

POPE
LEO
XIV

(CNS photo/Lola Gomez)



The Criterion

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Archbishop Charles C. Thompson speaks about newly elected Pope Leo XIV during a press conference on May 8 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, the same day that Cardinal Robert F. Prevost was elected as the 266th successor of St. Peter. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

Archbishop Thompson sees new pope as a ‘bridge builder’ and ‘a man of peace’

By Sean Gallagher

Pope Leo XIV made history on May 8 when he became the first American to be elected a successor of St. Peter. At a press conference at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis later that day, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson told members of the media that he took “great pride” in Cardinal Robert F. Prevost being an American pope. Knowing that the new pope had served for decades in Peru as a missionary priest and then as a bishop, Archbishop Thompson quickly added, “I think also the people of Peru are taking great pride as well, and the Church universal.” He went on to note that the 133 cardinals who elected Cardinal Prevost, a native of Chicago and previously an Augustinian priest, had discerned in the days following the death of Pope Francis the needs of the Church and the world and the gifts required in a new leader of the Church to address those needs. “They were looking for the person that had those particular gifts to meet those particular challenges at this particular time ... regardless of what his nationality happened to be,” Archbishop Thompson said. In discerning what the Church needed in its next leader, Archbishop Thompson said that the cardinals likely did not give thought to the Church’s relationship to American political

trends, including those involving President Donald Trump. “I don’t think they were thinking in terms of how we would do politics here,” Archbishop Thompson said. “Most of the cardinals in there weren’t thinking about President Trump or any other national figure in the United States. They were thinking about the needs of the world and the world Church. Remember, the pope serves as the shepherd for the Church universal, for Catholics around the world and all the countries.” He took as a good sign that the cardinals were able to elect a pope only a day after the conclave had begun. “I think it is a very strong indicator that the cardinals were united,” Archbishop Thompson said. “They knew what they were looking for. They read the signs of the times as they saw them through their prayer, through the guidance of the Spirit. And they recognized the cardinal among them who seemed to have those gifts.” Archbishop Thompson noted that the new pope was the only American cardinal whom he had not met. But based on his knowledge of the former cardinal and the remarks he made after being elected, Archbishop Thompson described Pope Leo as “a bridge builder” and “a man of peace.” In his missionary work in Peru and his ministry since January 2023 as prefect of the Vatican’s Dicastery for Bishops,



Public Schedule of

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

May 17–25, 2025

May 17 – 5:30 p.m.

Confirmation for the youths of SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, and St. Martin of Tours Parish, Martinsville, at SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Church

May 18 – 10:30 a.m.

Mass of Thanksgiving for National Eucharistic Pilgrimage at St. John the Evangelist Church, Indianapolis

May 18 – 1:30 p.m.

Graduation at Bishop Chatard High School, Indianapolis

May 18 – 6 p.m.

Graduation at Our Lady of Providence High School, Clarksville

May 19 – 6:30 p.m.

Graduation for Cathedral High School, Indianapolis, at Fishers Event Center, Fishers, Ind.

May 20 – 10 a.m.

Archdiocesan Priest Formation Day at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, Greenwood

May 20 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Simon the Apostle Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter

and Paul Cathedral, Indianapolis

May 21 – 10 a.m.

Department Heads meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center, Indianapolis

May 21 – 1 p.m.

Mass for International Catholic Stewardship and Development Region VII Conference at Bishop Simon Bruté Seminary Chapel, Indianapolis

May 21 – 7 p.m.

Confirmation Mass for the youths of St. Patrick Parish, Indianapolis, at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral

May 22 – 10 a.m.

Legal Team meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

May 22 – Noon

Women’s Care Center Board Luncheon meeting at the Women’s Care Center, Indianapolis

May 22 – 3 p.m.

Finance Council meeting at Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center

May 25 – TBD

Invocation for the 109th Indianapolis 500

Archbishop Thompson noted, Pope Leo had shown himself to be a man who could bring together people of differing viewpoints. “He’s known for being one who can listen well, dialogue well,” Archbishop Thompson said. These skills, he went on, could aid the new pope as he sought to promote harmony among nations as Pope Francis and earlier popes had done. Archbishop Thompson also expected him to be a pope, like his predecessors, to show pastoral care for all people, not just Catholics. “He’ll have concern for all, for the poor and for all those who are vulnerable, in need of a voice and needing of that solidarity,” said Archbishop Thompson. Pope Leo, he said, is a “missionary” who “has that joy of the Gospel” and “a confidence in Jesus Christ.” “I think that’s what’s going to serve any pope well, or any of us well,” Archbishop Thompson said. “It’s to remain centered in Christ.” Pope Leo has only been a bishop for 11 years, three less than Archbishop Thompson has served. And he became a cardinal less than two years ago. Archbishop Thompson expressed his amazement at the new pope’s quick rise to leadership in the Church. “Can you imagine less than two years being a cardinal and at your first conclave you get elected the pope?” he asked.

“I can’t imagine what’s going on in his head.” When asked if he hoped that the new American pope might make an apostolic journey to his native country, Archbishop Thompson remarked on the sudden limitations placed on Pope Leo by his election as bishop of Rome. He recalled his thoughts about a future pope as he walked back to his office at the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Catholic Center after celebrating a Mass for Pope Francis on April 24 at the cathedral. “I remember thinking about the freedom I had to go wherever I wanted to go,” he said, “and that some poor soul in just a couple weeks was not going to ever leave the Vatican grounds again without tons of security.” “So, you know, his life has changed, and changed drastically.” With these changes and all the responsibilities that a pope has for the Church and the world, Archbishop Thompson encouraged Catholics across central and southern Indiana to pray for Pope Leo at the start of his ministry as bishop of Rome. “The most important thing we can ever do is to pray,” he said, “to hold him up in prayer.” (To watch Archbishop Thompson’s press conference, go to www.archindy.org/PopeLeoXIV/press-conference.html.) †



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Leo XIV: White Sox fan, Villanova grad, missionary, and Vatican leader

(OSV News)—Standing on the loggia of St. Peter’s Basilica, newly elected Pope Leo XIV smiled, waved and appeared to hold back emotion on May 8 as he introduced himself to the world as the 266th successor to St. Peter—the first American to hold that role.

His first words: “Peace be with you!”
Pope Leo, 69, formerly Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, is the first pope from the United States. He assumes the chair of Peter with multifaceted leadership experience: He grew up in the Midwest, graduated from Augustinian-run Villanova University in 1977 with a math degree, ministered as a bishop in Peru, and led the Vatican dicastery that helps appoint bishops and assists them in their ministry around the world.

