



# The Holy See

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APOSTOLIC LETTER  
ISSUED *MOTU PROPRIO*

***NORMAS NONNULLAS***

OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF  
**BENEDICT XVI**

ON CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS TO THE NORMS  
GOVERNING THE ELECTION OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF

With the Apostolic Letter *De Aliquibus Mutationibus in Normis de Electione Romani Pontificis*, issued Motu Proprio in Rome on 11 June 2007, the third year of my Pontificate, I established certain norms which, by abrogating those laid down in No. 75 of the Apostolic Constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis*, promulgated on 22 February 1996 by my Predecessor Blessed John Paul II, reinstated the traditional norm whereby a majority vote of two thirds of the Cardinal electors present is always necessary for the valid election of a Roman Pontiff. Given the importance of ensuring that the entire process of electing the Roman Pontiff is carried out in the best possible way at every level, especially with regard to the sound interpretation and enactment of certain provisions, I hereby establish and decree that several norms of the Apostolic Constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis*, as well as the changes which I myself introduced in the aforementioned Apostolic Letter, are to be replaced by the following norms: No. 35. "No Cardinal elector can be excluded from active or passive voice in the election of the Supreme Pontiff, for any reason or pretext, with due regard for the provisions of Nos. 40 and 75 of this Constitution." No. 37. "I furthermore decree that, from the moment when the Apostolic See is lawfully vacant, fifteen full days must elapse before the Conclave begins, in order to await those who are absent; nonetheless, the College of Cardinals is granted the faculty to move forward the start of the Conclave if it is clear that all the Cardinal electors are present; they can also defer, for serious reasons, the beginning of the election for a few days more. But when a maximum of twenty days have elapsed from the beginning of the vacancy of the See, all the Cardinal electors present are obliged to proceed to the election." No. 43. "From the time established for the beginning of the electoral process until the public announcement that the election of the Supreme Pontiff has taken place, or in any case until

the new Pope so disposes, the rooms of the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, and in particular the Sistine Chapel and the areas reserved for liturgical celebrations are to be closed to unauthorized persons, by the authority of the Cardinal Camerlengo and with the outside assistance of the Vice-Camerlengo and of the Substitute of the Secretariat of State, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the following Numbers. During this period, the entire territory of Vatican City and the ordinary activity of the offices located therein shall be regulated in a way which permits the election of the Supreme Pontiff to be carried out with due privacy and freedom. In particular, provision shall be made, also with the help of Prelate Clerics of the Apostolic Camera, to ensure that no one approaches the Cardinal electors while they make their way from the *Domus Sanctae Marthae* to the Apostolic Vatican Palace."No. 46 § 1. "In order to meet the personal and official needs connected with the election process, the following individuals must be available and therefore properly lodged in suitable areas within the confines mentioned in No. 43 of this Constitution: the Secretary of the College of Cardinals, who acts as Secretary of the electoral assembly; the Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations with eight Masters of Ceremonies and two Religious attached to the Papal Sacristy; and an ecclesiastic chosen by the Cardinal Dean or by the Cardinal taking his place, in order to assist him in his duties."No. 47. "All the persons listed in Nos. 46 and 55 § 2 of this Constitution who in any way or at any time should come to learn anything from any source, directly or indirectly, regarding the election process, and in particular regarding the voting which took place in the election itself, are obliged to maintain strict secrecy with all persons extraneous to the College of Cardinal electors: accordingly, before the election begins, they shall take an oath in the form and using the formula indicated in the following number."No. 48. "At a suitable time before the beginning of the election, the persons indicated in Nos. 46 and 55 § 2 of this Constitution, having been duly warned about the meaning and extent of the oath which they are to take, shall, in the presence of the Cardinal Camerlengo or another Cardinal delegated by him, and of two Pronotaries Apostolic de Numero Participantium, swear and sign the oath according to the following formula: *I, N.N., promise and swear that, unless I should receive a special faculty given expressly by the newly-elected Pontiff or by his successors, I will observe absolute and perpetual secrecy with all who are not part of the College of Cardinal electors concerning all matters directly or indirectly related to the ballots cast and their scrutiny for the election of the Supreme Pontiff. I likewise promise and swear to refrain from using any audio or video equipment capable of recording anything which takes place during the period of the election within Vatican City, and in particular anything which in any way, directly or indirectly, is related to the process of the election itself. I declare that I take this oath fully aware that an infraction thereof will incur the penalty of automatic ('*latae sententiae*') excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See. So help me God and these Holy Gospels which I touch with my hand.*"No. 49. "When the funeral rites for the deceased Pope have been celebrated according to the prescribed ritual, and everything necessary for the regular functioning of the election has been prepared, on the day appointed in accordance with the provisions of No. 37 of the present Constitution for the opening of the Conclave, the Cardinal electors shall meet in the Basilica of Saint Peter's in the Vatican, or elsewhere, should circumstances warrant it, in order to take part in a solemn Eucharistic celebration with the Votive Mass *Pro Eligendo Papa*. This celebration should preferably take place

