**Pope Francis**[[b]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-3) (born **Jorge Mario Bergoglio**;[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-4) 17 December 1936 – 21 April 2025) was the head of the [Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church) and sovereign of the [Vatican City State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City_State) from 13 March 2013 until [his death](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_funeral_of_Pope_Francis) in 2025. He was the first [Jesuit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesuit) pope, the first [Latin American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_American), and the first born or raised outside Europe since the 8th-century Syrian pope [Gregory III](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_III).

Born in [Buenos Aires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buenos_Aires), Argentina, to a family of [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Argentines) origin, Bergoglio was inspired to join the Jesuits in 1958 after recovering from a severe illness. He was [ordained](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordination#Catholic,_Orthodox,_Lutheran_and_Anglican_churches) a [Catholic priest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_priest) in 1969, and from 1973 to 1979 he was the Jesuit [provincial superior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provincial_superior) in Argentina. He became the [archbishop of Buenos Aires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Buenos_Aires) in 1998 and was created a [cardinal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardinal_(Catholic_Church)) in 2001 by [Pope John Paul II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II). Following [the resignation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resignation_of_Pope_Benedict_XVI) of [Pope Benedict XVI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XVI) on 28 February 2013, [a papal conclave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_papal_conclave) elected Bergoglio as his successor on 13 March. He chose Francis as his [papal name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_name) in honor of [Saint Francis of Assisi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Francis_of_Assisi).

Throughout his papacy, Francis was noted for his humility, emphasis on God's mercy, international visibility, [commitment to interreligious dialogue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecumenism_and_interreligious_dialogue_of_Pope_Francis), and concern for the poor, [migrants, and refugees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theology_of_Pope_Francis#Refugees_and_migrants). Francis believed the Catholic Church should demonstrate more [inclusivity to LGBTQ people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis_and_LGBTQ_topics), and stated that although [blessings of same-sex unions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blessing_of_same-sex_unions_in_Christian_churches#Catholic_Church) are not permitted, individuals in same-sex relationships [can be blessed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiducia_supplicans) as long as the blessing is not given in a [liturgical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liturgical) context.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-5) Francis made women full members of [dicasteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dicasteries) in the [Roman Curia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Curia).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Dallas-2023-6)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Faiola-2023-7) Francis convened the [Synod on Synodality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synod_on_Synodality), which was described as the culmination of his papacy and the most important event in the Catholic Church since the [Second Vatican Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Vatican_Council).[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Faiola-2023-7)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Horowitz-2023-8)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Horowitz-2023a-9) Francis was known for having a less formal approach to the papacy than his predecessors by, for instance, choosing to reside in the [Domus Sanctae Marthae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domus_Sanctae_Marthae) guesthouse rather than in the [papal apartments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_apartments) of the [Apostolic Palace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Palace) used by previous popes. In addition, due to both his Jesuit and [Ignatian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatian) aesthetic, he was known for favoring simpler [vestments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vestment) devoid of ornamentation, including refusing the traditional [papal mozzetta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_mozzetta) cape upon his election, choosing silver instead of gold for his [piscatory ring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piscatory_ring), and keeping the same [pectoral cross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pectoral_cross) he had as cardinal.

Concerning [global governance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_governance), Francis was a critic of [trickle-down economics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trickle-down_economics), [consumerism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumerism), and [overdevelopment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overdevelopment);[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-10) he made action on [climate change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change) a leading focus of his papacy.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-11) He viewed [capital punishment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_and_capital_punishment) as inadmissible in all cases,[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-12) and committed the Catholic Church to its worldwide abolition.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-13) Francis criticized the rise of [right-wing populism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right-wing_populism) and [anti-immigration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-immigration) politics, calling the protection of migrants a "duty of civilization".[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Lerer-2025-14) Francis supported the [decriminalization of homosexuality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decriminalization_of_homosexuality).[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Staff-2023-15) In international diplomacy, Francis helped to restore [full diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_thaw), negotiated [a deal with the People's Republic of China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_Holy_See%E2%80%93China_agreement) to define [Communist Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Communist_Party) influence in appointing [Chinese bishops](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_in_China), and encouraged peace between Israel and Palestinians, signing the Vatican's first [treaty with the State of Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Agreement_between_the_Holy_See_and_the_State_of_Palestine). In 2022 [he apologized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visit_by_Pope_Francis_to_Canada) for [the Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_in_Canada)'s role in the [cultural genocide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_genocide) of [Canadian Indigenous peoples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples_in_Canada) in [residential schools](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Indian_residential_school_system). From 2023 he condemned [Israel's military operations in Gaza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_war), calling for investigations of [war crimes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_crimes_in_the_Gaza_war). Francis made his last public appearance on [Easter Sunday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_Sunday) before dying on 21 April 2025, [Easter Monday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_Monday).[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-LastAppearance-16)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-17) The [2025 papal conclave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_papal_conclave) elected [Leo XIV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_XIV) as Francis's successor on 8 May. Leo XIV became the second Pope from the Americas, after Francis.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-18)

Early life

Jorge Mario Bergoglio (fourth boy from the left in the third row from the top) at age 12, Salesian College (c. 1948–1949)

Pope Francis was born **Jorge Mario Bergoglio** on 17 December 1936[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-directory-19) in [Flores](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flores,_Buenos_Aires),[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Remeseira-20) a [neighbourhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subdivisions_of_Buenos_Aires) of [Buenos Aires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buenos_Aires).[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-directory-19) He was the eldest[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Garrido-21) of the five children of Mario José Bergoglio and Regina María Sívori. Mario Bergoglio was an [Italian immigrant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Argentine) and an accountant[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-biografia-22) from [Piedmont](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piedmont).[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-23) Regina Sívori[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Sivori-24) was a housewife born in Buenos Aires to a family of [northern Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Italian) origin.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-guardian-25)[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Donovan-26) Mario Bergoglio's family left Italy in 1929 to escape the fascist rule of [Benito Mussolini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benito_Mussolini).[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Rosales-2013-27): 5 According to María Elena Bergoglio, the Pope's only living sibling, the family did not emigrate for economic reasons.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-fascism-28) His other siblings were Oscar Adrián, Marta Regina, and Alberto Horacio.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-29)[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-30) His niece, [Cristina Bergoglio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cristina_Bergoglio), is a painter based in [Madrid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrid), Spain.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-31)[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-32)

In the sixth grade, Bergoglio attended Wilfrid Barón de los Santos Ángeles, a school of the [Salesians of Don Bosco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salesians_of_Don_Bosco) in [Ramos Mejía](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramos_Mej%C3%ADa), Buenos Aires Province. He then attended the technical secondary school Escuela Técnica Industrial Nº 27 Hipólito Yrigoyen[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-techniciandegree-33) and graduated with a chemical technician's diploma.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-directory-19)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-34)[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-35) In that capacity, he spent several years working in the food section of Hickethier-Bachmann Laboratory[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Clarin-36) where he worked under [Esther Ballestrino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esther_Ballestrino). Earlier, he had been a bouncer and a janitor.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-burke-37)[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-Chua-38)

When he was 21 years old, after life-threatening [pneumonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pneumonia) and three [cysts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cysts), Bergoglio had part of a lung excised.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-techniciandegree-33)[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis#cite_note-reuters-39)