

Ciao, fellow traveler!

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the death of **Pope Francis**, a global spiritual leader whose papacy was marked by compassion, humility, and a tireless call for peace. As Rome and the Catholic world enter a time of mourning and transition, I want to provide you with timely updates on what this means for travel, the Jubilee Year, and key upcoming events in the Eternal City.

Pope Francis Lies in State Beginning Wednesday

Starting **Wednesday, April 23**, Pope Francis will lie in state in **St. Peter's Basilica**, where pilgrims and the faithful may come to pay their final respects. Public visitation will be open throughout the day, with long lines expected.

- **Location:** St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City
- **Public Viewing:** Begins Wednesday morning (hours to be confirmed)
- **Note:** Silence is observed inside the basilica. Photography is restricted.

Funeral Mass – Saturday, April 26

The funeral for Pope Francis will take place on **Saturday morning in St. Peter's Square**. Dignitaries, world leaders, and thousands of pilgrims are expected to attend. The Mass will be broadcast globally.

- **Location:** St. Peter's Square
- **Time:** Morning, exact hour to be confirmed
- **Advice for Visitors:** Expect major road closures, security checks, and heavy crowds around the Vatican and Borgo neighborhoods.

Impact on the Jubilee Year 2025

Pope Francis was the initiator of the upcoming **Jubilee Year**, scheduled to begin in December 2024 under the theme “**Pilgrims of Hope.**” His passing introduces a period of uncertainty and review.

Here is what we currently know:

- The Jubilee infrastructure projects (pilgrim routes, renovations, signage) will continue.
- All major Vatican-organized Jubilee announcements are **on hold** pending the election of the new Pope.
- The overall theme and schedule of the Jubilee may be **revised or adjusted** based on the direction of the next pontificate.

The Vatican announced Monday that the canonization of **Blessed Carlo Acutis** has been postponed following the death of Pope Francis.

“Following the death of Supreme Pontiff Francis, notice is hereby given that the Eucharistic celebration and Rite of Canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis, scheduled for April 27, 2025, II Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy, on the occasion of the Jubilee of Adolescents, is suspended,” the Holy See Press Office said in a statement on April 21.

More than 80,000 teenagers were expected to gather in Rome for the April 27 canonization amid the Vatican’s Jubilee of Teenagers, according to the Dicastery for Evangelization, with young people registered from the United States, Brazil, India, Spain, Portugal, France, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Germany, Chile, Venezuela, Mexico, Australia, Argentina, and Nigeria.

News of Pope Francis’ death broke as pilgrims were beginning to arrive for the planned canonization, including a group of students from St. Joachim Parish in Sydney, Australia, who traveled more than 10,000 miles to attend the canonization.

Although the canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis is postponed during this time of *sede vacante* (the vacancy of the papal seat), the **Jubilee of Teenagers**

will still go forward. Some adjustments have been made to the original schedule out of respect for the mourning period. The planned musical celebration at Circus Maximus on Saturday night has been canceled, but a special Jubilee Mass for young people will still be held on Sunday, April 27. While it will no longer include the canonization, the spirit of the celebration remains—offering teens a powerful moment of unity, faith, and hope during this historic time in Rome.

What Happens Next in Rome

With the papal funeral on Saturday, Rome will soon prepare for the **Conclave**—the closed-door process by which cardinals elect the next pope. This will take place in the **Sistine Chapel**, and the world will watch for the symbolic smoke from the chimney:

- **Black smoke** signals no decision.
- **White smoke** announces the election of a new Pope.

During this period, expect:

- Security to remain heightened around Vatican City
- Limited access to St. Peter's Basilica and Square
- Modifications to public transit, particularly buses and Metro stops near the Vatican
- A surge of international media presence, especially around Piazza San Pietro

If you have plans to travel to Rome in the coming weeks, be sure to confirm opening hours for major churches and museums, especially around Vatican City. Some events and exhibitions may be temporarily paused.

Looking Ahead

While we await news of the next Pope and official Jubilee decisions, we remain inspired by the legacy Pope Francis leaves behind. His message of mercy and unity echoes through every basilica, pilgrimage route, and sacred space we explore.

I will continue to monitor developments and share updates about travel, events, and the future of the Jubilee Year.

With reverence and reflection,

Katerina Ferrara

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