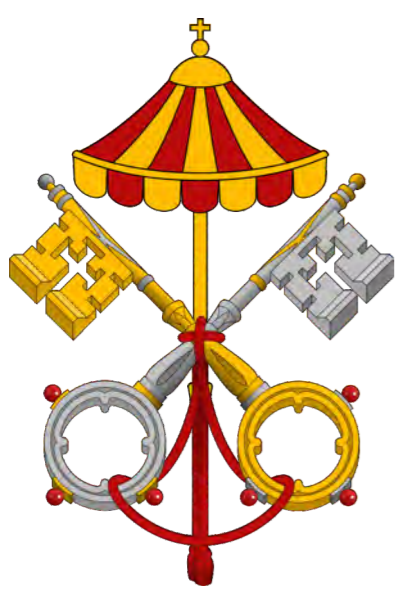
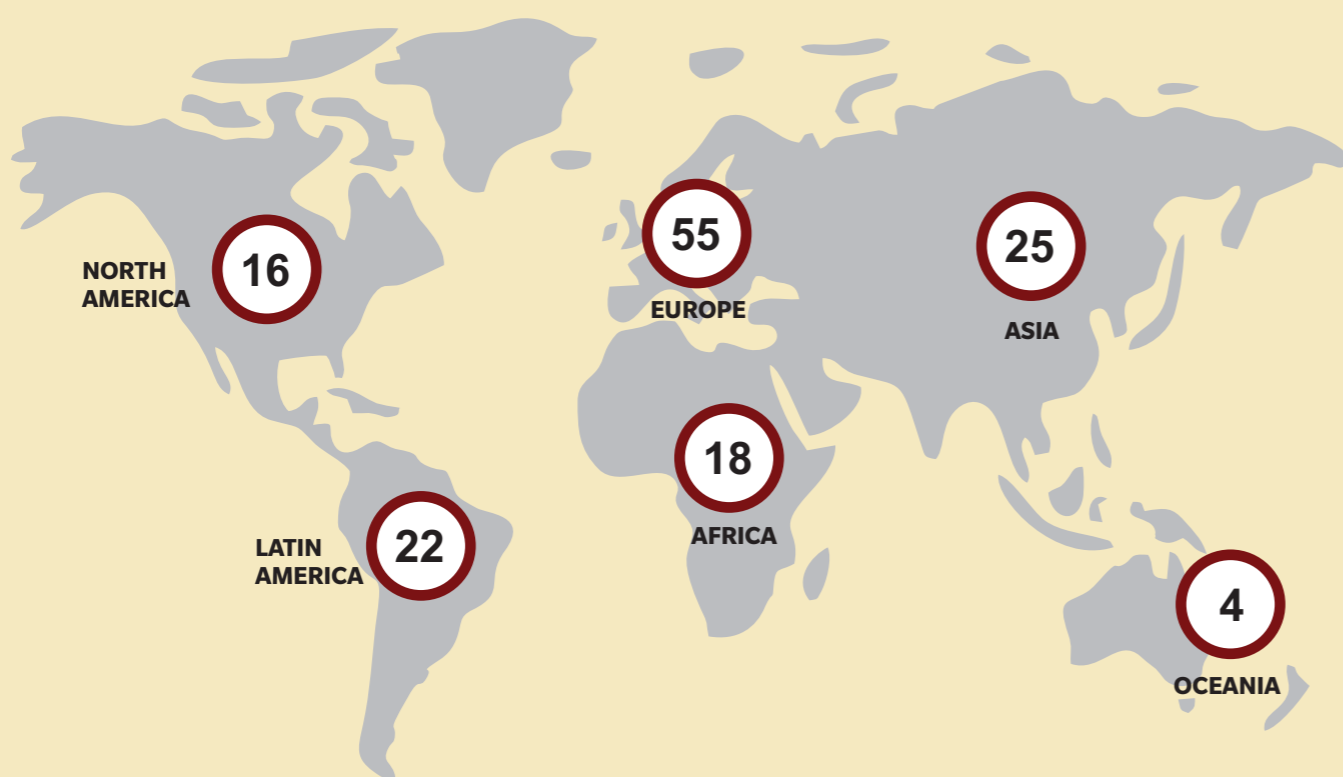


CONCLAVE: How cardinals elect a Pope



Sede vacante ('the time of the empty throne' in Latin) is a term for the state of a diocese while without a bishop. In the canon law of the Catholic Church, the term is used to refer to the vacancy of the bishop's or Pope's authority upon his death or resignation.

