

## ACADEMY OF GLOBAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2025

The second edition of the Academy of Global Church Leadership took place from 22 to 24 May 2025, with the theme: **The Papacy Today**.

On 8 May 2025, Catholics and non-Catholics alike around the world heard the unforgettable words from the loggia of St Peter's Basilica: *Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!* This makes the theme of the second Academy particularly timely, although the election of a new pope could not have been foreseen when the theme was proposed a year earlier.

The eleven lectures held at the Academy explored the nature, role, and relevance of the papacy in the present historical and ecclesial context, focusing on three key areas. Firstly, there was a dogmatic, theological, and historical approach; secondly, an ecclesiological approach focusing on the value of collegiality and synodality for the papacy and its response to contemporary urgent questions, whether ecclesiastical or secular. Particular note was taken of papal and curial communication; and thirdly, a canonical approach to the figure of the pope and the institution he represents. Within this perspective, the questions of papal resignation, the conclave, and the election process were considered and discussed.

The take-home message from the rich presentations and exchanges was that the current Pope is not the successor of the one before him, but of Peter. In effect, the Pope does not exercise his authority in the name of the Church or the College of Bishops, of which he is the visible head. In this way, the deliberations of the cardinals and the formation of a moral majority of over two-thirds in a conclave are merely a plea to God: 'Show us which of these men you have chosen', Acts 1:24. Thus, the theological understanding of the nature and mission of the episcopal office, as well as the papal ministry and primacy, transcends a naturalistic, corporatist interpretation. Therefore, the Church of God is not a humanitarian world organisation with a Christian social foundation. Rather, it is the sacrament of the world's salvation. This is why non-believers see the Pope as the only person who can speak on behalf of all Christian believers.

The number of participants in the 2025 Academy has increased slightly. Of the 66 registered participants, 37 joined remotely online and 29 attended in person. Participants came from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania (New Zealand). During the three-day event, eleven lectures were delivered by professors, researchers, and a Vaticanist journalist from a variety of backgrounds. The lectures and discussions were conducted in English.

Full videos of the various presentations can be found on the Global Church Leadership's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@GlobaleKirchenleitung>