



**Statement on the election of Pope Francis
Bishop Felipe J. Estevez of St. Augustine
March 13, 2013**

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad!

It is with great joy that the name of our Holy Father will be inserted at its proper place in the Eucharistic Prayer of every Mass and the faithful of the Catholic Church will pray for Francis, our new pope.

I am confident the College of Cardinals was divinely led to elect a pope from the Americas.

As the Archbishop of Buenos Aires in Argentina, Pope Francis was chosen to lead the Catholic Church. A son of Italian immigrants, he became a Jesuit priest, an educator and spiritual director, destined to become a bishop for his people. Today, the election of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as our new pope is an answer to our prayers.

Cardinal Bergoglio – the spiritual leader of a diocese of 2.5 million Catholics – is a shepherd who witnesses the humility of the Gospel. He is a strong leader recognized by the bishops of the Latin-American Church. He is a courageous teacher who defends the family, the unborn, the poor and the vulnerable – and he leads not only with words but by his example.

The entire Church of Christ needs the Petrine ministry (the succession of Peter). A pope exercises care for all humanity. This is a ministry of truth and unity for the whole world. Let us keep Pope Francis in our daily prayers and more importantly support his ministry as he guides our church in its practice of faith and morals.