Cardinals summoned to Rome



Popes are chosen by the College of Cardinals, the Church's most senior officials, who are appointed by the Pope and usually ordained bishops. They are summoned to a meeting at the Vatican which is followed by the Papal election -- or Conclave.

Only cardinals under the age of 80 are eligible to vote in a conclave. They are known as the cardinal electors, and their number currently sits at 132.

Countries with a large Catholic population without cardinal electors: Ireland, China, Lebanon, Angola, Australia and Vietnam.

Paul VI elevated three of his immediate pontifical successors to the cardinalate: **Albino Luciani**, **Karol Wojtyla** and **Joseph Ratzinger**, who went on to become **John Paul I**, **John Paul II** and **Benedict XVI**.

Secret conclave & voting rituals

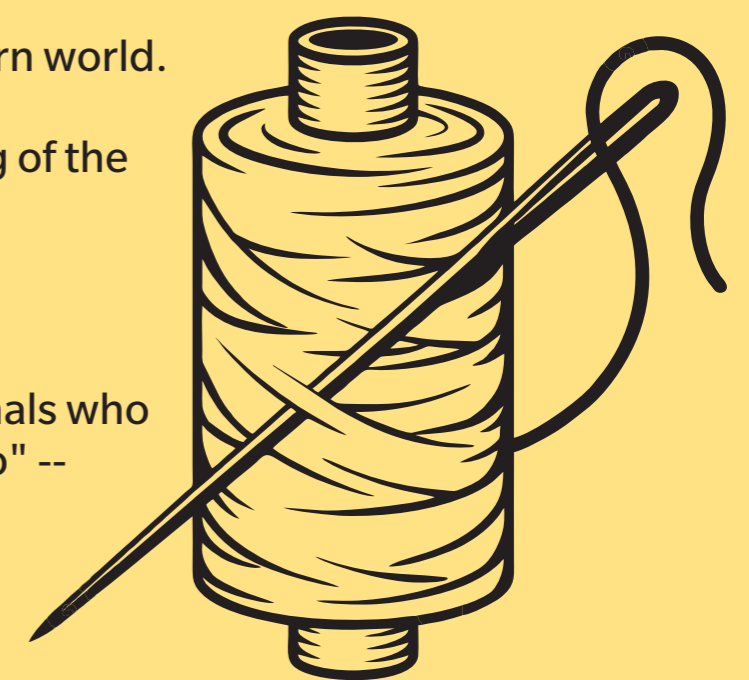
The election of a pope is conducted under conditions of secrecy unique in the modern world.

The cardinals are shut away in the Vatican until they reach agreement -- the meaning of the word conclave indicating that they are literally locked up "with a key."