Born in Chicago and ordained a priest for the Order of St. Augustine in 1982, Pope Leo held major leadership roles in his religious community before being ordained a bishop in 2014, ministering in the dioceses of Chiclayo and Callao, Peru. He was installed as the prefect of the Holy See’s Dicastery for Bishops in April 2023 and was elevated that September to the rank of cardinal.

In 2013, as he prepared to leave his role as the Augustinians’ global leader, he told Rome Reports that Augustinians “are called to live a simple life at the service of others, and in a special way, to reach out to those who are poor ... which includes, of course those who are monetarily poor, but there are many kinds of poverty in today’s world.”

Pope Leo was born in suburban south Chicago on Sept. 14, 1955. His family attended St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Dolton, Ill., and he is reportedly of Italian, French and Spanish descent. In 1977, Pope Leo entered the novitiate of the Order of St. Augustine in St. Louis. In September 1978, at the age of 22, he professed first vows, and three years later, he made solemn vows.

He earned a theology degree at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago before going to Rome to study canon law at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, also known as the Angelicum, receiving his licentiate in 1984. Three years later, he completed his doctorate, writing on “The role of the local prior in the Order of Saint Augustine.”

By the time he received his doctorate, he had been ordained a priest for the Order of St. Augustine for five years and had ministered for a year in the order’s mission of Chulucanas in Piura, Peru.

In 1987, he was elected the vocations director and missions director for his order’s Midwest province, Our Mother of Good Counsel. A year later, he went to Trujillo, Peru, to direct a joint formation project for the region’s Augustinian aspirants. Over the course of a decade in Trujillo, he served as the community’s prior, formation director and as a teacher. Meanwhile, he served the Archdiocese of Trujillo for nine years as its judicial vicar and was also a professor of patristics, canon and moral law in the San Carlos e San Marcelo Major Seminary, which is currently celebrating its 400th anniversary.

In 1999, Pope Leo returned to the U.S. to serve as prior provincial for the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel. In 2001, at age 46, he was promoted to his order’s prior general, considered its supreme authority that oversees its administration and governance.

Pope Leo was re-elected to the role in 2007, holding it for a total of 12 years until 2013.

For a year, from October 2013 to November 2014, he served as a “teacher of the professed” and provincial vicar.

In November 2014, Pope Francis appointed him apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo, Peru—an area in the northwestern part of the country that was then home to around 1.1 million Catholics, about 88% of the population at the time. He was simultaneously named a bishop, but of the titular diocese Sufar, under which title he was ordained a month later on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The following year, on Nov. 7, 2015, he was appointed bishop of Chiclayo. He also served for a year, from April 2020 to May 2021, as the apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Callao, Peru, whose see city is nearly 500 miles south of Chiclayo along the Peruvian coast.

In 2019, Pope Francis appointed him a member of the Congregation for the Clergy. A year later, he became a member of the Congregation for Bishops.

In January 2023, Pope Leo was appointed to lead

the Vatican’s Dicastery of Bishops, replacing the Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet, and given the personal title of archbishop. Pope Francis elevated him to a cardinal in September 2023, making him cardinal-deacon of Santa Monica of the Augustinians, a church immediately south of the Vatican dedicated to St. Monica, St. Augustine’s mother. He was the first—and so far only—cardinal named to that church.

Speaking to The Associated Press after being made a cardinal in 2023, Pope Leo XIV said, “I think that it’s not coincidental that Pope Francis chose me. I’ve been a missionary my whole life, and I was working in Peru, but I am American, and I think I do have some insights into the Church in the United States.”

He continued: “So, the need to be able to advise, work with Pope Francis and to look at the challenges that the Church in the United States is facing, I hope to be able to respond to them with healthy dialogue, as we’ve already begun, with all the bishops in the United States, and to continue to look for ways to be Church in the day and age that we’re living.”

In 2023, Pope Francis also named then-Cardinal Prevost president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, which studies and assists the Church in Latin America.

Pope Leo’s name is a tribute to Pope Leo XIII, known as the father of Catholic social doctrine, who wrote the groundbreaking 1891 social encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*,” also known as “On the Condition of the Working Classes,” that responded to the state of industrial society at the time.

Despite connecting himself to a pope who reigned more than 120 years ago, Pope Leo XIV appears to be a thoroughly modern prelate who keeps tabs on current events in Rome, Latin America and the U.S. Under “Robert Prevost,” Leo XIV has maintained an X account with sporadic, mostly news-based retweets, such as requests in February to pray for Pope Francis and rebukes of Vice President JD Vance’s comments on the ordering one’s loves, or “*ordo amoris*,” a Catholic concept Vance tried to invoke to justify Trump’s immigration policy.

Pope Leo XIV has enjoyed playing tennis; speaks English, Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese; and reads Latin and German. According to a May 8 interview with his brother John Prevost, Pope Leo is a Chicago White Sox fan.

At age 69, Pope Leo is seven years younger than Pope Francis was when he was elected in 2013, and nine years younger than Benedict XVI when he was elected in 2005. He is 11 years older than St. John Paul II, who was 58, at his 1978 election.

Pope Leo was elected on the third vote of the conclave’s second day, after a total of four votes. The 133 cardinal electors entered the conclave on the afternoon of May 7.

The conclave was the largest and most geographically diverse conclave known in history, with cardinals representing 69 countries across five countries, with greater percentages of participating cardinals from Africa, Asia and Latin America than in other recent conclaves. By contrast, 115 cardinal electors—half of them from Europe—participated in the 2013 conclave that elected Pope Francis. In the 2025 conclave, 43% of electors were from Europe.

Prior to the conclave, the cardinal electors met for 12 general congregations, during which they shared their hopes, concerns and priorities for the Church. The topics highlighted ranged widely, from evangelization, caring for the poor and addressing clergy sexual abuse, to the economy, peace-building efforts and synodality.

Many of the world’s 252 cardinals—including those



Pope Leo XIV, the former Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, waves to the crowds in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican after his election as pope on May 8. The new pope was born in Chicago. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

over age 80 who were no longer eligible to elect a pope—were already in or arrived in Rome within days of Pope Francis’ death on April 21. Most of them, including then-Cardinal Prevost, attended his funeral on April 26.

Pope Leo has been commended for his interpersonal skills, with veteran American Vatican journalist John Allen Jr. of *Crux* describing him as “a moderate, balanced figure, known for solid judgment and a keen capacity to listen.”

Pope Leo has also drawn criticism for his alleged role in the permissions given in 2000 for a priest of the Chicago Archdiocese, who had been credibly accused of multiple cases of child abuse, to live in an Augustinian friary less than a block from a school without informing the school.

While that situation occurred before the 2002 Dallas Charter, within which the U.S. bishops established procedures for addressing clergy sexual abuse, then-Bishop Prevost has also been accused of not fully investigating three sisters’ sexual abuse allegations, made in 2022, against two priests in the Diocese of Chiclayo—a charge the diocese has vigorously denied.

