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Call for church to have outward focus led to election

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NCR Today

A four-minute speech before the church's cardinals a week before conclave led to the election of Pope Francis, according to a report.

Speaking in the Paul VI grand hall of the Vatican, the Argentine cardinal warned against focusing too much on matters close to home.

He said the church needed to shift its focus outward, to the world beyond Rome rather than being "self-referential." Its core mission was "humility, dignity and justice. It should help the poor," he was reported as saying.

Just before his speech, at a dinner of English-speaking cardinals, the future pope's name had come up over a meal of soup and wine but hadn't generated a buzz, according to the account. "The speech was decisive," said one voting European cardinal.

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