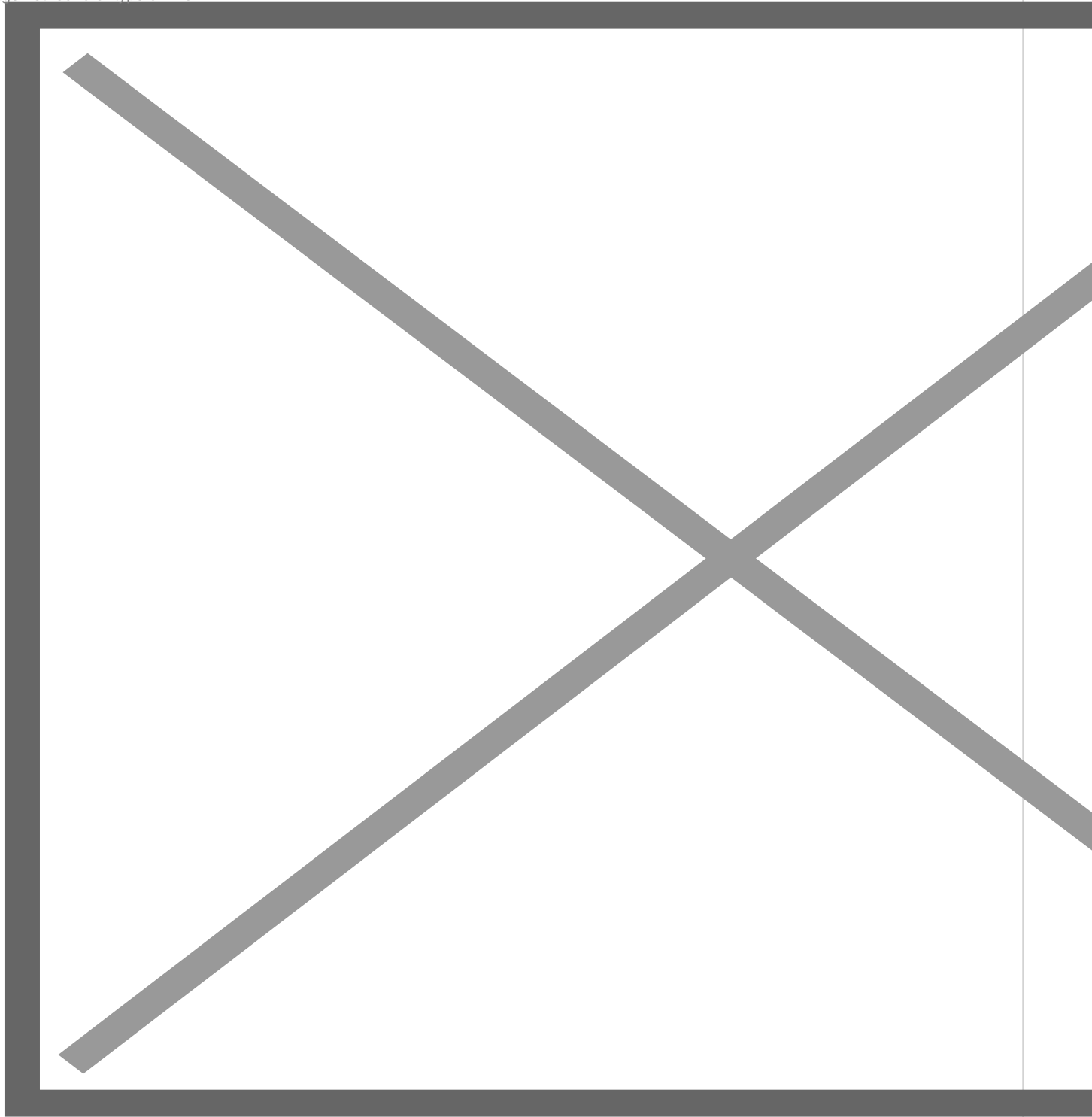


# *Cuban government congratulates Pope Francis on 11 years of pontificate*

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**The Pope visited Cuba in September 2015, as part of his pilgrimage to more than 50 countries. Photo: Archivo/RHC**

Havana, March 14 (RHC) -- The Cuban Foreign Ministry on Wednesday congratulated on behalf of the people and government, Pope Francis, the highest representative of the Catholic Church in the world, on the occasion of the 11th anniversary of his pontifical investiture.

"We reiterate our wishes for success in his functions as head of state and spiritual leader," the Foreign Ministry stressed in its congratulatory message, published on the X social network.

The conclave, held in the Sistine Chapel of the Apostolic Palace from March 12-13, 2013, elected him in the fifth round of voting, as the 266th pope.

For the first time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, a Jesuit was appointed as pontiff who, in addition, was not European, and received, also for the first time, the pontifical name of Francis.

The pope visited Cuba in September 2015, as part of his pilgrimage to more than 50 countries, and met with the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz (1926-2016), and then-President Raúl Castro.

On February 12, 2016, he paid a brief visit to Havana on a stopover during his trip to Mexico, and met here with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, on which occasion they signed a joint declaration.

Pope Francis was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, on December 17, 1936 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he served as Archbishop from 1998 to 2013, after holding various responsibilities within the ecclesiastical community. (Source: Prensa Latina)

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