The case has drawn global attention because as head of the Dicastery for Bishops, then-Cardinal Prevost oversaw cases of clergy negligence under the worldwide norms Pope Francis established in 2019 with “*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*.”

As a dicastery head, then-Cardinal Prevost participated in both sessions of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality that Pope Francis led in 2023 and 2024.

In remarks given from St. Peter’s loggia before offering his first “*urbi et orbi*” blessing, Pope Leo commended Pope Francis’ final blessing of the world on Easter morning, the day before he died, saying, “Let me follow up on that same blessing: God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail! We are all in God’s hands. Therefore, without fear, united hand in hand with God and each other—let us go forward. We are disciples of Christ. Christ goes before us.”

Pope Leo also indicated he would continue the legacy of Pope Francis in developing a synodal style within the Catholic Church for the sake of its Gospel mission.

“We want to be a synodal Church,” he said, “a Church that walks, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close especially to those who suffer.”

In that 2013 Rome Reports interview, then-Father Prevost spoke about God and St. Augustine, the fifth-century philosopher, theologian and bishop who inspired the formation of the Augustinians in 1244.

“God is not someone or something that is absent and far away,” he said. “And Augustine, in his spirituality, in his struggles, in his reflections that we see, for example, in the *Confessions*, is able to open a window ... and to lead others to come to discover how God is working in their lives.” †

Pope Leo to inaugurate his papacy with May 18 Mass in St. Peter’s Square

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Leo XIV will officially inaugurate his papacy with Mass in St. Peter’s Square on May 18.

Although he was pope from the moment he accepted his election on May 8, the inauguration Mass—which replaced the papal coronation after the pontificate of St. Paul VI—formally marks the beginning of his ministry with his reception of the fisherman’s ring and

his pallium, a wool band worn around his shoulders.

The Vatican announced the date for the Mass on May 9.

In a separate statement, the Vatican said the new pope has asked the heads of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the offices of Vatican City State to continue in their posts “on a provisional basis.”

When Pope Francis died on April 21, and when any pope dies, most of the top Vatican officials lose their positions, giving the new pope a chance to appoint his team. Those reappointed included two women who were the first appointed to their posts and who succeeded cardinals: Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist Raffaella Petrini, who is president of the office governing Vatican

City State; and Consolata Missionary Sister Simona Brambilla, prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

In reappointing the officials temporarily, the Vatican said, “the Holy Father wishes to set aside some time for reflection, prayer and dialogue before any final appointment or confirmation is made.” †



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, *Publisher* Sally Krause, *Associate Publisher*
Mike Krokos, *Editor*

Editorial

Welcome, Pope Leo XIV!

It has been more than a week since the world was introduced to our new Holy Father, who until his election as our universal shepherd was Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost. And we, like many others around the world—Catholics and people of other faith traditions—say “Welcome, Pope Leo XIV!”

When the 69-year-old Chicago native stepped out on a balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica on May 8 and was introduced to the world as our new pope, the joy felt throughout the universal Church—including in North America and South America—was palpable.

And that feeling was especially prevalent in Peru, where the pope ministered as a priest and later as a bishop for two decades, and in the United States, where a young Robert Prevost felt a vocation to religious life and the priesthood, entered a high school seminary in Michigan, attended Villanova University in Philadelphia and was ordained a priest for the Augustinian order in 1982.

His most recent ministries at the Holy See as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America add to the global impact of his vocational journey, and offer a beautiful witness in how living out his vocation as a religious and a priest has touched lives far and wide.

His Holiness, Pope Leo XIV, becomes the latest—No. 266—in a very long line of popes to succeed to the ministry of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome and as the Vicar of Christ.

Our faith teaches us the pope must fill many roles, but his primary responsibility is to preserve and proclaim the teachings of Jesus as handed down through the centuries from the time that Jesus appointed Peter and his successors to lead his Church. Pope Leo, we believe, is well equipped to do that.

While many Catholic and secular media outlets have begun their “deep dive” into the life story of our new Holy Father, we encourage people of faith in central and southern Indiana to not put the new pope into a box but to take their time to learn of the gifts of our universal shepherd.

There are, however, some things worth noting about Pope Leo XIV: He is a dual citizen of the United States and Peru. He was a cardinal less than two years. (Pope Francis elevated him to the College of Cardinals in September 2023.) He speaks five languages—English, Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese—and he also is able to read Latin and German. While a missionary in Peru, he also learned Quechua, the language of natives in that country that dates back to the Incan empire.

He chose his name in homage to Pope Leo XIII, recognizing the need to renew Catholic social teaching to face today’s new industrial revolution and the developments of artificial intelligence, which he noted in remarks to the College of Cardinals on May 10, “pose new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labor.” His



Pope Leo XIV speaks with the College of Cardinals in the New Synod Hall at the Vatican on May 10, during his first formal address to the college since his election on May 8. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

older brother Joseph also confirmed the pope is a lifelong fan of the Chicago White Sox.

Although he admitted then-Cardinal Prevost was the only American cardinal he had not met, Archbishop Charles C. Thompson reacted with “great pride” upon learning of his election as our new pope.

During a press conference on May 8 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis, the archbishop said he saw it as a good sign that the cardinals were able to elect a new pope a day after the conclave began.

“I think it is a very strong indicator that the cardinals were united,” Archbishop Thompson said. “They knew what they were looking for. They read the signs of the times as they saw them through their prayer, through the guidance of the Spirit. And they recognized the cardinal among them who seemed to have those gifts.”

The archbishop called Pope Leo a “bridge builder” and “a man of peace,” and expects him to be a pope, like his predecessors, to show pastoral care for all people, not just Catholics.

“He’ll have concern for all, for the poor and for all those who are vulnerable, in need of a voice and needing of that solidarity,” said Archbishop Thompson.

In his first homily during a Mass celebrated with the cardinals on May 9 in the Sistine Chapel, Pope Leo noted the weight of his new mission.

“Through the ministry of Peter, you have called me to carry that cross and to be blessed with that mission,” he said, “and I know I can rely on each and every one of you to walk with me as we continue as a Church, as a community of friends of Jesus, as believers, to announce the good news, to announce the Gospel.”

While we all celebrate Pope Leo’s election as our universal shepherd, our prayers for him must become a priority.

We pray he indeed builds bridges, strives to bring peace around the globe, and becomes a source of unity for our Church and the world. Holy Spirit, please guide him in his mission.

Let us also pray, please God, that he may shepherd after the heart of Christ. *Ad multos annos* (for many years).

—Mike Krokos

Reflection/Natalie Hoefler

‘You had me at Pope Leo’

Watching the announcement of the new pope on May 8 was much like watching game one of the NBA Eastern Conference Semifinals on May 7,



1995—30 years and one day prior—when Reggie Miller scored eight points in 8.9 seconds near the end of the game, leading the Pacers to a 107-105 victory over the Knicks.