at a suitable hour in the morning, so that in the afternoon the prescriptions of the following Numbers of this Constitution can be carried out."No. 50. "From the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, where they will assemble at a suitable hour in the afternoon, the Cardinal electors, in choir dress, and invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit with the chant of the *Veni Creator*, will solemnly process to the Sistine Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, where the election will be held. The Vice-Camerlengo, the Auditor General of the Apostolic Camera and two members of each of the Colleges of Protonotaries Apostolic *de Numero Participantium*, of Prelate Auditors of the Roman Rota and of Prelate Clerics of the Apostolic Camera will take part in the procession."No. 51 §2. "It will therefore be the responsibility of the College of Cardinals, operating under the authority and responsibility of the Camerlengo, assisted by the Particular Congregation mentioned in No. 7 of the present Constitution, and with the outside assistance of the Vice-Camerlengo and of the Substitute of the Secretariat of State, to make all prior arrangements for the interior of the Sistine Chapel and adjacent areas to be prepared, so that the orderly election and its privacy will be ensured."No. 55 § 3. "Should any infraction whatsoever of this norm occur, those responsible should know that they will incur the penalty of automatic (*latae sententiae*) excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See."No. 62. "Since the forms of election known as *per acclamationem seu inspirationem* and *per compromissum* are abolished, the form of electing the Roman Pontiff shall henceforth be *per scrutinium* alone. I therefore decree that for the valid election of the Roman Pontiff at least two thirds of the votes are required, calculated on the basis of the total number of electors present and voting."No. 64. "The voting process is carried out in three phases. The first phase, which can be called the *pre-scrutiny*, comprises: 1) the preparation and distribution of the ballot papers by the Masters of Ceremonies – they will have been readmitted in the meantime, together with the Secretary of the College of Cardinals and the Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations – who give at least two or three to each Cardinal elector; 2) the drawing by lot, from among all the Cardinal electors, of three Scrutineers, of three persons charged with collecting the votes of the sick, called for the sake of brevity *Infirmarii*, and of three Revisers; this drawing is carried out in public by the junior Cardinal Deacon, who draws out nine names, one after another, of those who shall carry out these tasks; 3) if, in the drawing of lots for the Scrutineers, *Infirmarii* and Revisers, there should come out the names of Cardinal electors who because of infirmity or other reasons are unable to carry out these tasks, the names of others who are not impeded are to be drawn in their place. The first three drawn will act as Scrutineers, the second three as *Infirmarii* and the last three as Revisers.No. 70 § 2. "The Scrutineers add up all the votes that each individual has received, and if no one has obtained at least two thirds of the votes on that ballot, the Pope has not been elected; if however it turns out that someone has obtained at least two thirds of the votes, the canonically valid election of the Roman Pontiff has taken place."No. 75. "If the balloting mentioned in Nos. 72, 73 and 74 of the aforementioned Constitution does not result in an election, one day shall be dedicated to prayer, reflection and dialogue; in the successive balloting, observing the order established in No. 74 of the same Constitution, only the two names which received the greatest number of votes in the previous scrutiny, will have passive voice. There can be no waiving of the requirement that, in these ballots too, for a valid election to take place there must be a clear majority of at least two thirds of the votes of the Cardinals present and

voting. In these ballots the two names having passive voice do not have active voice."No. 87.

"When the election has canonically taken place, the junior Cardinal Deacon summons into the hall of election the Secretary of the College of Cardinals, the Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations and two Masters of Ceremonies. Then the Cardinal Dean, or the Cardinal who is first in order and seniority, in the name of the whole College of electors, asks the consent of the one elected in the following words: *Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?* And, as soon as he has received the consent, he asks him: *By what name do you wish to be called?* Then the Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations, acting as notary and having as witnesses the two Masters of Ceremonies, draws up a document certifying acceptance by the new Pope and the name taken by him."All that I have laid down in this Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio I hereby order to be wholly observed, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. This document will enter into effect immediately upon its publication in *L'Osservatore Romano*. Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 22 February in the year 2013, the eighth of my Pontificate. **BENEDICTUS PP. XVI**

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