# AI video depicting pope francis with deceased celebrities sparks backlash



An AI-generated video depicting Pope Francis in Heaven alongside various deceased celebrities and royals has ignited widespread controversy and backlash online. The 31-second clip, which has gone viral with over 38 million views, features the late pontiff meeting figures such as Queen Elizabeth II, Michael Jackson, Princess Diana, and Muhammad Ali, sparking a mix of astonishment and outrage among viewers.

The video, titled "Pope Francis meeting some old friends," shows the 88-year-old former pontiff embracing and interacting with numerous well-known personalities. Among them are boxing legend Muhammad Ali, late British pop star Amy Winehouse, and One Direction’s Liam Payne. It also depicts the Pope sharing moments with comedian Robin Williams, rapper Tupac Shakur, and actor Paul Walker. Toward the end of the video, Francis is seen with British scientist Stephen Hawking, boxing icon Muhammad Ali, and even the late Pope John Paul II.

The representation of Pope Francis alongside Michael Jackson has provoked particular anger. Jackson was accused of multiple child sexual abuse allegations before his death in 2009, and many viewers found his inclusion highly inappropriate. One user on the social media platform X commented, "This is one of the most sickening and horrendous things I've ever seen. How dare you desecrate the Pope's memory like this!! And to show him in 'heaven' with Michael Jackson who is arguably a paedophile is blasphemous in the extreme." Others described the video as "disgustingly creepy," "weird and lowkey disrespectful," and "the most dystopian thing I've seen today."

The video begins with Pope Francis embracing Queen Elizabeth II, American basketball star Kobe Bryant, and Argentine footballer Diego Maradona, famous for his controversial 'hand of God' goal in the 1986 World Cup. It then moves to scenes of the Pope with American rapper Mac Miller and Princess Diana before continuing to Michael Jackson and former Disney star Cameron Boyce. Other meetings include singer Amy Winehouse, actor Chadwick Boseman, Brazilian football legend Pelé, Robin Williams, Paul Walker, Liam Payne, Stephen Hawking, Muhammad Ali, and Pope John Paul II.

The portrayal of Stephen Hawking, who was a diagnosed ALS patient and did not believe in Heaven, also raised questions among viewers. One commentator asked, "Why is Hawking still disabled in paradise?" while others questioned why the Pope would be reunited with people he never met personally, such as Kobe Bryant or Paul Walker, suggesting he would rather be with his family.

Criticism extended beyond the controversial depictions to address the use of AI in creating such images of deceased individuals. Several social media users voiced discomfort with the concept of generating digital representations of those who have passed away, with comments including "Can we not use AI for dead people? This is weird," and "People are so infatuated with celebrities. Please get some HELP."

Pope Francis passed away on 21st April at the age of 88 following months of poor health. He was laid to rest in Rome after a funeral ceremony held at the Vatican on Saturday morning, an event attended by world leaders and royalty including Sir Keir Starmer, former US President Donald Trump, and Prince William. The Pope, known for being the first South American to hold the position, served as the head of the Catholic Church for 12 years.

The Daily Mail is reporting that the AI video has stirred significant emotional responses and debate regarding the respectful treatment of deceased individuals in digital media, particularly involving figures of immense public and historical significance such as Pope Francis.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/giro-ditalia-final-stage-dedicated-to-pope-francis-2025-04-29/> - This piece reports on the final stage of the 2025 Giro d'Italia being dedicated to Pope Francis, marking a symbolic tribute to the late Pontiff.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-jokes-that-hed-like-be-next-pope-2025-04-29/> - This article covers U.S. President Donald Trump's lighthearted comment expressing a desire to succeed Pope Francis as the next Catholic pontiff.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hundreds-line-up-visit-pope-francis-tomb-rome-2025-04-27/> - This report details the large number of people visiting Pope Francis's tomb in Rome, reflecting the public's respect and admiration for the late Pontiff.
* <https://www.wsaw.com/2025/04/25/pres-trump-flies-rome-pope-francis-funeral/> - This article discusses President Trump's attendance at Pope Francis's funeral in Rome, among other world leaders and dignitaries.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hundreds-line-up-visit-pope-francis-tomb-rome-2025-04-27/> - This piece reports on the public's visit to Pope Francis's tomb in Rome, highlighting the significant turnout and the Pontiff's impact on the faithful.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14659043/fury-creepy-ai-video-pope-francis-heaven.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data