

## PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

11 .05 . 2025

### **Leo XIV Becomes New Pope: A Historic First for North America**

The Catholic Church has a new leader. Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, aged 69, has been elected as the new Pope, taking the papal name *Leo XIV*. His election follows the death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday 2025. Chosen by the College of Cardinals, Leo XIV becomes the first North American to lead the global Church.

Thousands gathered in St Peter's Square to witness the traditional white smoke rise from the Vatican chimney—signalling the successful election of a new Pope. Addressing the crowd of 40,000, Pope Leo XIV offered a “greeting of peace,” and urged people to “build bridges” with one another.

Born in Chicago in 1955, Robert Prevost was raised in a devout Catholic family. Ordained in 1982, he moved to Peru three years later, becoming a citizen and eventually an Archbishop. In his first papal address, he acknowledged his deep ties to the region, speaking both in Italian and Spanish: “Hello to all... especially to those of my diocese of Chiclayo in Peru.”

The Pope serves as spiritual leader for 1.4 billion Roman Catholics, presiding over masses, guiding global Church affairs, and representing the Church in international diplomacy. He also travels widely, meeting with believers and world leaders alike.

By choosing the name *Leo XIV*, the new Pope aligns himself with a historical legacy—the 14th Pope to take the name Leo, and the first to do so in over a century.

World leaders responded warmly. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer called it a “moment of joy,” while US President Donald Trump hailed it a “great honour.” Leaders from Peru, France, Ukraine, Russia, and the EU also expressed their hopes for Pope Leo XIV’s global leadership.

A new chapter in Catholic history has begun.

We are called to pray for those in Government and world leaders, and this includes the Roman Catholic Church, represented around the globe. He will clearly have significant influence over the 1.4 billion Roman Catholics globally in the religious, political, and social contexts.

Jeremiah 29:7 says: "

Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."

Let us pray.

---