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Cardinal Dolan: New pope 'the figure of unity for all Catholics'

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NCR Today
Pope Francis

Hours after the white smoke signaled a new pope, Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York issued his congratulations to Pope Francis.

"The election of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who has taken the name Francis I, marks a great milestone in our church. As successor to Peter, our first pope, Pope Francis I stands as the figure of unity for all Catholics wherever they reside. The bishops of the United States and the people of our 195 dioceses offer prayers for our new leader and promise allegiance to him," Dolan said in a statement released by the U.S. bishops' conference.

Going into the conclave, Dolan had generated some buzz among media and Vatican observers that he might have succeeded Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, but cardinals ultimately selected Argentina's Bergoglio, the first Jesuit pope, the first from Latin America and the first to select the name Francis.

While not revealing any of the internal debates among cardinals, Dolan said "intense prayer from all around the world surrounded the election of Pope Francis I," what he described as "the inspired choice of the College of Cardinals."

Read Dolan's full statement [here](#)

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