



College of Cardinals

Choosing the 267th Pope in the context of increasing global violence against minority groups



Chairs: Liv Kemmsies and Lara Ruhle

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LETTER TO THE DELEGATES

Dear Cardinals,

I am Liv Kemmsies, currently in my last year of high school at the Swiss School of Curitiba, and consequently, my last year of SMUN. Such a bittersweet moment: on one hand, letting go of something which has been integral to my life for the past 4 years is heartbreaking. On the other hand, I am immensely confident that this conference will be packed with everlasting memories, friendships, and knowledge. For you to gain some perspective, the idea for this committee was pitched to the Executive Council in February of this year, even before the conference was planned or the death of Pope Francis, which goes to show how much dedication and passion have been put into making this committee as engaging and memorable as possible.

I am Lara Ruhle, from the 12th grade at Colégio Humboldt, São Paulo. It is of great honor to have been accepted to take this role as your Dean alongside Liv in the College of Cardinals, especially as someone from another school. I am deeply excited to dive in as your Chair in a Model UN that somehow differs slightly from what I am commonly used to, and to therefore, exchange knowledge and experience with all of you in this different and unique committee that Liv and I are looking forward to welcoming to this year's SMUN.

For this conclave, the chairs are positive of your engagement with the debate, and request only that the topic is dealt with respect and cordiality, as religion can be a sensitive matter, and, considering we are in an environment of diplomacy, courtesy is the most important quality for communication and an amicable environment. We are not promoting the catholic faith, but exploring its undeniable impact on global issues.

See you soon!

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COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION



The roots of the College of Cardinals can be identified from Ancient Jewish Practices in which Moses was the one chosen by God to be the head of Israel serving as a bridge between Him and Humanity. By his side, he had his collaborators, to whom he established a hierarchy. When Jesus Christ came to earth, he accordingly chose 12 apostles to work beside him, teaching the same as he taught, casting out demons, baptizing, anointing the sick, forgiving sins, and celebrating the Holy Eucharist, and other 70, who were given less power. Over time the Holy orders developed into the roles of bishop, priest and deacon.

Eventually, the title of Cardinal, meaning principal, eminent or superior, was given to the ones who were considered being part of a privileged class in the Catholic Church. Those who had therefore the duty of being the Pope's Chief advisors were all hierarchically divided in: Cardinal-bishops, ranked the highest who could become deans, Cardinal-priests, who hold the titles of churches in Rome and cardinal-deacons, who hold liturgical or charitable duties in the Church. They all were given the right to become a Pope and at last, in 1059 allowed to elect a Pope.

In the 12th century, the College of Cardinals was officially established as a formal institution, with its exclusive rights to elect a Pope in a Conclave. The duties

and necessities of the Cardinals have shifted through the evolution of the council, such as now, the requirement of initially becoming a Bishop, to then become a Cardinal.

A conclave occurs every time a Pope dies or resigns with a valid explanation. The dean should be the first one to inform and invoke all Cardinals for the conclave, which starts when all are located at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, which has the purpose of housing all the Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel. After the Chapel's doors are closed, all members should follow the rule of strict seclusion, with no usage of electronic devices or any other external contact mechanism. The ones who do otherwise should be excommunicated.

All cardinals under the Age of 80 are allowed to vote on the future Pope. A Pope is elected, when two thirds majority is reached among all the present members of the College. The Voting is done on paper by secret ballot. After the results are revealed, they are burned and if the fire which comes out of a chimney is white, it means the Pope has been chosen, but if not, the process still awaits.



PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Flow of Debate

As this is a special committee, the flow of debate, as well as the procedure, was adapted to mimic the conclave while still allowing for engaging debates. The cardinals, as in regular MUN, should set an agenda, engage in caucuses, and produce documents defending their thesis.

To initiate the discussion on the topics outlined on the agenda, Cardinals are recommended to engage in a semi-moderated caucus, rather than a moderated one, which is typically the case. However, it is up to the Cardinals to determine which caucus will be held.

Afterwards, documents which are called Draft Motu Proprio must be written one per bloc. In each, there shall not only be written proposals regarding the issue at hand, but also the three Cardinals most fit for the papacy, appointed by the bloc. The Draft Motu Proprio will be presented and the three cardinals appointed in the Motu Proprio must give a speech in favor, defending their perspective regarding the topic. Cardinals may propose to limit the number of speeches in favour entertained, after the three cardinals have spoken, but at least one speech against must be entertained for the cardinals of the other bloc to be considered in the voting. Regarding amendments, these will be an option but will only be voted on as friendly, seeing as the voting, which will happen at the end of every second session, will be concerning only the papacy, and not the actual documents written.

Voting will be done on writing on paper, by secret ballot, as in a real conclave, and it is allowed to vote for a cardinal who has not been appointed in the document, but the ones recommended should be the priority. For a Cardinal to be chosen as Pope, a two-thirds majority must be reached, which is what this committee wishes to achieve at the end of all sessions.