Both times, there was shock: “Did Reggie really just do that?” “Wait—is the new pope from the U.S.?”

And both times, shock turned to excitement (OK, hysteria in the case of the Pacers), pride and rejoicing as the truth set in.

But on May 8, the source of my rejoicing suddenly shifted from nationality to name. Like the “you had me at hello” line in *Jerry Maguire*, the new pontiff “had me at Pope Leo.”

The choice was a clear, intentional nod to Leo XIII, who served as pope from 1878 to 1903. At that moment, There were only three things I knew about him and his papacy. But there were three things that instantly warmed my heart with hope.

First was Leo’s XIII’s 1891 encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*” (“Of New Things”). Subtitled “On Capital and Labor” and written in response to the Industrial Revolution, one of its main themes addressed the rights and human dignity of workers.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has concerned me for several years—fake news, less human interaction and the loss of jobs in general but particularly those that call on unique, God-given gifts.

Turns out the new pope agrees.

Speaking to the College of Cardinals on May 10, the new pope said he chose his name “mainly because Pope Leo XIII in his historic encyclical ‘*Rerum Novarum*’ addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution. In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defense of human dignity, justice and labor.”

That was the “main” reason he chose the name Leo XIV.

But in the same speech he noted there were “different reasons” as well. He didn’t name them, but I heard in his May 8 address two other possible nods to Leo XIII I found potentially intriguing.

“God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail!” he said. Those last four words caught my attention, “evil will not prevail.” Could this be a nod to Leo XIII’s “Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel”?

He wrote the prayer after receiving a vision so frightening he fainted. While Leo XIII never documented what he saw in the vision, it is believed it dealt with spiritual warfare—hence the nature of the St. Michael prayer. It calls on him to defend us and the world in the spiritual battle with Satan.

We know in the end that “evil will not prevail.” But perhaps our new pope sees a need to renew our efforts and prayerful pleas for help in the spiritual battles of our time.

The third possible homage to Leo XIII I noticed came at the end of his May 8 address.

Leo XIII was known as “the rosary pope.” During his 25-year papacy, he wrote 12 encyclicals on the rosary. He encouraged the faithful to pray the rosary daily for peace and for challenges against “Christian piety, public morality, nay, even faith itself” (“*Supremi Apostolatus Officio*,” #6).

Leo XIV finished his first address with prayer “for this new mission, for the whole Church, for peace in the world,” invoking Mary’s intercession.

But he did not pray alone. Rather, he said (with my own emphasis added), “I would like to *pray together with you*. Let us pray *together* ... and let *us* ask Mary, our Mother, for this special grace.”

And then Pope Leo lead the world in praying the “Hail Mary.” Think of the power and protection that covered the world as millions simultaneously called upon God through Mary’s intercession. I suspect “the rosary pope” would approve.

There are many other aspects of Leo XIII and his papacy that might have influenced the choice of our new pope’s name.

But even if just for the three potential nods I noticed on May 8, he “had me at Pope Leo.”

(Natalie Hoefler is a reporter for The Criterion and a member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Letter to the Editor

Reader: Follow new pope’s lead of encouragement and love toward a hope that does not disappoint

Daniel Conway’s editorial in the May 9 issue of *The Criterion* on “Waiting for Peter’s successor” was insightful, faithful, but also very down-to-Earth and “real-world” oriented.

Conway pointed out that the pope is a normal, regular human being, given to all the pitfalls and pratfalls of some, but called to lead Jesus’ Church and be both a nurturer and shepherd of the flock, which as of this writing is 1.4 billion people!

Our new Holy Father Pope Leo XIV has already come under scrutiny by some

for being an American, and possibly a liberal one at that.

To this, I can only say Jesus never told Peter to separate his sheep, to give all the food to certain ones, and ignore others.

Conway closed with a note that the calling of a new pope is a challenge to the rest of us to follow his lead of encouragement and love, and toward a hope that does not disappoint.

Sonny Shanks
Corydon

Letters Policy

Letters from readers are welcome and every effort will be made to include letters from as many people and representing as many viewpoints as possible. Letters should be informed, relevant, well-expressed and temperate in tone. They must reflect a basic sense of courtesy and respect.

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ARCHBISHOP/ARZOBISPO CHARLES C. THOMPSON



Christ the Cornerstone

Want to draw closer to Christ? Love unselfishly

I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn 13:34-35).

The Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday of Easter (Jn 13:31-33a, 34-35) provides us with the plain truth: If we want to be followers of Jesus Christ, we must love one another.

Love is not optional; it is essential to our calling as missionary disciples who live and proclaim the Gospel. The fact that we love each other is the one sure sign that we are who we say we are as people who are united with Christ and with each other.

“I give you a new commandment: love one another” (Jn 31:34), Jesus tells his disciples (and all of us). But the kind of love that Jesus demands of his followers is not the “love” we see every day in the world. It is not romantic love, or parental love, or even friendship. The love that we are commanded to share with one another is a *sacrificial* love. It is a love that cares more for the good of others than for our own interests or

our feelings about ourselves or other people.

A love that is selfless is what makes it possible for followers of Jesus to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them. We are challenged to love those we disagree with and to pray for those who would hurt us.

We are commanded to think less of our own needs and desires, and to think more of the needs and wishes of others—those closest to us, those who are merely acquaintances, strangers and even our enemies. “Love one another,” Jesus tells us, without qualification or distinction, “as I have loved you” (Jn 31:34). Jesus loves us unselfishly and unconditionally, without exception, and he demands that we follow his example.

The commandment to love unselfishly embraces all the other commandments. It requires that we love God above all else, and that we love others—everyone—as we love ourselves. This love makes it possible for us to live good, holy lives in accordance with God’s plan for us.

It allows us to observe all the commandments, to live the Beatitudes, and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus

who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. When we love one another as Jesus loves us, we cast off the heavy burdens of selfishness and sin. And we embrace the freedom and happiness of God’s children both here and now and in the joy of heaven.

This kind of love is simple and uncomplicated, but it is not easy. Everything in us resists the command to set aside our own interests.

One of the most powerful effects of Original Sin, our first parents’ choice to place their own interests ahead of God’s plan, is our “natural” tendency to think first of ourselves. We justify our selfishness with a thousand excuses, but in the end, we forget our Lord’s example, and we fail to love one another as Jesus loves us.

This is why prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist are so important. We need the help of God’s grace to love one another sacrificially. We need help to restrain our self-interest and to place God’s will (the good of others) first and foremost.

