Vatican

Vatican News



Cardinal François-Xavier Bustillo of Ajaccio, France, is surrounded by members of the media as he approaches the Petriano entrance next to St. Peter’s Square to attend a general congregation meeting in the New Synod Hall at the Vatican April 25, 2025. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

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Whether Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who relinquished the rights associated with being a cardinal after he was forced to resign in 2020, will be able to enter the conclave to elect a new pope is an ongoing question.

It also is one question that Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, continued to decline to speak about, saying any information on the conclave will be released after the April 26 burial of Pope Francis.

Becciu, who is appealing his December 2023 conviction on charges of embezzlement and fraud, has told reporters that he never formally, in writing, renounced his right to enter the conclave. But the Italian newspaper Domani reported April 25 that Becciu was shown two letters signed by Francis excluding him from the conclave; apparently members of the College of Cardinals will discuss the matter after the funeral.

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Briefing reporters April 25, Bruni said that as of noon that day 150,000 people had passed through St. Peter's Basilica to pay their last respects to Francis, who died April 21 at the age of 88.

At the general congregation meeting of the College of Cardinals April 25, 149 cardinals were present, Bruni said, which is an increase of 36 cardinals over the previous day.

During the meeting, he said, 33 cardinals took their turns to speak about the current situations of the church and the world.

The general congregation also decided that April 27 at 4 p.m., the cardinals would go to Rome's Basilica of St. Mary Major, pass through the Holy Door, visit the tomb of Francis, who will be buried there April 26, and recite vespers together.



Cardinal Stephen Chow Sau-yan of Hong Kong approaches the Petriano entrance next to St. Peter’s Square to attend a general congregation meeting in the New Synod Hall at the Vatican April 25, 2025. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

Bruni also said Archbishop Diego Ravelli arrived to explain to the cardinals some of the details of the pope's funeral rites, especially because Francis had simplified the rites and rituals originally approved by St. John Paul II to emphasize "they are the funeral rites of a pastor, not a sovereign," Bruni said.

The press office director also spoke about the seating charts for presidents, kings, queens and prime ministers who will be among some 130 official government representatives to the funeral.

After the presidents of Argentina, where Francis was born, and Italy, where he served as bishop of Rome, Bruni said, precedence is given to reigning royalty and then heads of state, sitting in the alphabetical order of their nation's name in French.

U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump announced their attendance. They are from the "États-Unis," so will not be among the last of the

leaders.

This story appears in the **Who will be the next pope?** feature series. View the full series.