If all the ballots don't result in the election of a Pope, a runoff is going to happen between the two leading candidates of the previous round, however, simple majority is still required. It is a possibility as well, that a Pope is quickly elected, before the third day. If this is the case, the Cardinals should shift immediately into the Writing of a Motu Proprio. Therefore, they all should, beside



the chosen Pope, write a single unified document. Discussions on each topic will still be entertained.

At the end, the Draft Motu Proprio clauses which were agreed upon by the chosen Pope will all come together for the official Motu Proprio, which will be signed by him, with his chosen Papal name. The name of the other Cardinals should be kept below, since they are all the draft writers of the document.

In case of a crisis, it should not be disregarded from the main debate. Draft Motu Proprios should be written and the issue discussed should be taken into account when voting for a Pope.

If the cardinal wishes, the words *“Chiamo a testimone Cristo Signore, il quale mi giudicherà, che il mio voto è dato a colui che, secondo Dio, ritengo debba essere eletto”* can be said, before inserting their vote into the chalice as it is done in real conclaves, but this is by no means a necessity during this conference.

Personal Pronouns

As you will be representing people instead of a country's delegation, using personal pronouns - such as “I” and “you” - will be allowed. It is unnecessary to use pronouns matching the gender of figures being represented, so you may use the gender the cardinal prefers. The cardinals may refer to each other as “Your Eminence”, for respect.

Directives

In this committee, to improve the flow of the debate and to add historical accuracy, cardinals have the right to write directives, which are actions cardinals can take independently of the rest of the conclave. Essentially, they are crisis suggestions based on the individual power of each cardinal. A vivid imagination is always welcome!

The chairs will provide you with a Google form in which you can send your directives, and it will remain private from the rest of the conclave until the chairs or the crisis committee evaluates it. For better results, we advise you to be as specific as possible, so that it can have the effect you desire within the committee.



Position Paper

Regarding your position papers, you are allowed to use personal pronouns, and the structure is similar to traditional position papers. In the first paragraph, you should include an overview of the topic. This may include which types of minorities are most affected in your cardinal's country and a brief historical background. The structure does not deviate heavily from the traditional structure of a position paper in the first paragraph.

In the second paragraph, you should write an overview of your cardinal, which may include when they were made cardinal and by whom, past positions, motto, etc.

Finally, in the third paragraph, you should explore the views of your cardinal regarding the topic. We recommend that you include quotes, possible proposals for the papacy, and past actions your cardinal might have taken. In this paragraph, you should also include the name your cardinal would choose as Pope, as this also reflects on the type of papacy the cardinal wishes to emulate.

Resolution

The resolution at hand in the College of Cardinals is a Motu Proprio. This Document is usually only issued by the Pope, however to open the possibility for every Cardinal to take part in the writing process, the Deans have adapted it to a Draft Motu Proprio.

Considering the sample attached below, the Cardinals should write the names of the three most adequate candidates for the Papacy, where the name Francis is written. Underneath, the names of all Cardinals who took part in the writing of the document should be added as well. The next step is to write the purpose of the document and a short text issuing the topic, followed by propositions regarding it. Lastly, it should be registered where and when the document was written, finalized once again by the names of all cardinals.

A Motu Proprio shall be written after the Pope is elected, containing the aspects of the previous Draft Motu Proprios, however, instead of the three main cardinals, the Papal name of the chosen Pope should be written, and below, the name of all Cardinals who are the draft writers. The clauses that were successfully accepted, should be included and underneath them, at last the phrase "This I



decide and establish, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.” followed by “I establish that this Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio will be promulgated by its publication in L'Osservatore Romano, entering into force on **August 30th 2025**”

Draft Motu Proprio Sample:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aZk2E9VL-H4mMjQ6hij3qWZ0pOJCcB55wTvCswmDuPc/edit?tab=t.0>



TOPIC: The 2025 Conclave: Choosing the 267th Pope in the context of increasing global violence against minority groups.



Historical background

Conflicts against minority groups are those that aim to undermine, discriminate, or exclude certain communities which stand out, based on certain characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, religion, etc. Such conflicts have persisted through centuries, as those who identify any of these differences tend to segregate and dehumanize, leading ultimately to violence.

In the Middle Ages, ethnicity, gender, and religion were main factors in shaping what was then considered to be the perfect European society. Women accused of witchcraft and considered a threat to society, individuals of other ethnic backgrounds, and followers of a religion other than the only accepted at the time were persecuted and sometimes even killed. Playing a central role in society, the Catholic Church strongly supported these actions, spreading not only religion but also ideologies that resisted alteration.

Throughout the age of Exploration, initiated in the 15th century, European expansions in new Lands brought encounters with new and diverse communities. These discoveries incentivized Settlers and the Catholic Church to invade and

colonize these territories, as a way to once again spread their religion and culturally assimilate indigenous populations in ways that were far from ideal.

