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From left: Cardinals Raymond Burke, Robert Sarah and Gerhard Müller are three leading conservative prelates who hold views in favor of the Latin Mass. (CNS photos/Paul Haring)



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If traditionalists have their way, the next pope will not only champion the Latin Mass, but also rescind Pope Francis' 2021 *moto proprio* letter that limited its celebration.

The likelihood of that transpiring is low, given that just about two dozen cardinal electors are on record as lending support to the traditional liturgy, according to National Catholic Reporter's analysis of the College of Cardinals.

Of the 133 cardinals who will cast ballots in the conclave, only about 24 have articulated views in favor of the Tridentine Mass that Latin-rite Catholics attended before the Vatican II-inspired liturgical reforms promulgated by St. Pope Paul VI in 1970.

A majority of cardinal electors — 92 — have not spoken out either way on the Latin Mass, either in media interviews, articles, diocesan newspaper columns, homilies or op-eds.

Given those numbers, it is unlikely that a traditionalist pontiff will emerge on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, although a few archconservative cardinals may have enough clout and name recognition to have an impact.

How to use this database: *Hover over each cardinal to learn more about him. A green dot next to an issue indicates the cardinal has expressed support for positions and teachings that generally align with those of Pope Francis. A red dot indicates disagreement with Francis' stances, and a gray dot means the cardinal's position is unclear.*

Among the leading traditionalists, Cardinals Robert Sarah of Guinea and Raymond Burke of the United States have garnered the most media attention. A few

conservative-leaning outlets have even floated their names as papabile, or cardinals considered to have strong chances to be elected pope.

Sarah, 79, who served as prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship under Francis from 2014 to 2021, has been a vocal proponent of the Latin Mass and pre-Vatican II practices such as receiving Communion on the tongue and while kneeling.

In a 2016 French-language interview, Sarah said the 1962-65 Second Vatican Council did not require priests to face the congregation during Mass, and he invited priests to celebrate Mass facing east, so as to "put God back in the heart of the liturgy."

In a July 2017 article, Sarah wrote of wanting a liturgical reconciliation between the old and new rites, adding that those who saw the Latin Mass as undermining the authority of Vatican II were seriously mistaken.

Burke, 76, is a canon lawyer who has long been received as a leading voice of Catholic traditionalism. He has celebrated the Tridentine Mass often and has worn pre-Vatican II vestments such as the cappa magna.

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When Francis promulgated *Traditionis Custodes*, his 2021 *motu proprio* (on his own initiative) letter that restricted the Latin Mass, Burke responded with a lengthy statement on his website where he called the restrictions severe and revolutionary. He also questioned the pope's authority to revoke use of the rite.

A doctrinal hardliner who became a vocal critic of Francis' agenda and reforms, Burke was removed as head of the Vatican supreme court as well as from the influential Congregation for Bishops early in Francis' papacy. In 2023, Francis removed Burke's privileges for a Vatican apartment and salary, calling Burke a source of disunity in the church.

Other leading conservative prelates hold views in favor of the Latin Mass, such as Cardinal Gerhard Müller, the former prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In 2021, Müller criticized *Traditionis Custodes* as harsh, and noted that its restrictions could "be modified again by any future pope."

Notable prelates who have expressed support for the Latin Mass, according to NCR's analysis, include Cardinals Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem; Matteo Maria Zuppi, president of the Italian bishops' conference; Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York; Michael Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Christophe Pierre, the Vatican ambassador to the United States; and Jean-Marc Aveline, president of the French bishops' conference.

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