The American Name Society, at its annual meeting in Minneapolis on January 3, 2014, voted “Francis” as the Name of the Year for 2013. Francis, chosen by Jorge Mario Bergoglio as his regnal name when he was elected Pope last March, is significant both because it is the first time in 1100 years that a Pope has chosen a name not used by any previous Pope, and because of its association with St. Francis of Assisi. By choosing this name, Francis was signaling to the world his desire to make changes in the Roman Catholic Church and his desire to live simply and focus on concern for the poor, like St. Francis.

Francis was also voted Personal Name of the Year. “Obamacare” was voted Trade Name of the Year, “Ender Wiggin” was Fictional Name of the Year, and Syria was Place Name of the Year.

The American Name Society, founded in 1950, is an organization devoted to the scholarly study of all types of names. For more information about ANS or the Name of the Year contest, contact Cleveland Evans, Cleveland.evans@bellevue.edu