Slavery was a system that prevailed during this period in which Africans and indigenous peoples were, in the literal sense, owned and controlled by European Settlers all over the world. Enslaved individuals, therefore, had their rights eliminated and lived in poor conditions, other than free citizens. These were not only harmed, but were profits of the Catholic Church to spread the religion by imposing a new language, culture, and most importantly, faith.

As a response to the resistance against the Church's practices and the growth of the protestant branch, the Catholic Church started what was called the Counter-Reformation from the 16th to the 17th century. This movement aimed not only to fight against the Protestant Reformation but also to renew the Church internally by reinforcing Papal authority, and spreading Christianity through education and missionary work by the Jesuits, in African, Asian ,and American countries.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, the Catholic Church adopted a somewhat different approach towards inequality, defending workers who were then exploited during the rise of capitalism and socialism. Having an important role during the ages of industrialization, Pope Leo XIII wrote the *Rerum Novarum*, An Encyclical Letter, that defended the duty of workers to fight for their own rights and against corruption.

Although supporting colonization in African and Asian countries by collaborating with colonial authorities through missionary work, it also criticized major abuses during imperialism in the 19th century. In the subsequent World War I (1914-1918), churches became a vital helper for those in need of humanitarian assistance, providing aid for soldiers and their families, and turning cloisters, churches and monasteries into hospitals.

World War II (1939-1945) and especially the Holocaust-the systematic killing of six million jews-brought tough times of strong criticism towards the Catholic Church. Although not taking a clear public stance, many Catholics were strongly opposed to and denied any antisemitist claims, even if being a target of persecution, facing restrictions on practicing their own religion.

It was only in 1962, with the opening of the Second Vatican Council opened by Pope John XXIII when the Catholic Church took initiative to re-modernize itself. The Church began to acknowledge the social changes of modernity and therefore



modified itself respectively, respecting cultural and religious values and confronting social inequalities affecting minorities.

This re-modernization gave entry to new pathways for the Catholic Church and had an effect in the 21st century, such as for Pope Francis, elected in 2013, who contributed by visiting ten African countries with the mission to address social issues such as economic exploitation, corruption, refugees and migrants, interreligious dialogue and tolerance, peace and conflict, and climate change. This also reinforced his worldwide trust and his representation, extending his cardinal electors in the Sahara from 8% to 12%.

The Catholic Church has taken its variety of stances throughout history in response to fragile conflicts against minorities, from being a strong supporter of segregation to a provider of aid and justice in the fight against those. Today, these contributing efforts have gained global support, which portrays the Church as an influence and an ally to many of those minorities who struggle within conflicts and discrimination.

Current situation

Nowadays, it is difficult to pinpoint which groups are the biggest target of violence worldwide, although some groups may include migrants and refugees, women, religious groups, LGBTQIA+ persons, and people with disabilities. As violence is not standardized across the globe, some of the most notable problems are explored in this guide, but the extent to which the topic is explored is up to each cardinal.

Violence against women

When thinking about violence against women, the extent of this violence is broad. This can go from salary inequality to education inaccessibility to female gender mutilation to the absence of marital autonomy to abuse, etc. When thinking about the catholic church, however, the main issues are the lack of participation in positions of power, intramarital violence and divorce, and sexual abuse within the church.

Although in the past years the number of women working in the Curia has increased significantly, considering a fourth of the workforce is female and



positions such as secretary general of the Vatican City State are occupied by a woman, there are still barriers to be overcome. Priesthood, up until now, has been exclusive to men, although surveys have shown support for “women’s ordination to the priesthood and the ability to preach homilies at Mass.”

Another issue is domestic abuse, which, according to Vatican News, “125 million Catholic women may endure physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime”. Although priests and other clergy may offer support to the victim, domestic abuse often leads to divorce, which in turn is not recognized by the Catholic Church. This can leave women in a further position of vulnerability.

Regarding sexual abuse within the church itself, it is usually associated mostly with the abuse of minor boys, but it also happens to girls. Although overlooked, sexual misconduct towards girls by Catholic clergy is and has been a problem as well. For example, in Switzerland, the abuse of girls in recent years accounted for 39% of all cases, while in France, it accounted for 32% of all cases. Undeniably, the problem is more centred around underage boys, but it affects girls as well.

Violence against the LGBTQIA+ community

Persons of the LGBTQIA+ community have also been a target of hate crime, and the input of the Catholic Church has a major impact on the violence against the community.

Whether Same-Sex Couples should be blessed is a topic that has been discussed at length, but no Pope to this point has approved the blessing of same-sex marriage, although Pope Francis allowed the blessing of same-sex couples. This is but a part of the systemic discrimination that LGBTQIA+ persons may suffer within the Catholic Church. Other instances of discrimination include the social prejudice against such individuals, the higher chances of these persons being victims of sexual abuse within the church, notably minors, and the perpetration of extreme violence against LGBTQIA+ people.

Although not common, examples of extreme violence can be traced to France in 2023, with the Tours Bombing, in which the explicit purpose of the attack was to harm LGBTQIA+ people. Other types of violence are more common in other places, such as Uganda, with its “Anti-Homosexuality Act”, Tanzania, where castration for same-sex relations has been heavily endorsed, and Honduras,



in which most crimes against the LGBTQIA+ community are committed by the police, to mention but a few.