The second reading for the Fifth Sunday of Easter (Rev 21:1-5a)

continues the great Revelation shared with us by St. John the Evangelist. This is a vision of the world to come, but the death and resurrection of Jesus have opened a doorway between our time on Earth and the heavenly kingdom envisioned here. As the evangelist reveals:

Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away. (Rv 21:3-4)

If we love one another as Jesus loves us, living together as disciples and missionaries of the Lord who loves us unconditionally, we will help build God’s kingdom here and now. What’s more, we will prepare ourselves to enter into the heavenly realm, the new and everlasting Jerusalem where God dwells with his people and where suffering and death are no more.

As we continue our celebration of Easter, let’s ask our Risen Lord to give us the grace we need to love one another as he loves us. †



Cristo, la piedra angular

¿Quiere acercarse más a Cristo? Ame incondicionalmente

Les doy un mandamiento nuevo: Ámense unos a otros; como yo los he amado, así también ámense los unos a los otros. El amor mutuo entre ustedes será el distintivo por el que todo el mundo los reconocerá como discípulos míos (Jn 13:34-35).

La lectura del Evangelio del quinto domingo de Pascua (Jn 13:31-33a, 34-35) nos plantea la pura verdad: si queremos ser seguidores de Jesucristo, debemos amarnos unos a otros.

El amor no es algo opcional; es esencial para nuestra vocación de discípulos misioneros que viven y anuncian el Evangelio. El hecho de que nos amemos unos a otros es el único signo seguro de que somos quienes decimos ser como personas unidas a Cristo y entre nosotros.

“Les doy un mandamiento nuevo: Ámense unos a otros” (Jn 31:34), dice Jesús a sus discípulos (y a todos nosotros). Pero el tipo de amor que Jesús exige a sus seguidores no es el “amor” que vemos todos los días en el mundo; no es amor romántico, ni amor paternal, ni siquiera amistad. El amor que se nos ordena compartir unos con otros es un amor *sacrificial*, un amor que se preocupa más por el bien de los demás que por sus propios intereses o sentimientos

hacia sí mismo o hacia otros.

Un amor desinteresado es lo que hace posible que los seguidores de Jesús amen a sus enemigos y recen por quienes los persiguen. Se nos desafía a amar a aquellos con los que no estamos de acuerdo y a rezar por quienes nos harían daño.

Se nos ordena pensar menos en nuestras propias necesidades y deseos, y más en las necesidades y deseos de los demás: desde los más cercanos a nosotros, los que son simples conocidos, hasta los extraños e incluso nuestros enemigos. “Ámense unos a otros,” nos dice Jesús, sin matices ni distinciones, “como yo los he amado” (Jn 31:34). Jesús nos ama desinteresada e incondicionalmente, sin excepción, y exige que sigamos su ejemplo.

El mandamiento del amor desinteresado abarca todos los demás mandamientos. Requiere que amemos a Dios por encima de todo, y que amemos a los demás—a todos—como nos amamos a nosotros mismos. Este amor hace posible que vivamos una vida buena y santa, de acuerdo con el plan de Dios para nosotros.

Nos permite observar todos los mandamientos, vivir las Bienaventuranzas y seguir las huellas de Jesús, que es el Camino, la Verdad

y la Vida. Cuando nos amamos unos a otros como Jesús nos ama, nos despojamos de las pesadas cargas del egoísmo y del pecado y abrazamos la libertad y la felicidad de los hijos de Dios tanto aquí y ahora como en la alegría del cielo.

Este tipo de amor es sencillo y sin complicaciones, pero no es fácil de lograr ya que todo en nosotros se resiste a la orden de dejar de lado nuestros propios intereses.

Uno de los efectos más poderosos del Pecado Original—la elección de nuestros primeros padres de anteponer sus propios intereses al plan de Dios—es nuestra tendencia «natural» a pensar primero en nosotros mismos. Justificamos nuestro egoísmo con mil excusas, pero al final, olvidamos el ejemplo de nuestro Señor, y no logramos amarnos los unos a los otros como Jesús nos ama.

Por eso es tan importante rezar y recibir frecuentemente los sacramentos de la reconciliación y la Eucaristía: porque necesitamos la ayuda de la gracia de Dios para amarnos unos a otros de una forma sacrificial. Necesitamos ayuda para poner freno a nuestro interés personal y anteponer la voluntad de Dios (el bien de los demás).

La segunda lectura del V Domingo

de Pascua (Ap 21:1-5) continúa con el relato del gran Apocalipsis que nos compartió san Juan Evangelista. Se trata de una visión del mundo venidero, pero la muerte y la resurrección de Jesús han abierto una puerta entre nuestro tiempo en la Tierra y el reino celestial de esa visión. Tal como revela el evangelista:

Esta es la morada que Dios ha establecido entre los seres humanos. Habitará con ellos, ellos serán su pueblo y él será su Dios. Enjugará las lágrimas de sus ojos, y ya no habrá muerte, ni luto, ni llanto, ni dolor, porque todo lo viejo ha desaparecido (Ap 21:3-4).

Si nos amamos unos a otros como Jesús nos ama, viviendo juntos como discípulos y misioneros del Señor que nos ama incondicionalmente, ayudaremos a construir el reino de Dios aquí y ahora. Es más, nos prepararemos para entrar en el reino celestial, la Jerusalén nueva y eterna donde Dios habita con su pueblo y donde el sufrimiento y la muerte ya no existen.

Mientras continuamos nuestra celebración de la Pascua, pidamos a nuestro Señor Resucitado que nos dé la gracia que necesitamos para amarnos unos a otros como Él nos ama. †

Events Calendar

For a list of events for the next four weeks as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/events.

May 19
Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 345 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **Moving Catholic Parishes from Maintenance to Mission**, 7-9 p.m., Mass at 6 p.m., doors open 6:30 p.m., Dr. Jonathan Reyes, Knights of Columbus senior vice president of Evangelization and Faith Formation, presenting, light refreshments, free. Information: tinyurl.com/Maint2Mission, 317-236-1466, abardo@archindy.org.

May 21
Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

May 21-26
Daughters of Charity, 9200 New Harmony Road, Evansville, Ind. (Diocese of Evansville). **Search and Serve Discernment Week**, join Daughters of Charity in ministry while discerning a call to a life of serving the poor, for single Catholic women ages 18-40. Information, registration: sisterliz@doc.org, daughters-of-charity.com/retreats.

May 24
Our Lady of the Most Holy

Rosary Parish, 520 Stevens St., Indianapolis. **Faithful Citizens Rosary Walk**, 10:45-11:45 a.m., meet in front of church. Information: holyrosary.prolife@gmail.com.

May 25
SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, 1347 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis. **Filipino Mass**, Divine Mercy 3 p.m., rosary 3:10 p.m., Mass 3:30 p.m. with homily in English, every fourth Sunday. Information: mariasolito@yahoo.com.

