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Black smoke after first votes Wednesday

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NCR Today

Conclave 2013

Black smoke belched from the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel at 11:39 a.m. Rome time (6:39 a.m. EST), signaling to the thousands of pilgrims and faithful in a rain-drenched St. Peter's Square that the Catholic church still does not have a pope. Countless millions must have seen the live television images.

The 115 cardinals in conclave have by now voted three times, once last night when they first entered the Sistine Chapel and twice this morning. The ballots were burned last night and this morning after the second morning vote, as per custom.

The cardinals will have a lunch break and siesta and then begin another round of balloting late this afternoon Rome time.

What does it mean? Read *NCR* senior correspondent John L. Allen's analysis: Wednesday looms as 'Super Tuesday' for 2013 conclave. He says Wednesday may be the "make or break" day for the papal candidates.

Wondering what to expect today and (maybe tomorrow)? Read Fr. Tom Reese's backgrounder: What happens after the first day of the conclave?

Pat Marrin, editor of *NCR*'s sister publication, *Celebration*, reflected Tuesday on the Scripture readings the cardinals were asked to meditate on before conclave started: A Mass and readings for a new era with a new pope.

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