Religious persecution

In his latter days, Pope Francis was very vocal about his stance on the Palestine-Israel War, which in turn reveals problems of both global antisemitism and islamophobia, which are not minorities per se, but are groups that have faced difficulties in recent years, especially in light of the Palestine-Israel war and the high flow of migration.

In 2024, antisemitism has grown significantly, according to the Antisemitism Research Center (ARC) by the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM), documenting a total of 6,326 incidents, which represents an increase of 107.7% from 2023. The cases derive mostly as a response to the October 7th massacre and the resurfacing conflict in Israel, and consist mostly to “an unrelenting onslaught of violence, harassment, and systemic discrimination, fueled by a fusion of far-left, far- right, and Islamist extremism.”, which threatens the well-being of Jewish people around the world, being the highest encounter of antisemitism since World War II.

On the other hand, Islamophobia, especially in the USA and in Europe, has risen as well in the past year. Such incidents are accounted for by employment discrimination (15.4%), immigration and asylum (14.8%), education discrimination (9.8%), and hate crimes (7.5%). In Europe, Islamophobia can be noticed through government-backed suppression of pro-Palestine demonstrations, prohibiting religious attire, and inconsistent court rulings, revealing anti-Muslim biases.

Timeline of events

5th to 15th century - Support of the Catholic Church in the persecution and killing of women accused of witchcraft, ethnic minorities, and non-Christian religious followers during the Middle Ages

15th-20th century - European Colonization reinforced the idea to spread Christianity worldwide.



Enslaved African and Indigenous peoples were owned by settlers, and were then used to spread Christianity.

16th to 17th century - Counter-Reformation to fight against the protestant reformation and renew the Catholic Church internally, reinforcing its authority.

18th century - The catholic church strongly defended workers' rights who were exploited during the Industrial Revolution.

19th century - The Catholic Church supports colonization in Africa and Asia but criticizes abuses of colonial authorities.

1914-1918 - During World War II, the church was vital in securing humanitarian aid, soldiers and their families, and turning cloisters, churches, and monasteries into hospitals.

1939-1945 - Persecution and criticism of many followers of the catholic church during the Holocaust.

1962-1965 - In the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church modernizes itself, taking a stance in respecting and depending on diversity and inequality

2013-2025 - Pope Francis visits ten African countries, addressing social issues such as economic exploitation, corruption, refugees and migrants, interreligious dialogue and tolerance, peace and conflict, and climate change.

Increase in Pope Francis' representation of cardinal electors from the Sahara region from 8 to 12%.

Positions of all cardinals

Fridolin Ambongo Besungu

The Congolese Cardinal of 65 years, Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, is strongly seen as a papabile- an eligible candidate to be the next Pope- who is a promoter of social justice, speaking for the poor and the voiceless. Within the death and



persecution of Congolese Catholics at the hands of the jihadist group, Cardinal Fridolin is seen as a fierce helper. Therefore, he supports union and religious plurality, once stating: "Let Protestants be Protestants and Muslims be Muslims. We are going to work with them. But everyone has to keep their own identity.", which, however, sounds contradictory to some towards Catholic missions. He also strongly opposes blessing same-sex marriages, questioning how it can even be, given the fact that homosexuality is not legal in his continent, as he explained.

Raymond Leo Burke

The American Cardinal, Raymond Leo Burke, the age of 76, is someone who is widely known for his expertise in common law at the catholic church. He has therefore been Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura and uses this duty as a way to teach the Church in accordance with Catholic tradition and the Second Vatican Council. He has been a critic of Pope Francis' actions, which led him to almost evict Burke from his Vatican apartment and remove his stipend, pension, and healthcare. Even though the Cardinal mainly reinforces his opposition towards the Pope, he was happy to know he mentioned that Female deacons, which he stands against, are not a possibility for the church. He insists blessing same sex marriages is a sin and is worried that the Muslim religion will become a majority in a country where it is not.

Peter Erdo

Peter Erdo, a Hungarian Cardinal of 72 years of age, is one who grew up under communism in a catholic family. When he was only 4 years old, he was forced to flee after his house was burned down by invading troops. Given his background, Erdo is considered a man of intellect and experience, who could potentially be the next Pope. He is also known as a leader who served as president in the Hungarian Catholic Episcopal Conference and in the European Episcopal Conferences in 2005, and led the Council of European Bishops' Conferences twice in 2006 and 2016. As for social issues, the Cardinal focuses on migration, recognizing its need, but claiming that political stability needs to be reached beforehand. In addition, he worries about persecuted Christians, but emphasizes with Islam at the same time.

