

Pope Francis gives women historic right to vote at meeting

The Pope will for the first time allow women to vote at an influential global meeting of bishops in October - a move that has been welcomed as a historic first.

The new rules announced on Wednesday will give five religious sisters voting rights at the synod, which is a papal advisory body.

In the past, women were only allowed to attend the gathering as observers.

Men will still cast the majority of the votes at the influential gathering.

Nevertheless, the reforms are seen as a significant shift for the Roman Catholic Church, which has been male-dominated for centuries.

The US-based Women's Ordination Conference, which advocates for women priests, has called the reform "a significant crack in the stained glass ceiling".

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