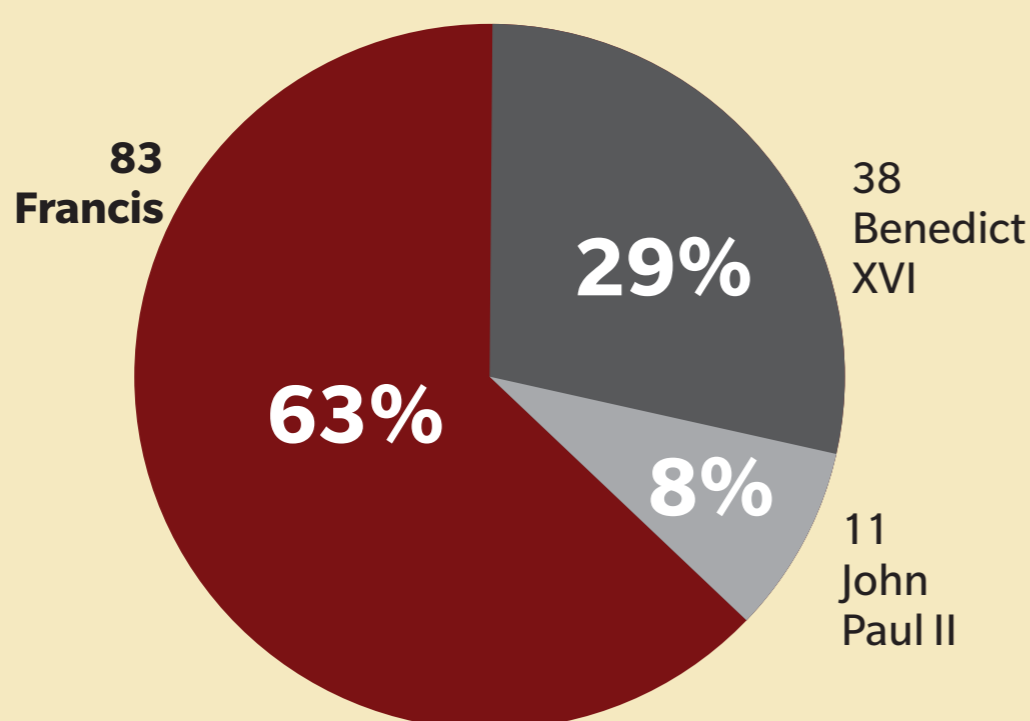
After all the votes have been cast, the papers are mixed, counted and opened.

As the papers are counted, one of the scrutineers calls out the names of those cardinals who have received votes. He pierces each paper with a needle -- through the word "Eligio" -- placing all the ballots on a single thread.

The ballot papers are then burned - giving off the smoke visible to onlookers outside which traditionally turns from black to white once a new pope has been chosen.



Electors created by the last 3 popes



To elect a new pontiff, two-thirds of the votes are needed, that is 66.6%

Reaching a decision

If after three days of balloting nobody has gained the two-thirds majority, voting is suspended for a maximum of one day to allow a pause for prayer.

At the end of the election, a document is drawn up giving the results of the voting at each session, and handed over to the new pope. It is kept in an archive in a sealed envelope, which can be opened only on the orders of the pope.

The only clue about what is going on inside the Sistine Chapel is the smoke that emerges twice a day from burning the ballot papers. Black signals failure. The traditional white smoke means a new pope has been chosen.

New pope announced

After the election of the new pope has been signalled by white smoke rising from the Sistine Chapel chimney, there will be a short delay before his identity is finally revealed to the world.

Once one candidate has attained the required majority, he is then asked: "Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?"

Having given his consent, the new pope is asked: "By what name do you wish to be called?"

After he has chosen a name, the other cardinals then approach the new pope to make an act of homage and obedience.

The new pope also has to be fitted into his new robes. Then, from the balcony of St Peter's Basilica, the traditional announcement will echo around the square: "Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum... habemus papam!" -- "I announce to you a great joy... we have a pope!"

His name is then revealed, and the newly-elected pontiff will make his first public appearance.

After saying a few words, the pope will give the traditional blessing of Urbi et Orbi -- "to the city and the world" -- and a new pontificate will have begun.



According to the *Annuario Pontificio*, the papal annual, there have been more than 260 popes since St. Peter. Among these, 82 considered the first pope. Most holders of the office have been Roman or Italian, with a sprinkling of other Europeans, including one Polish, and one Latin American pope.