May 26
Our Lady of Peace Cemetery and Mausoleum, 9001 Haverstick Road, Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-574-8898, catholiccemeteries.cc.

Calvary Mausoleum Chapel, 435 W. Troy Ave., Indianapolis. **Memorial Day Mass**, 2 p.m. Information: 317-784-4439, catholiccemeteries.cc.

May 29-31
St. Jude Parish, 5353 McFarland Road, Indianapolis. **Parish Festival**, Thurs. 5-10 p.m., Fri. and Sat. 5-11 p.m., children’s games, prizes, food and beer tents, raffle, silent auction,

bingo, Monte Carlo games, carnival rides, live music: Thurs. DJ Tobias, Fri. Project 19, Sat. Train Wreck, free admission. Information: 317-786-4371, festival@stjudeindy.

St. Simon the Apostle Parish, 8155 Oaklondon Road, Indianapolis. **Parish Festival**, Thurs. 5-11 p.m., Fri. 5 p.m.-midnight, Sat. 3 p.m.-midnight, rides, food, beer garden, games, kids’ zone, Vegas room (ages 21 and older), live music: Thurs. St. Simon Idol, Fri. My Yellow Rickshaw, Sat. Stella Luna and the Satellites, \$10 admission. Information: Facebook: @stsimonfestival, 317-826-6000, saintsimonfestival.com.

May 30-31
St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish, 6000 W. 34th St., Indianapolis. **International Festival**, 5 p.m.-midnight, carnival rides, food, live music, raffles, free admission. Information: 317-291-7014, eesparza@stgabrielindy.org.

May 30-June 1
St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish, 4720 E. 13th St., Indianapolis. **Summerfest**, Fri. 5-11 p.m., Sat. 3-11 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m., \$4,000 grand prize

raffle, bingo Fri. and Sat., midway rides, silent auction, food, beer, wine, games for kids and adults, live music: Fri. 5 Minutes to Wapner 5 p.m., The Sherwood Club 8:30 p.m.; Sat. OK Boomer Band 4:30 p.m., Bigger is Better Band 7:30 p.m.; Sun. Silly Safaris noon, Jaylen Koehl 1 p.m., Arisan Maru (Scecina) 2 p.m., Almost Live 3 p.m., \$10 admission for \$10 in event coupons. Information: 317-357-8352, lfsummerfest@littleflowerparish.org.

June 3, 10, 17, 24
St. Patrick Parish, 950 Prospect St., Indianapolis. **“Know Your Fertility” Class in Spanish**, 7-9 p.m., series of four sessions, \$75. Information, registration: ccorona@archindy.org, 317-800-9306.

June 4
MCL Cafeteria, 5520 Castleton Corner Lane, Indianapolis. **Solo Seniors**, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Catholic, educational, charitable and social singles—separated, widowed or divorced—age 50 and older, new members welcome, also call about regular Friday night dinner events. Information: 317-796-8605.

June 5-7
St. Anthony Parish, 337 N. Warman Ave., Indianapolis. **Crossroads of the Americas Festival**, Thurs. 4-10 p.m., Fri. 4-11 p.m., Sat. 2 p.m.-midnight., live music, beer garden, American, Mexican and international food, \$20,000 cash raffle, free admission. Information: 317-636-4828. saintanthonybusiness@gmail.com.

June 6
Women’s Care Center, 4901 W. 86th St., Indianapolis. **First Friday Mass**, 5 p.m., optional tour of center to follow. Information: 317-829-6800, womenscarecenter.org.

Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, 335 S. Meridian St., Greenwood. **First Friday bilingual celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Mass 6 p.m. followed by adoration until 9 p.m., sacrament of reconciliation available. Information: 317-750-7309, msross1@hotmail.com.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Friday Devotion**, 11:40 a.m., litany, consecration to the Sacred Heart, Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by noon Mass.

Information: 812-246-2512.

June 7
Virtual Prayer with the Sisters of Providence, 7-7:45 p.m., for single women ages 18-42, prayer and sharing on topic of gratitude. Information, registration: eventssistersofprovidence.org, 361-500-9505, jluna@spsmw.org.

St. John Paul II Church, 2253 St. Joe Road W., Sellersburg. **First Saturday Devotion**, 8 a.m., rosary, litany, consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, confession 8-8:30 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. Mass. Information: 812-246-2512.

St. Matthew the Apostle Church, 4100 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Children’s Rosary**, 9 a.m., children of all ages invited to pray rosary every first Saturday, donuts and fellowship to follow, free. Information: julie3reyes@gmail.com.

June 8
Marian University, Norman Center Room 222, 3200 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis. **People of Peace OFS Monthly Meeting**, 12:30-3 p.m., explore Franciscan spirituality with lay Franciscans, free. Information: 317-432-0909, jodymdalton@aol.com. †

Retreats and Programs

For a complete list of retreats as reported to The Criterion, log on to www.archindy.org/retreats.

May 31-June 1
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Flourishing in Seasons of Surrender**, 11 a.m. Sat.-noon Sunday, Teresa Venatta presenting, \$175 includes private room, Saturday lunch and dinner and Sunday breakfast. Information, registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 6-8
Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Praying the Mass: Eucharistic Spirituality**, Benedictine Father Lorenzo Penalosa presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **Women’s Day Celebration**, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., keynote by Cory Lockhart, coffee, breakfast, crafts, chair yoga, essential oils, neck massages, door prizes, coffee bar, lunch, \$60. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

June 10, July 9
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Day of Silence**, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45, includes room, lunch, Mass and use of common areas and grounds, overnight stay available for additional \$32, dinner additional \$11. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 13-15
Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington.

St. Jacinta of Fatima: A Prophetess for Our Times, 5 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Franciscans of the Immaculate Father Jacinto Chapin facilitating, \$241 for single, \$302.90 double, \$368 triple, \$433.12 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com.

June 16
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Pilgrims of Hope and the Jubilee Year: Day of Reflection**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Father James Farrell presenting, \$45, includes Mass and lunch. Information, registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 17
Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., Indianapolis. **Pilgrims of Hope and the Jubilee Year: Evening of Reflection**, 5-9 p.m., Father James Farrell presenting, \$45, includes Mass and dinner. Information, registration: ftm.retreatportal.com/events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 20, July 18
Oldenburg Franciscan Center, 22143 Main St., Oldenburg. **A Day of Quiet Renewal**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., \$20, \$80 with spiritual direction. Information, registration: 812-933-6437, oldenburgfranciscancenter.org.

June 20
Saint Meinrad Archabbey Guesthouse, 200 Hill Dr., St. Meinrad. **Making “Soma” from “Sarx”:** The Transformative Power of the

Gospel, Benedictine Father Adrian Burke presenting, \$350 single, \$550 double. Registration: 812-357-6611, saintmeinrad.org/retreats.

