

## Lula Is Rooting for a Brazilian Pope

Contributed by Spensy Pimentel  
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Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said that he would like the next Pope to be a Brazilian. "It is my sincere desire for him to be a Brazilian," the President said.

"And I have so many friends who are cardinals here in Brazil that I would be happy for one of them to be elected," he affirmed in answer to questions from the press after a statement on the death of Pope John Paul II.

The President made a point of adding that he would also be "pleased" if the new Pope comes from Latin America, regardless of the country.

"Obviously, if he were from Latin America, he would be much closer to us and would be much more familiar with our problems, but I hope that the Church chooses a Pope with a broad social vision, a Pope concerned with combatting the extreme poverty and injustices of the world. If this happens, that in itself will make me content, because I shall certainly have an ally in the fight against hunger," he affirmed.

Lula emphasized, however, that he chiefly desires and roots for a Brazilian. "For me, it would be important from the political standpoint, and, from the geographical standpoint, it would be even better if he were Brazilian. Let's root."

The Brazilian President will travel to the Vatican on Thursday morning, April 7, to accompany Pope John Paul II's funeral. This information was provided by the Presidential Press Office. The ceremony is scheduled to take place on Friday, April 8 at 10 A.M. in Rome.

The press office informed that it is not yet able to confirm who will make up the Brazilian delegation . On Saturday, April 2, Lula invited the presidents of the Senate, Renan Calheiros, the Chamber of Deputies, Severino Cavalcanti, and the Federal Supreme Court (STF), Minister Nelson Jobim, to join him on the trip to Rome.

From Italy the President will proceed to Africa on a four-day official visit. Lula will arrive in Cameroon on Sunday, April 10 and will also visit Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal.

Translation: David Silberstein

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