Willem Jacobus Eijk



The Dutch Cardinal Willem Jacobus Eijk of 71 years of age, is one who worships the teachings and spreading of the catholic religion. Since he comes from a country that was affected after the Second Vatican Council by the decrease of the church's role, even supporting the council's ideals, he worked on bringing back the light of Christ to his people. He defended marriage as permanent between men and women, reinforcing his opposition to blessing same-sex marriages, however, in a tactical and diplomatic manner. Nevertheless, his claims in which he implies that only men should be priests have been controversial to some. He understands the need for migration and is open to helping all those in need, especially persecuted Christians, but insists that the ones who flee for economic reasons have the duty to stabilize their native country and the country they have immigrated to as well.

Kurt Koch

Since a very young age, the Swiss Cardinal Kurt Koch has shown his deep interest towards ecumenism - a movement of Christian union or cooperation worldwide. He studied theology, and even though taking the role as Bishop, he did not leave his work aside, being able to separate these two duties carefully. Therefore, he worked on the relationship between catholics and jews, emphasizing not mission, but dialogue implementation. By his extensive knowledge of Christian unity, he was appointed president of the Pontifical Council by Benedict XVI. He conducted a study of the papal ministry in 2024, which shows his knowledge of the history and role of a Pope in today's society and further on. Critics view the Cardinal, however, as someone who has limited knowledge or concerns towards social issues, given his focus on ecumenism. Yet, he has given his stances towards priestly celibacy and women's ordination, which have been unstable, since he abandoned his support.

Robert Sarah

The Guinean Cardinal, Robert Sarah, of 80 years of age, is well known and respected among conservative Cardinals, who is often seen as an opposition of Pope Francis' reformist leanings. Sarah was named archbishop of Conakry at the age of 34 by John Paul II, who gave him then the nickname of "Baby Bishop". He accepted the offer to become secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and by having to leave his home to do so, he was awarded by Guinea's leader, the country's highest honor; however, he still insisted



on criticizing the poor administration and corruption present in the regime. He is a defender of Catholics who attend the Latin Mass, suffering persecution from Rome, and an opponent of blessing same sex couples. Even though he resigned from his role as prefect of the Congregation in 2021, therefore losing his status in the Church, he is still considered the most respected Cardinal in Africa by some.

Robert Francis Prevost

The 69-year-old Cardinal, Robert Francis Prevost, born in the United States of America, is one whose views align with those of Pope Francis. The cardinal spent two years in Peru doing missionary work and was afterwards named its Bishop. Therefore, he is seen not as an American Cardinal, but a worldwide one, strengthened by his Latin-American ties. Prevost's main social issue concerns climate change, immigrants, and the poor. He emphasizes the need to go out and meet new people where they are, which was reinforced by his statement: "The bishop is not supposed to be a little prince sitting in his kingdom." He has, however, dealt with accusations of mishandling cases of sexual abuse of two priests, which are denied. Regarding ordaining women as deacons, Prevost argues that ordaining them to clerical roles may not solve the problems in the church but create new ones. As for blessing same-sex couples, although not sympathizing with teachings which do not follow the Gospel, the Cardinal has not set his clear position on *Fiducia supplicans* and therefore the topic in general.

Charles Maung Bo

As a Cardinal who comes from a country that is facing a civil war at the moment, Charles Maung Bo sets his deepest concerns clear on that. The 76-year-old agrees that Myanmar should celebrate its diversity and mentioned he is worried about the difficulties of Rohingya Muslims who were forced to flee the military in Rakhine state, for example. The Cardinal was the parish priest of Loihkam, near Lashio, northern Shan State, a region of ethnic armed resistance organizations such as the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and there he learned a new local dialect and gained experience. He was nominated Myanmar's first ever Cardinal by Pope Francis and has been extremely respected ever since. Besides that, it is believed that he is against women being priests and blessing same sex marriages, but has spoken little, or not at all, about it, since he sets his concerns elsewhere.



François-Xavier Bustillo

François-Xavier Bustillo is a French Cardinal, originally born in Spain, whose reformist visions align with Former Pope Francis. During the tensions in the Catholic Church, which were acknowledged by the Cardinal in 2023, he replied meaning the Church was afraid of: “growing secularism, afraid when the Pope calls for greater responsibility in front of the tragedies of migrants”. This portrays him as a Cardinal who insists on union in the fight for social justice. He encourages an Authentic Christian life and moreover, various expressions of faith. He supports the blessing of same-sex marriages, which align with his views, however he stands against female ordination, claiming that even though they hold great importance to transmit faith, they would be a symbol of power and not of service. Bustillo's age of only 56 years, can be an obstacle for him to be respected for the role of Pope as one of the youngest Cardinals.

Pietro Parolin

As the Secretary of State of Pope Francis, the Italian Cardinal of 70 years of age, Pietro Parolin had the duty as a deputy Pope, and could therefore be a preferred candidate for this Conclave. He is someone who most likely prioritizes diplomacy and a global outlook over the purity of the Catholic church itself, which is viewed as very positive by his supporters. The Cardinal worked at the nunciature of Mexico, helping to establish diplomatic ties with the country and the Holy sea, and as undersecretary of state for the Relations with States and was influential in directing the relations with Vietnam, China, North Korea and Israel. He, however, is against the legalisation of same sex marriages and has called the voting in favor of it in the Republic of Ireland, a “defeat for humanity”.