For full details on the conclave and the election of our new pope

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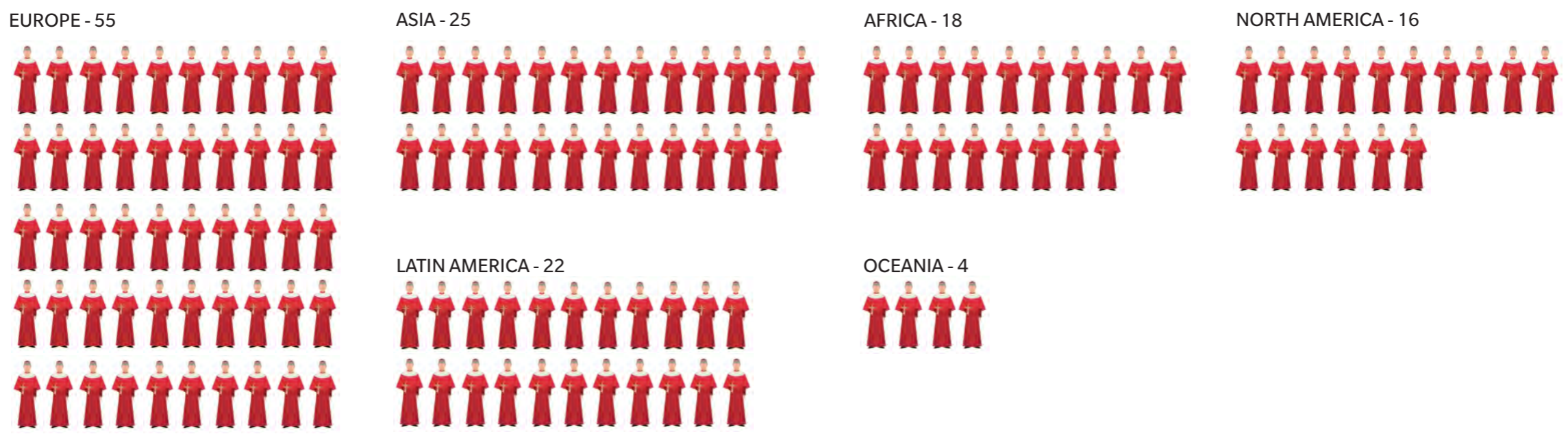


