

B'nai B'rith welcomes Pope Francis

Written by B'nai B'rith Europe



B'nai B'rith welcomes Pope Francis, who was elected at the Vatican on March 13 by the 115 Catholic cardinals eligible to vote.

The new pope who is 76 years old, became the Archbishop of Argentina in 1998. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now pope Francis is the first pope from Latin America and the first non-European pope in history. He will lead a Catholic church with 1.2 billion followers.

In November, then-Cardinal Bergoglio was the keynote speaker at B'nai B'rith's Krystallnacht commemoration in Buenos Aires, where he helped light the menorah.

"We welcome Pope Francis to his new role as leader of the Catholic Church," B'nai B'rith International President Allan J. Jacobs said. "Catholic-Jewish relations had remained a focus of Pope Benedict XVI and we look forward to continuing the solid foundation that already exists for interfaith dialogue."

"We have been encouraged by the historic progress in Catholic-Jewish relations," said B'nai B'rith Executive Vice President Daniel S. Mariaschin. "Interfaith dialogue, stressing tolerance and mutual respect, is increasingly important in today's world."

B'nai B'rith leaders met with Pope Benedict, as with a line of his predecessors, on multiple occasions and looks forward to establishing a similar relationship with Pope Francis.