

## ?Francesco? now Italy?s most popular baby name

Eric J. Lyman Religion News Service | Oct. 23, 2013 The Francis Chronicles  
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Moved by the election of Pope Francis seven months ago, the name ?Francesco? has leapfrogged to No. 1 on the list of the most popular baby names in Italy, according to a study.

The study, conducted by Enzo Caffarelli, who researches the origins of names at Rome?s Tor Vergata University, along with telephone directory publisher Seat PG Italia, also showed a trend toward re-naming streets, town squares and parks for St. Francis of Assisi, the pontiff?s namesake.

There are now more than 2,000 public places in Italy named after Francis; 300 of them were named this year.

The name Francesco has long been commonplace in Italy, according to Caffarelli. But the new pope has pushed its popularity even higher. Caffarelli noted that over the first three months of the year ? before Francis? election ? the name was No. 2 in Rome, behind ?Lorenzo.?

After the papal election on March 13, Francesco leaped into first and has grown more popular since then. (The study did not include baby girls named Francesca.)

In recent years, around 8,500 newborn Italian boys are christened Francesco every year ? a number that should see a significant jump in 2013.

?The name ?Francesco? is the most popular name for newborns in Italy so far in 2013, and it is evident that the impact of the former Jose Mario Bergoglio is the main contributing factor to the name?s new popularity,? Caffarelli said.

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