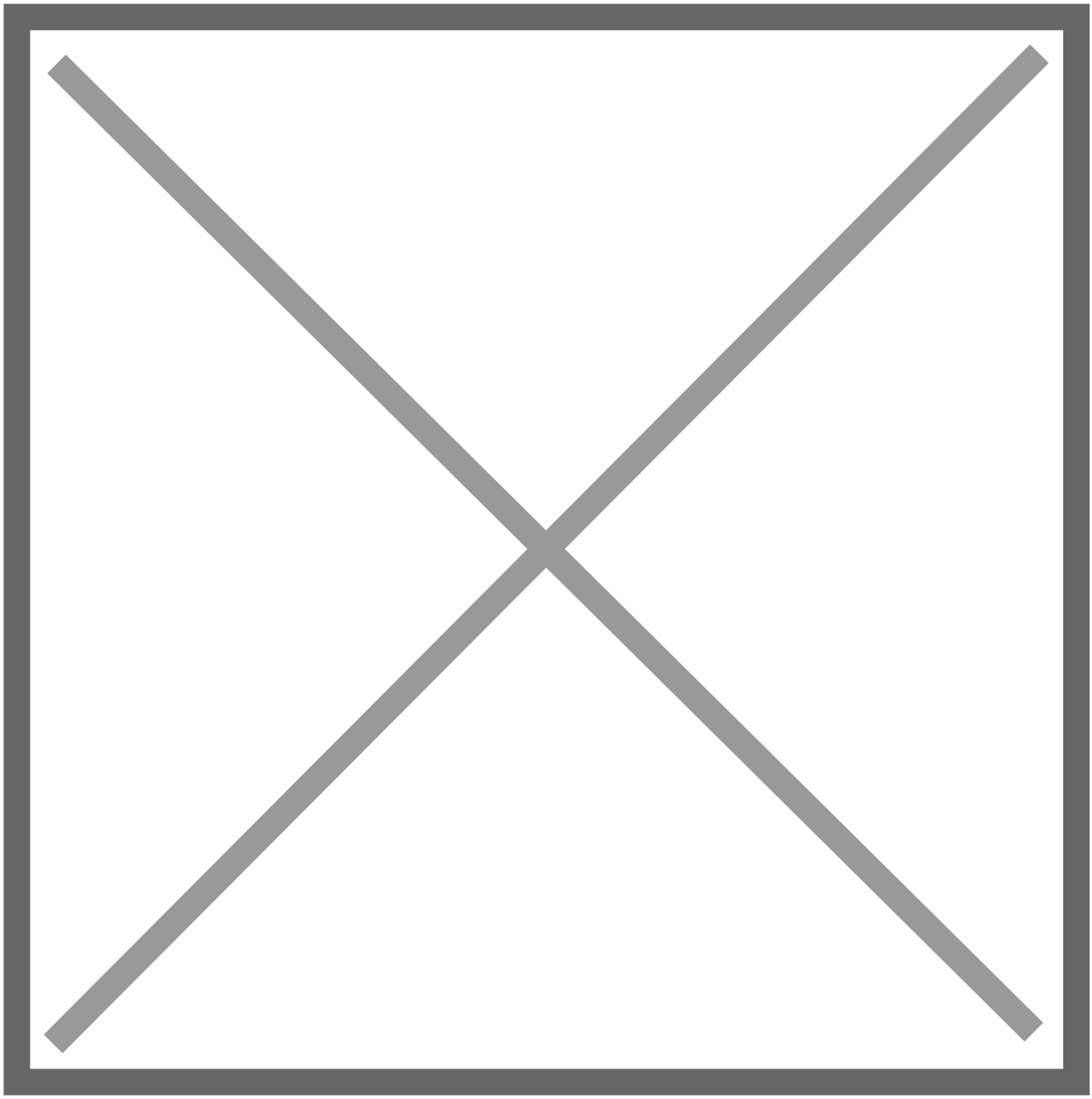
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A woman prays before a crucifix during a Mass in honor of Pope Francis' 10th anniversary as pontiff at the cathedral in Buenos Aires March 13, 2023. (OSV News/Reuters/Agustin Marcarian)



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Vatican City — April 21, 2026
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One year ago today, Pope Francis died at 7:35 a.m., April 21, 2025.

It came the day after Easter, when — barely able to raise his hands — he gave his blessing *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world). Looking drawn and worn, the 88-year-old pope from Argentina took his final ride in the popemobile, spending about 15 minutes among the crowd.

But then, the next morning, which was a major holiday in Italy, church bells tolled the death knell after U.S. Cardinal Kevin Farrell, chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church, announced that Francis had died just a few hours ago.

"His whole life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and his church," Farrell said in a video announcement broadcast from the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Francis lived.

The Wikimedia Foundation said that its "Deaths in 2025" entry, which included Francis, was their second most-read entry during the year. And plenty of people took the occasion to learn more about his life too, adding that "His English Wikipedia article was the 11th most-read (page) of the year."

Elected March 13, 2013, Francis was the first pope in history to come from the Southern Hemisphere, the first non-European to be elected in almost 1,300 years and the first Jesuit to serve as successor to St. Peter.

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Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Francis was an untiring voice for peace, urging an end to armed conflict, supporting dialogue and encouraging reconciliation.

He gave new energy to millions of Catholics — and caused concern for some — as he transformed the image of the papacy into a pastoral ministry based on personal encounters and strong convictions about poverty, mission and dialogue.

His simple lifestyle, which included his decision not to live in the Apostolic Palace and his choice of riding around Rome in a small Fiat or Ford instead of a Mercedes sedan, sent a message of austerity to Vatican officials and clergy throughout the church.

Although he repeatedly said he did not like to travel, he made 47 foreign trips, taking his message of Gospel joy to North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

He was elected after Pope Benedict XVI retired in 2013. Then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was already a known and respected figure within the College of Cardinals, so much so that no one disputed a respected Italian journal's report that he had received the second-highest number of votes on all four ballots cast in the 2005 conclave that had elected Benedict.

Elected on March 13, 2013, Bergoglio chose the name Francis to honor St. Francis of Assisi.

"Go out" was Francis' constant plea to every Catholic, from curial cardinals to the people in the pews. More than once, he told people that while the Bible presents Jesus as knocking at the door of people's hearts to get in, today Jesus is knocking at the doors of parish churches trying to get out and among the people.