



## Archdiocesan Liturgy Commission

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Our Ref: 7

Dear Reverend Fathers,

1) Due to many requests for clarification re the mourning period for the pope, we have the following explanation that would be useful and help clear any uncertainty.

2) Also reproduced below is the answer to the clarification requested:

“According to the Holy See’s Novendiali, the first day begins with the funeral Mass. The Novendiali is timed to end with the beginning of the conclave. Then when the conclave begins, the other prayers for the conclave proper takes over.”

***The problem lies with the use of the word Novendiales, Noverndiales and Novendiali.***

***The word Novendiales, Noverndiales and Novendiali means a nine day festival.***

***Problem- there are two traditions running concurrent using these same words in this case.***

***Mourning the Pope’s death for the universal church begins when the Pope dies- 9 days of mourning - Novendiales***

***Following his death the College of cardinals are to celebrate 9 consecutive masses for him beginning with the Mass of the funeral rites for Nine consecutive days (Novendiali), except for special reasons, the funeral should take place between the fourth and sixth day after death. These masses that are said by the Cardinals must be in accordance with the Funeral Rites and so it is “mourning” in character, and these special masses are celebrated by only by specific Cardinals in Rome.***

***This confusion appears too when in reference to a Novena which to many is synonymous to the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succor, However the word Novena could also mean, nine days of prayer, nine hours, or nine weeks. Therefore, Our Lady does not have monopoly over the word Novena.***

**The Archdiocesan Liturgy Commission.  
11 April 2005**

## **The Vacancy of the Holy See** (Papal Interregnum)

The period between the death or resignation of a Pope and the election of his successor, when the See of Peter is vacant, is called the ***Interregnum***. This Latin term means *between the reign* (of one Pope and another).

It is a period governed by papal law, which admits of no changes to Church governance, or to the spiritual or material patrimony of St. Peter, save the election of his successor.

During the ***Interregnum*** the church offers fitting prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the College of Cardinals to elect a successor.

In the case when a Pope dies, a ***Novendiales*** a 9 day mourning period, begins the ***Interregnum***.

### **Mourning the Pope**

An official mourning period of nine days, called the Novemdiales\*, begins when a Pope dies. **The day of death is counted as the first day of this period.** On each of these nine days the Mass of each Cardinal must be a funeral rite for the Pope.

The Missal provides a Mass formula "For a Deceased Pope," and the Liturgy of the Hours an Office of the Dead, which can be used during this time, if the liturgical season permits. In 2005, since Pope John Paul II died during the Octave of Easter, the initial rites celebrated for him observed the liturgical precedence which the Octave of Easter, the Sundays of Easter and Solemnities which are Holy Days have. However, excluding Sundays, the Mass formula for a deceased Pope, and the Office of the Dead with propers, can be celebrated as of Tuesday 5 April.

Prior to his burial, and following private rites in the Sistine Chapel, the Pope is laid in state in St. Peter's Basilica, permitting the faithful to pay their respects. In Pope John Paul II's case, this was preceded by a period of visitation for the Papal Household, Civil Dignitaries and Diplomats, held in the Clementina Hall of the Apostolic Palace.

After the Funeral and Burial the mourning period continues until the nine days are completed.

\**novendiales/novemdiales*: From novem (nine) and dies (days), meaning *lasting nine days*. A religious festival of nine days length, or, the ceremonies honoring a deceased, which in ancient Rome ended on the ninth day of death with a funereal feast. The English word novena, for nine days of prayer, shares the same root. Vatican usage seems to prefer *novemdiales* over the classical *novendiales*.

## Entry into the Conclave

The day on which the Conclave begins is ordinarily to be the fifteenth day after the death of a Pope, the 16th day of the *Interregnum*. However, the College of Cardinals is given the faculty by *Universi Dominici Gregis* to defer its beginning "for serious reasons" up to the 20th day after death (21st day of the Vacancy). It must begin on or before that day.

### **The case of this election the Cardinals will enter into the conclave on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the *Interregnum*.**

On the morning of the first day on which the Conclave is to begin, the Cardinal Electors gather in St. Peter's Basilica, or another place as may be determined by the College, to celebrate a Votive Mass for the Election of the Pope.

In the afternoon they gather in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace. Invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit with the *Veni Creator Spiritu*, they process to the Sistine Chapel. There they take a solemn oath to observe the prescriptions of the law governing the election, to observe the secrecy obliged, to not assist any secular power which may try to influence the election. They also swear that if elected they will faithfully carry out the Petrine Office, and protect the spiritual and temporal rights of the Holy See.

After the last Cardinal Elector has taken the oath, the Master of Papal Liturgical Ceremonies gives the order *Extra omnes*, commanding everyone not authorized to remain in the Conclave to leave the Chapel. Besides the Electors, only the Master of Papal Liturgical Ceremonies and the ecclesiastic chosen beforehand to give a meditation to the Cardinals on the seriousness of their duties, remains. When the meditation has been concluded, both of these men depart the Sistine Chapel.

After the Cardinals recite prayers provided in the proper Ordo for the Conclave, the Cardinal Dean inquires if any Electors have questions concerning the norms and procedures. Once these have been clarified, by a majority decision of the Cardinals the election can proceed.

Only the Cardinal Electors may remain in the Sistine Chapel during the actual voting, which by law is from after the ballots have been distributed until after they have been tabulated and checked. Outside of the time of actual voting, the Secretary of the College, the Master of Papal Liturgical Ceremonies and the 2 Masters of Ceremonies are present to assist the Conclave.

On this first day of the Conclave, only one ballot is permitted. On the other days of the Conclave, two ballots are permitted in the morning session and two are permitted in the afternoon session.

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## **Cardinals to Prepare for Conclave in Silence**

### **Electors Agree Not to Give Interviews to Media**

VATICAN CITY, APRIL 10, 2005 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The cardinal electors unanimously agreed to hold off making public statements, and to prepare in silence and prayer for the conclave where they will elect a new pope.

After the general congregation of cardinals Saturday, Vatican spokesman Joaquín Navarro Valls published a statement announcing that the cardinals were united on the decision.

"After the Holy Father John Paul II's funeral rites, the cardinals have begun a period of more intense silence and prayer in the face of the conclave," said the director of the Vatican press office.

"They have decided by unanimity to avoid interviews and meetings with the media during these days," Navarro Valls said. "Journalists are politely requested to abstain from asking cardinals for interviews or any sort of commentary."

The press statement clarified that the decision "must not be interpreted as an attitude of discourtesy or indifference toward the media, but as a gesture of great responsibility. What is more, the cardinals are grateful for the enormous interest with which [the media] are following this period."

The Vatican spokesman said it is not a question of a "prohibition," but an "invitation," as opposed to what will occur when the conclave begins, when the obligation is normative.

The cardinals' decision preceding the conclave is unprecedented.