Pierbattista Pizzaballa

Pierbattista Pizzaballa, a Cardinal who was originally born in Italy, is now one who lives in Jerusalem and claims it as his nationality. When he was 25 years old, he moved to the city and already encountered a not ideal scenario, which was an ongoing clash between the Israeli military and the Palestinians. At first, even more so since he didn't know any other language other than Italian, it all seemed new and foreign to him. With time, he gained experience with the exchange between him and Jewish people and reinforced, therefore, the approach between different religions, especially the Jewish. He therefore has an impressive understanding of Israelis and Palestinians in the ongoing conflict in Gaza. However, considering his



young age of 60 years, he can be seen as too young and inexperienced to be the next Pope.

Matteo Maria Zuppi

The Italian, Matteo Maria Zuppi, is a Cardinal, who is considered to be on the left wing of the catholic church. He has been part of the Sant'Egidio Community, one that cares about the poor and the marginalized, and helped to mediate the end of Mozambique's 15-year civil war in 1990 and continued in Guatemala and Burundi. In the year of 2019, he was nominated by Pope Francis to be a Representative after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He has been a helper to mitigate this issue ever since, and was therefore responsible for the release of 19,000 Ukrainian Children who were taken to Russia. Besides that, he wrote an introduction to a book in 2018, requesting the church to approach its relations with the LGBTQIA+ community. Zuppi is, therefore, a Cardinal who truly believes in the potential of the Second Vatican Council and engages with these profound changes made by it.

Luis Antonio Tagle

Luis Antonio Tagle, a Philippine Cardinal of 67 years, is known by many as the “Asian Francis”, as he cares about social issues and has sympathy toward migrants, just like the former Pope. By Francis himself, he was ranked as Cardinal-bishop, meaning he could possibly be favored for the role of successor. Tagle acts playfully, but is a great negotiator, having smart political tactics. He insists that the church should act respectfully and with compassion towards gay people, divorcees, and single mothers, since the fact that they were treated unfairly can not simply be erased. Other than that, the Cardinal published a document, met families of victims, and asked the church for a 5-minute tolling or ringing of bells at 8:00 to remember all the deaths and pray for the victims, to address and combat the ongoing drug crimes and killings in his country. However, critics insist these actions were not enough, since he should have been more vocal on the issue.

Jean-Marc Aveline

Cardinal Jean-Marc Aveline was originally born in Algeria while it was under French rule, but was forced into exile, among others, growing up in France's second city, Marseille. Consequently to these traumatic events, he has experience



and fragility with the theme and is therefore dedicated to migration issues, focusing on avoiding the “criminalization of immigrants as the cause of all evil”, which gives him closeness to Pope Francis’ ideals, who allegedly named him as his favorites to assume the role of Pope. Aveline is also dedicated to interreligious dialogue, promoting it between Islam and Judaism. He prefers to keep his stance on women’s ordination, questioning of priestly celibacy, and access to Communion for remarried divorcees, indirect, since he believes that these are fragile topics. On blessing same-sex couples however, he stands against, reasoning that individuals should be blessed and not couples.

José Tolentino de Mendonça

Born in Portugal, yet moved to Angola in his early years, during its process of independence, the 59-year-old Cardinal faced tragedies such as the killing of men. When the country gained its Independence, Mendonça fled together with his family, but never forgot his experience. He is therefore strongly in favor of cultural exchange and was the first director of the Portuguese Bishops Conference’s National Secretariat for Culture from 2004 to 2014, incentivizing the Church’s dialogues with a more cultural milieu in Portugal. The Portuguese Cardinal is seen as a modernist figure in the Catholic Church, being connected with groups such as the Community of Sant’Egidio, the United Nations, and allies in the Roman Curia, approaches homosexuality, and is an Ally of a radical feminist Benedictine sister who engages with abortion, women’s ordination, blessing same sex marriages and homosexual couples adopting children. He is, however, one of the youngest Bishops present in the College of Cardinals, which can be an obstacle for him to be the next Pope.

Reinhard Marx

Ever since Francis was elected Pope in 2013, the 71 year old German Cardinal, Reinhard Marx has played a prominent role in being one of the Church’s advisers. The Cardinal has successfully accomplished many of his goals in the Catholic Church, mainly on the defence of Homosexuality. He gained the church’s approval by strong-armed persuasion in the employment of “remarried” divorcees or same-sex couples and for spouses of Catholics to gain Holy Communion. In addition, he supports the ordination of homosexual men, willing to speak for the cause. He has shown his support to sexual abuse victims in the Catholic Church as well, creating a fund called *Spes et Salus*. However, in 2021, Marx was accused of



mishandeling a case of sexual abuse. He offered to resign as a way to own his mistake, which was then denied by the Pope himself. Regarding Climate change and refugee crisis, which are the biggest challenges Europe is facing, he calls for unification to face these issues.

