SELECTING A NEW POPE

Time to choose
The College of Cardinals is to meet today to begin selecting a new pope. After a security check of the Sistine Chapel to ensure that the deliberations remain secret, and the cardinals take an oath not to reveal anything of the proceedings, they will begin their work. The conclaves could last several days, or extend almost two weeks.

Deciding factors

The cardinals will weigh various traits of papal candidates and issues, including:
- Leadership style
- Linguistic ability
- Personal or moderate leaning
- Generalization to nations especially in developing countries
- Whether to return the papacy to an Italian
- Advocacy for local choices

The electorate
Almost all of the 115 cardinals expected to vote in this conclave were appointed by Pope John Paul II. About half are from Europe.

The conclave
Here’s how the process of choosing a new pope will unfold:

The voting
The rectangular hut behind the walls “Eligos in Summitum Frontem” I select as supreme pontiff with power over the bottom for the elector’s choice. Disaguing his handwriting, each cardinal notes his choice and holds the ballot face down. Three “scrutineers” chosen earlier by lot take places at a table in front of the altar to count the ballots after all are cast to ensure they correspond to the number of electors.

Deciding factors

The new pope: Stoves: are folded twice before being submitted.

Inside the Sistine Chapel
The chapel was built between 1475 and 1481, during the time of Pope Sixtus IV.

Papal elections through the ages

In its present form, the papal conclave dates from the 13th century. Before that time, cardinals, clerics and farmers voted in papal elections and were often influenced by kings, emperors and even sitting popes.

Table:<ref>Deciding factors</ref>

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Cardinals, by region of
Europe 25
Latin America 28
North America 14
Asia 20
Africa 7
Oceania 2

The cardinals are locked in a room until a pope is chosen. The word conclave is derived from the Latin “cum” (with) and “clavis” (key), implying that the cardinals are locked in a room until a pope is chosen. Not all scholars agree on the exact history of papal elections.

The new pope will speak from St. Peter’s.

Papal elections through the ages

1073: St. Gregory VII is the last pope to act for explicitly heretical reasons.
1077: Pope Alexander II rules that the papal elections must be decided by a two-thirds majority of electors.
1276: Pope Gregory X decrees that papal elections must take place in a locked room until they arrive at a decision.
1700: The College of Cardinals is commissioned to choose a candidate.
1996: Pope John Paul II selects four cardinals to be named the new pope.
2005: The College of Cardinals is to meet today to begin selecting a new pope. After a security check of the Sistine Chapel to ensure that the deliberations remain secret, and the cardinals take an oath not to reveal anything of the proceedings, they will begin their work. The conclaves could last several days, or extend almost two weeks.

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