Vatican
Vatican News
Pallbears w coffin

Pallbearers carry the coffin of Pope Francis inside the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome following his funeral Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 26, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Claudia Greco)



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Rome — April 26, 2025
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More than 250,000 people from around the world gathered in St. Peter's Square and Vatican City to pay tribute to Pope Francis on April 26. Monarchs and presidents, cardinals and sisters, Jubilee pilgrims and tourists filled the square for the funeral of the charismatic leader of the Catholic Church who died April 21 at 88.

The National Catholic Reporter sent seven journalists to Rome to cover the funeral, joining scores of media from around the world. Here are some of the photo highlights from the services as captured by NCR wire services and NCR journalists.



More than 250,000 people from all walks of life and all over the world crowded St. Peter's Square for Pope Francis' funeral. (NCR photo/Olivia Bardo)

Parolin signs scroll.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state under Pope Francis, signs the "rogito" or scroll describing the late pope's life, ministry and papacy April 25 during a prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Trump-Zelenskyy meet

Francis, throughout his ministry, worked hard to build bridges. Even in death, Francis brought together two presidents who have had a rocky relationship: Donald Trump and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Inside St. Peter's Basilica, Trump and Zelenskyy met for about 15 minutes before Francis' service — their first face-to-face meeting since an angry exchange in the

Oval Office in late February. The Trump administration has been trying to broker peace in the Russia-Ukraine war that began more than three years ago.

Zelenskyy and Trump

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, right, and U.S. President Donald Trump, talk before the funeral of Pope Francis in Vatican April 26.(OSV News/Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, via Reuters)

After Trump was seated for the funeral, he was immediately followed out of the basilica by Zelenskyy.

"Good meeting," Zelynskyy wrote on X. "We discussed a lot one on one. Hoping for results on everything we covered. Protecting lives of our people. Full and unconditional ceasefire."

Trumps at coffin

U.S President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump view Pope Francis' casket. (OSV News/Reuters/Dylan Martinez)

Hundreds of thousands say goodbye

Traveling from around the world, from monarchs to the poor, 150,000 people gathered along the route from St Peter's to Santa Maria Maggiore, Francis' final resting place, on a mild and sunny late-spring morning to attend the funeral.



Many young people who had planned to attend the canonization of Carlos Acuti attended the pope's funeral. (NCR photo/Olivia Bardo)

The crowd represented a decidedly youthful demographic because the theme of this weekend's Jubilee events was focused on youth, noted Global Sisters Report journalists Soli Salgado, Rhina Guidos and Olivia Bardo. Tens of thousands of people had planned to attend the canonization of Carlo Acutis, the first millennial saint, but the ceremony was postponed when Francis died.

Prelates share the sign of peace during the funeral Mass. (OSV News/Reuters/Dylan Martinez)

Prelates share the sign of peace during the funeral Mass. (OSV News/Reuters/Dylan Martinez)

A member of the clergy prays during the funeral Mass. (OSV News/Reuters/Matteo Minnella)

A member of the clergy prays during the funeral Mass. (OSV News/Reuters/Matteo Minnella)

Homily: ‘Build bridges, not walls’

In the funeral homily, as Vatican correspondent Christopher White reported, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re illuminated the bridge-building theme when he paid tribute to the major initiatives of Francis' 12-year papacy

" 'Build bridges, not walls' was an exhortation he repeated many times," Cardinal Re said.

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, blesses the casket of Pope Fra

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, blesses the casket of Pope Francis with holy water during the pope's funeral. (CNS/Pablo Esparza)

"He established direct contact with individuals and peoples, eager to be close to everyone, with a marked attention to those in difficulty, giving himself without measure, especially to the marginalized, the least among us," Re said.

"He was a pope among the people, with an open heart towards everyone."

Pope Francis' casket is driven through the center of Rome on the way to his burial in the Basil

Pope Francis' casket is driven through the center of Rome on the way to his burial in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. (CNS/Kendall McLaren)

Crowds waited at basilica

Francis was entombed inside the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where Evelia Gonzalez, from Los Angeles, waited for the cortege. Gonzalez had been on vacation in Texas when she heard the news that the pope had died. "I decided just like that, at the last hour, to come to the pope's funeral,” she told Guidos. "He was a brother to all."

Outside the basilica, Global Sisters Report reporter Rhina Guidos talked with migrants, who called Francis "friend and defender."

Pope Francis' casket is driven past the Colosseum on its way toward his burial place in Santa

Pope Francis' casket is driven past the Colosseum on its way toward his burial place in Santa Maria Maggiore. (CNS/Justin McLellan)

People stand behind the flag of Argentina outside the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Pope

People stand behind the flag of Argentina outside the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Pope Francis' final resting place. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

Attention turns to conclave

After the funeral, NCR reporter Camillo Barone caught up with Cardinal Ángel Sixto Rossi, archbishop of Cordoba, Argentina, and asked him how the College of Cardinals might now carry forward Francis' vision and legacy. "By being faithful and having the courage that he always had to really live the Gospel," he said. "Francis' revolution is to return to the Gospel."



Cardinal Ángel Sixto Rossi, 66, archbishop of Cordoba, Argentina, right, watches the motorcade transporting the body of Pope Francis, a longtime friend, from St. Peter's Square to Santa Maria Maggiore, where he was laid to rest. (NCR photo/Camillo Barone)

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