CONCLAVE

How cardinals elect a Pope

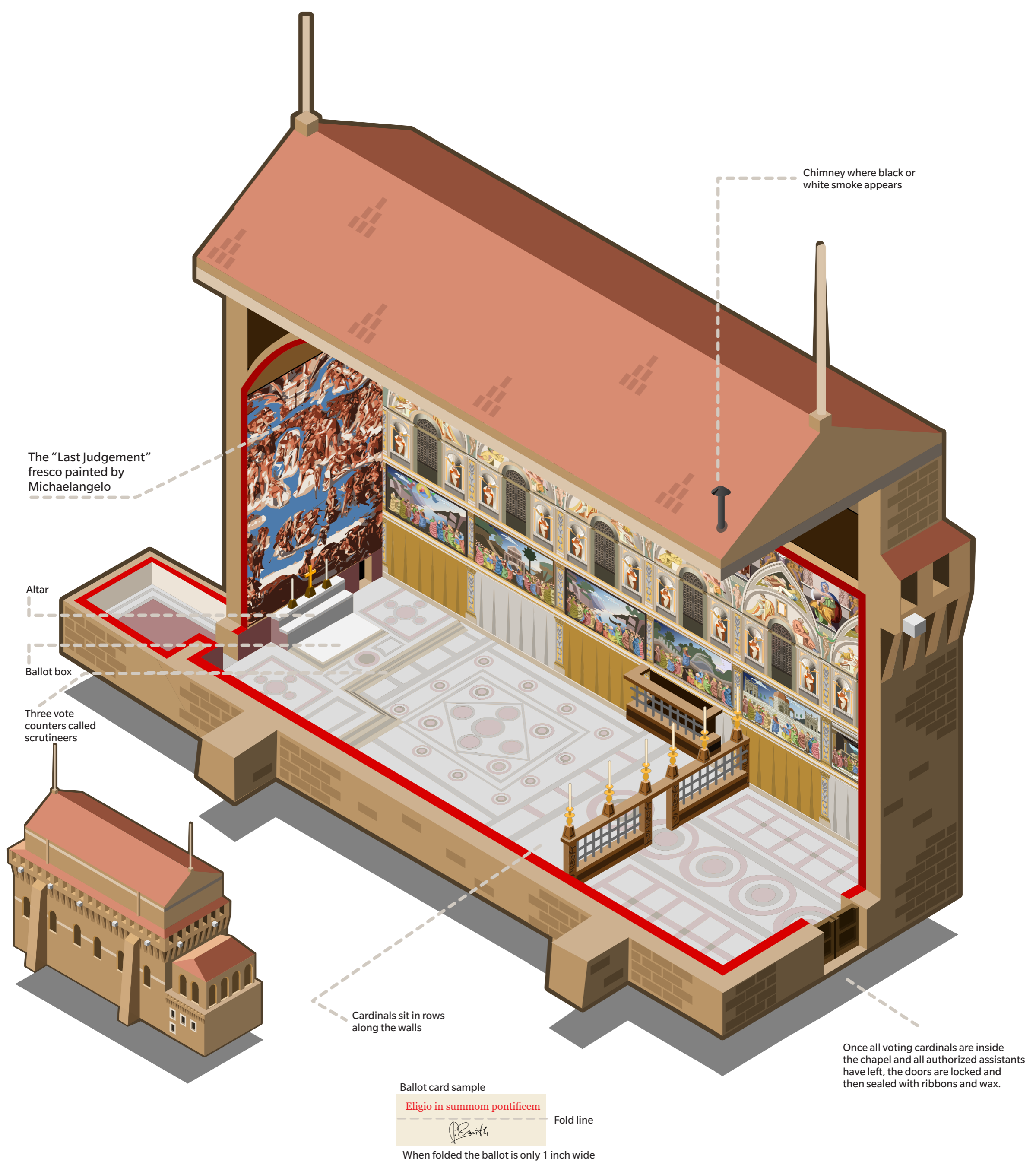
Who is eligible to vote

Under a change of rules stipulated by Pope Paul VI, only cardinal's who have not yet reached their 80th birthday on the day of the pope's death may enter the conclave. Those over 80 may participate in preliminary meetings.



Conclave rules

- The chapel is swept for listening devices before and during the conclave
- Each cardinal has to be present to vote and must case his own ballot.
- Other people allowed inside the conclave: two technicians, medical personnel and several assistants.
- Cardinals and assistants swear an oath of absolute secrecy. Leaking information would result in excommunication.
- The cardinals are not permitted and contact with the outside world: No cell phones, newspapers, television, messages, letters or signals.
- Observers can see the cardinals only when they travel between their lodging and the chapel. Vatican City workers who encounter them are not allowed to speak to them.



Ballots are counted

The scrutineers tally the ballots and read aloud the name of the cardinal who received each vote. The ballots and any notes are then burned. A record is kept for the Vatican archives.

How balloting takes place

Voting begins the first afternoon. If no one receives two-thirds of ballots cast, voting takes place twice each morning and afternoon. If after the third day no pope is elected, a one day break for prayer can be taken. This process repeats after every seven votes.

Determining a winner

A two-thirds majority of the cardinals present is required to win. After 33 rounds, a runoff will occur between the top two vote-getters, according to a tweak in the rules made by Pope Benedict XVI.

A new pope is announced

Smoke signals: After each voting session, all ballots, tally sheets and notes are burned in a small stove just off the chapel. An official record of the voting is sealed and put in the Vatican archives.

Black: If no one has been elected, black smoke from the burning papers signals an inconclusive vote to the waiting crowd in the square.

White: When a candidate is elected, the papers are burned with chemicals that cause white smoke. Bells of St. Peter's Basilica also ring to clear up any confusion over smoke colour.



The pope is introduced

Once a cardinal has received the required number of votes, the dean of the College of Cardinals asks him if he accepts, and he chooses a name.

The cardinals then pledge their obedience to the new pope. The pope puts on a white cassock and skullcap; various sizes are kept on hand.

The senior deacon of the cardinals steps onto the main balcony of the Vatican and declares: "Habemus papam" - "We have a pope"

According to the Annuario Pontificio, the papal annual, there have been more than 260 popes since St. Peter. Amongst these, 82 have been proclaimed saints. Most holders of the office have been Roman or Italian, with a sprinkling of other Europeans, including one Polish, and one Latin American pope.

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