



## Vox Populi

08 May 2025

Just days after a new Prime Minister was elected in Australia, the College of Cardinals have begun the process to elect a new Pope.

Unlike the Federal Election however, the election of a new Pope is not a popularity contest based on campaigning, political spin and million-dollar advertising campaigns.

Instead, it is a process deeply driven by conversation, prayer and reflection. The Cardinals are not electing the new leader of a country, but rather they are electing the Successor of Saint Peter, the man who will hold the Keys to the Kingdom and who will take the title of “Holy Father” and serve the 1.4 billion Catholics worldwide.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “The *Pope*, Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, “is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful.”

In Matthew 16:19, Jesus gives Saint Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven, telling him he is the rock on which the Church will be built and whatever he binds on Earth will be bound in heaven.

This special role was entrusted to Saint Peter and in turn to his successors: those who bear the title “Bishop of Rome”.

The Bishop of Rome doesn’t simply serve as the leader of the Catholic Church, he is the visible sign of unity of the Christians and the Holy Father.

Throughout the writings of the early Church Fathers, this assertion of Rome’s special role is continually referred to.

The 4<sup>th</sup> century Council of Nicaea affirmed the Bishop of Rome’s special authority among the other Patriarchs.

Since then, through numerous heresies, splits, disagreements, wars, tribulations and divisions, the Bishop of Rome has triumphantly stood as the symbol of unity, under the promise that the gates of hell would not prevail against Saint Peter and his successors.

While he may not be perfect in all his actions, whomever sits on the Chair of Saint Peter sits there with the authority of Christ.

Let us pray for our Holy Father constantly, as he guides, serves and shepherds the Church and the People of God.