

The man who brought God down to earth

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Humble: When he was chosen as the next Pope, Francis flew to Rome via economy class. He carried his own luggage.

Should everyone be religious? Pope Francis has died. He was known for caring about the poor and living as if he was simply any other man.

What's happening?

Pope Francis died early on Monday morning. The head of the Catholic Church was 88 years old.

The Thursday before he died, he visited prisoners in a jail in **Rome**. He said sorry to the prisoners because he could not wash their feet — but he wanted to be near them.

Find out more

Pope Francis was unusual in many ways. Born in **Argentina**, he was the first South American leader.

He had worked as a nightclub **bouncer** and liked to dance. He was the first Pope to take the name of Francis. He chose it in honour of a **saint** who had given up all his wealth to work among the poor.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in **Buenos Aires** in 1936. He did not become a priest until the age of 33.

In 1997 he became archbishop of Buenos Aires. He had no wish to become Pope: he once begged a group of **cardinals** not to choose him.

But in 2013, it happened: he was chosen to replace Pope Benedict XVI. He did not choose a grand life. He wore simple white robes and battered shoes. He chose not to live in a palace but a simple house, and he drove a simple car instead of being driven.

He said: “My people are poor, and I am one of them.”

Should everyone be religious?

Some say

Yes! Religion offers us a guide to the best way to live our lives and be good people. Leaders like Pope Francis show us how to live simply and care for others.

Others think

No! Religion is a belief in something that does not exist and has been the cause of wars throughout history.

Some people say

"To change the world we must be good to those who cannot repay us."

Pope Francis (1936 – 2025), Argentinian spiritual leader

What do you think?

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Do you spend time praying? Have you helped someone who is poorer than you?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How many Popes have there been? Who was the first?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know about this story for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are asked to be a godparent to a new baby. Think about what you would say.

5. Express

What do others believe? - What is the best way to help people who are poorer than us? Talk about it with your classmates.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Design a memorial for Pope Francis or another religious leader. How do you think we would want to be remembered?

Glossary

Pope - The bishop of Rome and the head of the worldwide Catholic Church.

Rome - The city at the centre of the ancient Roman Empire.

Argentina - The second-largest country in South America. It has a population of nearly 46 million.

Bouncer - A person who works for a nightclub or bar and prevents troublemakers from entering.

Saint - A person who is officially recognised by the Christian, especially Catholic, Church as having lived in a good and holy way. Saints often have miracles attributed to them.

Buenos Aires - The capital city of Argentina.

Cardinals - Leading officials in the Roman Catholic Church. They are nominated by the Pope, and choose the next Pope together.