

JD Vance shares condolences for Pope Francis death after meeting with Catholic leader

Vice President JD Vance shared his condolences after Pope Francis passed a day after he met with the head of the Catholic Church in the Vatican.

By Francesca Chambers
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — [Vice President JD Vance](#) shared his condolences after [the death of Pope Francis](#), which came a day after [he met with](#) the head of the Catholic Church in the Vatican.

Vance, a Catholic convert who tussled with Francis in the past [over immigration](#), complimented the late Catholic leader for [the homily](#) he gave early in the pandemic.

"I just learned of the passing of [Pope Francis](#). My heart goes out to the millions of Christians all over the world who loved him. I was happy to see him yesterday, though he was obviously very ill. But I'll always remember him for the below homily he gave in the very early days of COVID. It was really quite beautiful," [Vance posted on X](#).

Vance [visited the Vatican](#) over the weekend and met with the Pope on Easter Sunday before he and his family departed for India. Vance also held talks in Rome with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni at the start of his three-day visit.

The vice president had a formal meeting with Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin on April 19, and returned on April 20 for a brief interaction with the Pope. Photos taken by the Vatican and shared by the White House showed a smiling Vance seated across from Francis, who was in a wheelchair.

In a social media post after the greeting, Vance said it was [an "honor"](#) to meet Francis. Vance said in [another post](#) that the unannounced sit-down, which was not on the vice president's public schedule, came at Francis' invitation.

He made his last public appearance later the same day at Easter mass in St. Peter's Square, where he greeted the crowd in an open-air popemobile.

Francis spent five weeks in the hospital after coming down with pneumonia earlier this year. He returned the Vatican in March. He died at age 88 on April 21.

Vance converted to Catholicism in 2019. He sparred [with Francis](#) shortly after becoming vice president over the Trump administration's deportation plans, which the Pope had [called a "disgrace."](#) Amid the debate, Vance [invoked the concept](#) of "ordo amoris," and drew a brushback from Francis.

At the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington on Feb. 28, Vance [led a prayer](#) for the pontiff, who was hospitalized at the time, and dismissed the dispute.

He said while [he was "surprised" by](#) the criticism coming from Francis, "I also know that the pope, I believe that the pope, is fundamentally a person who cares about the flock of Christians under his leadership."

Vance said he and his children prayed for the pope every day, and he encouraged his audience to "take a page out of the books of our grandparents, who respected our clergy, who looked to them for guidance but didn't obsess and fight over every single word that came out of their mouth."