Angelo Bagnasco

The 82 years old Italian, Angelo Bagnasco, is a Cardinal who was born during World War II and has therefore gained experience for his career in the Catholic Church. He is known as a man of high culture, intelligence, intense spirituality and profound compassion, who is one of the ideal candidates for the Papacy, if a conservative who will return to traditional Christian roots is preferred. The Cardinal opposed allowing Holy communion to "remarried" divorcees, proposed by the *Kasper Proposal*, which he denied. He opposed to homosexual unions, however, surprised many in 2019, when he canceled three reparation prayers in response to a gay pride parade. He additionally stands against the ordaining of women as deacons and the persecution of christians. One of the main issues addressed by Bagnasco as well is the clerical abuse crisis in which he demands transparency, since many cases are hidden or not properly addressed to the public eye.

Fernando Filoni

As the Conclave approaches, the chances for Fernando Filoni, a 79 year old Italian Cardinal, to be preferred for the papacy increase. He is a Cardinal who is well experienced and has global vision, as he spent the years of 1992 to 2001 in Hong Kong with the task to reconcile Chinese People to the Holy see since the country was going through a situation of social and religious changes and went to Iraq during the 2003 Iraq war as an apostolic nuncio, who decided to stay with the displaced, even though tensions were rising. Therefore, Filoni's concerns stand more on migration and refugee issues and not on blessing same-sex couples or women deacons, since he believes these are too controversial to talk openly about. On the Israel-Hamas war, the Cardinal has proposed solutions that would satisfy both parties and thinks the best and only option is a two state one, to end the conflict once and for all.

Gerhard Ludwig Müller



Gerhard Ludwig Müller is a 77 year old German Cardinal, who is known for being an intelligent and honest man. Even though having more of a conservative leaning, the Cardinal sometimes diverges from those, therefore he prefers to call himself just Catholic, with no political label, which he dislikes. During the sexual abuse crisis he seemed indecisive at first in how to act, but further on took a firm stance towards opposing groups. Müller stands against ordaining female deacons as he mentions having them as priests or deacons would be impossible. He also stands against blessing same-sex marriages, which he describes as a “blasphemy”. He is seen as someone who is loyal and collaborative to the church and has therefore avoided criticizing Pope Francis directly, even though their perspectives don't align.

Albert Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don

Albert Malcolm Ranjith Patabendige Don, or simply Malcolm Ranjith, is a Sri Lankan 77 year old Cardinal, who grew up not only in a family of committed Catholics but also in a village of militant Christians, who were loyal to their traditions. Since his childhood, he gained political experience by taking part in a protest, as socialists were determined to nationalize schools. Regarding his conservative leanings he likely stands against blessing same-sex marriages and ordaining female deacons; however, since he comes from a traditional country, he prefers to keep his focus elsewhere. Malcolm has had a stable relationship with Pope Francis, in which they both shared their concerns for the poor. He is also a strong supporter of the Second Vatican Council and within its reformist ideas, the Cardinal defends religious freedom and dialogue. After the 2019 terrorist bombing in Sri Lanka, the cardinal emphasized his critics to the church, by emphasizing the lack of social justice, which can present his character as impulsive, but also as one who also is willing to confront social justice.

Daniel Fernando Sturla

The Uruguayan 65 year old Cardinal, Daniel Fernando Sturla, is a defender of the Catholic Faith not only in his country but to everyone worldwide. In his country itself he struggles to defend it, especially since its past history of Spanish missionary work as a consequence for secularism. Sturla himself insists that Uruguay should safeguard catholicism in the face of self-secularization, acting serene and non-confrontational in occasions such as the attempt of Montevideo's legislators to block the construction of the statue of The Virgin Mary in 2014. He



remarks the Church is open and should therefore reach out to everyone, keeping her identity intact. The Cardinal is seen as someone who has the concern to care for the weakest and for the young throughout their personal and spiritual development. As for blessing same-sex couples although respecting Pope Francis' decisions, he rejected *Fiducia Supplicans* pointing out how it can create confusion, being contradictory.

Anders Arborelius

As a Cardinal who was born in Switzerland but has a Swedish nationality, the 75 year old Anders Arborelius is considered a prominent catholic in his country. By the King of Sweden, he was once awarded a medal for his significant contribution. Pope Francis called him a model of Guidance who is not afraid and not against anybody. He upholds the church's teaching insisting that it is unchangeable especially regarding gender and sexual orientation and is therefore against women's ordination. The issues that call most the attention of the Cardinal is interreligious dialogue, which he promotes and migration, aligning with Pope Francis. Even with the circulation of violence in Sweden, mainly caused by numerous immigrants, Arborelius upholds his position, promoting dialogue and integration to all, including many muslims and opposing any restrictions against them. Although respected by many, he was once asked if he wants to be Pope and he responded by saying it is unrealistic, but a possibility indeed.