June 23
You Are Not Alone: The Healing Journey Forward with Suicide Loss (virtual via Zoom), 6:30-8 p.m., sponsored by Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, for adults, teens ages 15-19 and older may attend with parent or guardian, licensed therapist Christine Turo-Shields presenting, free, registration required. Registration: archindy.org/fatima-events, 317-545-7681, lcoons@archindy.org.

June 25-29
Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality, 101 Saint Anthony Dr., Mount St. Francis. **In the Quiet, God Speaks**, 6 p.m. Wed.-noon Sun., personal retreat guided by spiritual directors Anny Behymer and Peggy Holthaus, includes meals and private room, \$550. Information, registration: 812-923-8817, mountsaintfrancis.org/four-day-directed-retreat.

July 18-20
Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, 8220 W. State Road 48, Bloomington. **Honoring the Elderly and Grandparenting in Scripture**, 5 p.m. Fri.-10 a.m. Sun., Franciscans of the Immaculate Father Joachim Mudd facilitating, \$241 for single, \$302.90 double, \$368 triple, \$433.12 quadruple, includes four meals and room for two nights, commuters \$50.70 includes lunch and dinner on Sat. Information, registration: 812-825-4642, ext. 1, motheroftheredeemer.com. †

Wedding Anniversaries

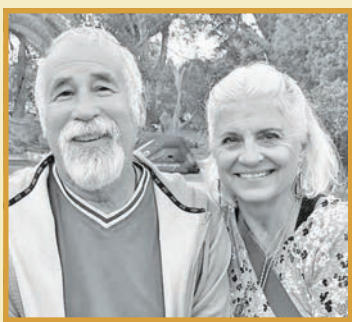
JOSEPH AND LILLIAN (SENN) JACOBI, members of St. Michael Parish in Bradford, celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary on May 15.
The couple was married at St. Michael Church in Bradford on May 15, 1954.
They have six children: Janette Fetz, Donna Miller, David, Jerry, Deacon John and Thomas Jacobi.
The couple also has 15 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.



WALTER AND JOAN (LOHMAN) ECKSTEIN, members of St. Anthony Parish in Morris, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on May 21.
The couple was married at St. Louis Church in Batesville on May 21, 1960.
They have six children: Deb Adams, Sandy Kramer, Karen Merkel, Sharon Struewing, Ken and Tim Eckstein.
The couple also has 19 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.



EDWIN AND KATHLEEN (MOUNTJOY) VANVELSE, members of Holy Spirit Parish in Indianapolis, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 17.
The couple was married at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis on May 17, 1975.
They have five children: Jacquelyn Dunn, Carla Reynolds, Amanda and Blair vanVelse and Jessica Wurz.
The couple also has 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



DELBERT AND DOLORES (SCHAUB) VINCENT, members of St. Joseph Parish in Jennings County, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 10.
The couple was married at St. Finbar Church in Burbank, Calif., on May 10, 1975.
They have six children: Christine Vincent-Rodas, Jennifer, Sarah, Teresa, Delbert and James Vincent.
The couple also has 14 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Announcements for couples celebrating 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 or more years of marriage are accepted. Go to cutt.ly/anniversaries or call 317-236-1585.

Want to know more about Pope Leo XIV? Following are 10 things

(OSV News)—As the Catholic Church welcomes its first American pope, here are 10 things to know about Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert F. Prevost.

1. Chicagoan. Pope Leo was born on Sept. 14, 1955, and grew up in the south suburbs of Chicago. His father,



Pope Leo XIV

Louis Marius Prevost, was an educator, and his mother, Mildred Martínez, was a librarian. He has two older brothers, was active in his childhood parish and his brother John says he is a White Sox fan (even though their mom was a Cubs fan).

His family is reportedly of French, Italian and Spanish origin, with Creole heritage on his mother’s side. He loves the sport of tennis and plays regularly.

2. Cosmopolitan. While American, Pope Leo has a global perspective, having lived most of his adult life in Peru and Rome. Based on his assignments, it appears that he has spent less than five years combined living in the United States since his 1982 ordination to the priesthood.

3. Augustinian. He is a member of the Order of St. Augustine, a religious order that dates to 1244 and was founded to live the spirituality of early Christians. The order considers St. Augustine, a fifth-century theologian, philosopher and bishop of Hippo in North Africa, its father.

Before ordination, Pope Leo attended St. Augustine Seminary High School in Holland, Mich., and Villanova University near Philadelphia, both Augustinian institutions. Augustinians are mendicant, meaning that they traditionally survive on begging or their own work, do not hold property and do not spend their life in a single location. Pope Leo is the first Augustinian to assume the chair of Peter, and the second member of a religious order to do so in nearly two centuries—the first being the first Jesuit pope, Pope Francis.

4. Canonist. Pope Leo is a canon lawyer, having received his licentiate and doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, also known as the Angelicum, in Rome. He wrote his doctoral thesis on “The role of the local prior in the Order of Saint Augustine.” For nearly a decade, he served the Archdiocese of Trujillo, Peru, as its judicial vicar, which oversees the diocesan tribunal. During that time, he was also a professor of canon, patristics and moral law in the San Carlos e San Marcelo Major Seminary.

5. Leader. Pope Leo has an impressive range of leadership experience. After several pastoral and seminary formation roles in Chicago and Peru, he was elected in 1999 to oversee his order’s province in Chicago, and then two years later, he took the helm of the order worldwide. He was re-elected for a second six-year term, ultimately holding the Rome-based position for 12 years. Then, in 2014, Pope Francis appointed him to oversee the Diocese of Chiclayo, Peru, a role he held

for nine years and that included a year-long stint as the apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Callao, Peru, whose see city is nearly 500 miles south of Chiclayo. In 2023, Pope Francis appointed him as prefect of the Holy See’s Dicastery for Bishops, which oversees the appointments of bishops worldwide.

6. Baby boomer. At age 69, Pope Leo is seven years younger than Pope Francis was when he was elected in 2013, and nine years younger than Pope Benedict XVI when he was elected in 2005. He is 11 years older than St. John Paul II, who was 58 at his 1978 election.

7. Socially minded. His name is a nod to Pope Leo XIII, who led the Church from 1878 until 1903 and is especially known for his 1891 encyclical “*Rerum Novarum*,” or “On the Condition of the Working Classes.” That document responded to the state of the industrial society at the end of the 19th century and cemented Pope Leo XIII’s position as the modern father of Catholic social doctrine. Pope Leo XIII also composed the popular St. Michael prayer, penned an 1879 encyclical calling for the rooting of Christian philosophy in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and issued an 1899 apostolic letter condemning “Americanism,” a worldview he feared was held by American prelates that bolstered American values such as pluralism and individualism to the detriment of Catholic teaching.

