarizes and links to here](#). And, of course, if you'd like to take the deep dive into the legislation that governs the conclave, read St. John Paul II's document, [Universi Dominici Gregis](#).

There has been no shortage of ink spilled on the politicking that has led into this conclave through the general congregation meetings of all the cardinals gathered in Rome. Those cardinals under 80 will gather in the Sistine Chapel for the actual conclave. Of the 135 eligible voters, 133 will take part, meaning that 89 votes are required for the election of the new pope. Among these 133 electors, some have emerged as leading contenders, or *papabili*. Two journalists – [Christopher White of the National Catholic Reporter](#) and [John Allen of Crux](#) – have gone to great lengths to provide profiles of many of these contenders. Likewise, [Edward Pentin of the National Catholic Register](#) profiles his ten top contenders, even if some of these have no reasonable chance of being elected. [Hannah Brockhaus of the Catholic News Agency](#) gives a bit longer of a list, but not as long as [Brendan Walsh, Patrick Hudson, and Bess Twiston Davies at The Tablet](#), which has long been known for giving the most comprehensive list of the cardinal electors.

How about the thoughts of the cardinals in these days leading up to the conclave? [Gerard O'Connell of America](#) has been interviewing many cardinals, all of whom provide helpful insights as to what they are thinking during these days. O'Connell was one of two English-speaking Vatican reporters who correctly predicted Jorge Mario Bergoglio would win the 2013 election; the other is now-retired journalist John Thavis, who is [blogging here](#), and well worth a read. Likewise, the reporters at *OSV News*, Carol Glatz, Cindy Wooden, Ines San Martin, and Justin McLellan are doing intrepid reporting from the General Congregations, [all compiled here](#). Not to be outdone, the editors of *Commonweal* are providing a daily "[Interregnum Report](#)" with some helpful reporting.

A number of multimedia sources have also covered this conclave from a variety of angles worth your time. Each day, *America* is recording a podcast they are also posting as videos on their [YouTube channel](#). For their part, *EWTN* is producing a [daily program](#) preparing for the conclave.

Finally, the most important thing we can all do is to pray for the Cardinal electors. The Pontifical Mission Societies has created a [webpage where we can each adopt a cardinal](#) to hold in special prayer during these days. I was randomly assigned Cardinal Virgilio Do Carmo da Silva. I'll be praying for him and his brethren as they make this momentous decision. And of course, I'll be praying for all of you, especially those of you preparing for final papers and exams, and grading those assignments.

Sincerely,

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