Stephen Brislin

Stephen Brislin, a 68 year old South African Cardinal has recently gained recognition for his leadership skills. He is committed to social issues, especially the ones regarding women and the LGBTQIA+ community. He once allowed a prohibited group who fight for women priests and married clergy to attend the archdiocese and authorized the archdiocese to publish a report calling for hierarchical changes on the church such as the exploration of women's diaconate and LGBTQIA+ inclusion. He mentioned that this report is for the Church to of course keep its tradition, as well as embrace change so it stops restricting itself. Brislin additionally speaks about poverty issues, corruption and the need of an ethical leadership in his country, emphasizing that the catholic church should act upon these matters, promoting human dignity. When asked about the possibility



of him becoming the next Pope, he mentioned it is technically a possibility, however, he does not have the global experience as his other colleagues.

Blase Joseph Cupich

One of the Cardinals who has mostly faced criticism is Blase Joseph Cupich; a 76 year old American Cardinal who is an ally to Pope Francis, but is frequently questioned about views which do not align with orthodoxy and apostolic tradition. Some of his actions can be called controversial, such as the banning of children from receiving their first communion and confirmation, and a Traditional Mass community celebrating the Mass in the *Vetus Ordo*. He is an advocate for abortion rights who once told priests and seminarians not to protest in front of Planned Parenthood clinics or support the 40 Days for Life anti-abortion movement, since it is a woman's duty to decide about abortion at home and not in a clinic. He also calls for a welcoming language towards homosexuals, using the words gay and lesbian as these are words of respect and would like to see women's role in the Church expand, not necessarily favouring the possibility of ordaining deacons, but willing to discuss more on the topic.

Cristóbal López Romero

Cristobál López Romero is a Spain-born, Moroccan 72 year old cardinal. The social issues which shape his principles interreligious dialogue and the well being of migrants. The Cardinal lived not only in Spain and Morocco but also Paraguay and Bolivia, giving him an extensive global experience. In Morocco, he is seen as a leader who is dedicated to migration issues and the dialogue especially between Christians and Muslims, since the country is of Muslim majority. He considers migration not a problem, but a consequence to many problems such as poverty, wars, famines, climate change, and economic inequality; issues which need to be addressed. As for other issues such as ordaining women deacons and blessing same-sex couples, he has not given a clear stance since he does not express his concerns.

Leonardo Ulrich Steiner

As someone who is the Bishop of Manaus, where the Amazon Rainforest is located, the Brazilian 74 year old Cardinal Leonardo Ulrich Steiner cares about and defends the environment and the poor. He was born in Santa Catarina, but as a Bishop, shifted his focus to the Amazon Forest where he sets his concerns about



climate change and how it deeply affects indigenous communities who live there. He insists the main reason for climate change, which occurs considerably in Amazonian territories, is deforestation. These acts are often a consequence of consumerist and mercantile mentality according to Steiner, and therefore indigenous peoples habits should be introduced such as sustainable practices. The Cardinal also argues the Church should normalize homosexuality, encouraging unions from same sex couples, who do not only need the support from the Catholic Church, but the legal protection in society and supports ordinating women as deacons, emphasizing that many symbolize the duty of a deacon only without the official label.

Jean-Claude Hollerich

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich is a 66 year old Luxembourger who values experience and worldwide exchange between cultures. He has grown up in contact with Germany and France, since these two countries share borders with his, which made him not only learn these languages, but learn from other cultural habits. He also spent many years in Japan and in one of his returns to the country, in 1994, he spent 17 years teaching German. The cardinal sees only positive aspects on women being deacons and goes one step further by advocating on ordaining them as priests. He also defends the blessing of not just simply same sex couples, but homosexual unions, arguing the Church needs to change her doctrine towards homosexuality. As he values his own experience over Church tradition, he is not seen as favorable to become the next Pope, however as someone who can direct and influence other cardinals on their favorites.

Víctor Manuel Fernández

Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, a 62 year old Argentinian, sets his deepest concerns around social justice, the most disadvantaged and the defence of human rights. Since the death of his father in 1978 he was raised by Father Staffolani, a local priest while he was growing up. As he grew older, he was introduced by Staffolani to the *Theology of the People*, which emphasizes the respect of other cultures and popular religious expressions of the poor. Fernández is considered a controversial Cardinal by some who complained about certain theological comments of his in a newspaper, especially regarding same-sex couples, which even hindered his appointment as rector of the Catholic University of Argentina. However, he supports the blessing of same-sex marriages and as a



Ghostwriter of many of Pope Francis documents, took the role as the chief drafter of *Fiducia Supplicans*. Regarding the ordination of women as deacons, he is open to exploring the female role in the church, has however not yet made a statement of ordaining them as deacons.

Guiding questions

1. Where does your Cardinal stand politically?
2. What social issues most call the attention of your Cardinal?
3. What is your Cardinals' opinion on the blessing of same-sex couples?
4. How does your Cardinal view exploring women's role in the catholic church and possibly ordaining them as Deacons?
5. How does your Cardinal see immigration?

Further research

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