8. Peace bearer. Pope Leo’s first words to the world were “Peace be with

you” on a balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica overlooking masses of people in the square. “Beloved brothers and sisters, this is the first greeting of the risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who has given his life for the flock of God,” he continued. “I, too, would like this greeting of peace to enter your hearts, reach your families, to all people, wherever they may be, to all peoples, to all the Earth. ... This is the peace of the risen Christ, a disarmed peace and a disarming peace, humble and persevering. It comes from God, God who loves us all unconditionally.”

9. Polyglot. Pope Leo speaks English, Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese, and he reads Latin and German. He gave his first greeting on May 8 in Italian, but switched to Spanish to greet the faithful of his former Diocese of Chiclayo before giving the “*urbi et orbi*” blessing in Latin. On May 9, he began his first public homily with English but preached most of it in Italian.

10. Successor of Peter. On his first full day as pope on May 9, Pope Leo preached before the College of Cardinals who elected him, speaking of an exchange between Jesus and St. Peter, the first pope. He called the Church “an ark of salvation sailing through the waters of history and a beacon that illumines the dark nights of this world. And this, not so much through the magnificence of her structures or the grandeur of her buildings—like the monuments among which we find ourselves—but rather through the holiness of her members.” †

The Augustinians, Pope Leo XIV’s religious order, goes back centuries

(OSV News)—In Pope Leo XIV’s first greeting after being introduced as pope on May 8, he described himself as a “son of St. Augustine.”

The first American pope has spoken in the past with affection about the fifth-century convert, bishop and intellectual powerhouse considered the father of his religious order, the Order of St. Augustine. Although their order was founded more than 800 years after Augustine’s death, the Augustinians draw on his wisdom and holiness to shape their community.

In the early 13th century, loosely organized communities of hermits living in Italy’s Tuscany region sought direction from Pope Innocent IV—known to be an excellent canonist, or Church law scholar—to help them adopt a common rule of life to live with greater uniformity.

They were inspired, in part, by the recent formation of other new religious orders, including the Franciscans in 1209 and the Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans, in 1216. Both were mendicant orders, which meant they relied on begging and working for their sustenance, and unlike the long-established Benedictines and other monks, they did not vow stability, meaning they were not bound to a single monastery for life.

Pope Innocent advised the Tuscan hermits to organize under the Rule of St. Augustine, a guide for religious life the saint had developed around the year 400. It covered the breadth of religious life, including purpose and basis

of common life, prayer, moderation and self-denial, safeguarding chastity and fraternal correction, and governance and obedience.

Written initially as a letter for a community of religious women in Hippo, the diocese in modern-day Algeria that St. Augustine led, the rule made its way to Europe and influenced St. Benedict, who formed the Benedictines in Italy in 529.

The rule of St. Augustine had also informed the Dominicans, but when the Tuscan hermits adopted the rule, they also took the name and spiritual fatherhood of its author. Through time, they transitioned from an eremitical way of life to the mendicant model expressed by other medieval orders, which is why they are known as “friars.” Women’s religious communities also joined the Augustinians, producing saints including St. Clare of Montefalco and St. Rita of Cascia. Male Augustinian saints include St. John of Sahagún, an early Augustinian from Spain, and St. Nicholas of Tolentine, who was the first Augustinian to be canonized after the order’s “grand union” in 1256.

Today the Order of St. Augustine is an international religious community that includes more than 2,800 members in nearly 50 countries, including the United States, where they are organized into three provinces, or geographical areas. Lay men and women also affiliate themselves with the Augustinians and the order’s spirituality and support the order’s work.

Augustinians in the U.S. have a strong reputation for education and founded Villanova University near Philadelphia and Merrimack College in North Andover, Mass., and high schools in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oklahoma, Ontario and Pennsylvania. They also care for several parishes and have missions in Japan and Peru.

Contemporary Augustinians describe themselves as “active contemplatives” with varied ministries who are “called to restlessness”—a nod to St. Augustine’s famous description of himself in his influential autobiography, *Confessions*: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”

Despite the order’s 800-year history—and its Italian origins—Pope Leo XIV is the first Augustinian to be elected a pope.

His ministries as a young priest included missionary work in Peru and seminary formation before he became provincial of his order’s Chicago-based Midwest province, Our Mother of Good Counsel, and then his order’s worldwide leader, a role he held for two, six-year terms.

Augustinians worldwide met the news of an Augustinian as the Church’s universal shepherd with joy.

After identifying himself as an Augustinian on St. Peter’s loggia on May 8, Pope Leo quoted St. Augustine: “For you I am a bishop, with you, I am a Christian.

“In this sense, we can all walk together toward that homeland that God has prepared,” he said. †

Pope Leo XIV’s motto and coat of arms pay homage to St. Augustine



VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Leo XIV’s devotion to St. Augustine, his life and ministry as a member of the Augustinian order and his focus on the unity of the Church are reflected in his episcopal motto and coat of arms.

When he appeared on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica shortly after his election on May 8, he introduced himself as “an Augustinian, a son of St. Augustine.”

And he explained that the cardinals who elected him “have chosen me to be the successor of Peter and to walk together with you as a Church, united, ever pursuing peace and justice, ever seeking to act as men and women faithful to Jesus Christ, in order to proclaim the Gospel without fear, to be missionaries.”

His episcopal motto is, “*In Illo uno*

unum,” or literally “In the One, we are one.”

Vatican News explained that the phrase is taken from St. Augustine’s “Exposition on Psalm 127,” where he explains that “although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one.”

As a cardinal, he told Vatican News in 2023, “As can be seen from my episcopal motto, unity and communion are truly part of the charism of the Order of St. Augustine, and also of my way of acting and thinking.

“I believe it is very important to promote communion in the Church, and we know well that communion, participation and mission are the three keywords of the Synod” of Bishops on synodality, he said. “So, as an Augustinian, for me promoting unity

and communion is fundamental.”

His coat of arms, now topped by a miter instead of the red galero hat on the coat of arms of cardinals, is divided diagonally into two. The upper half features a blue background with a white lily or fleur-de-lis, symbolizing the Virgin Mary, but also his French heritage.

The lower half has a light background and displays an image common to the religious orders named after and inspired by St. Augustine: a closed book with a heart pierced by an arrow.

Vatican News said, “This is a direct reference to the conversion experience of St. Augustine himself, who described his personal encounter with God’s word using the phrase: ‘*Vulnerasti cor meum verbo tuo*’—‘You have pierced my heart with your Word.’” †

Local Catholics share unique viewpoints on our new Holy Father

By Natalie Hoefer

As the world learns more about Pope Leo XIV, some common observations and themes have emerged.

Many have noted in articles and interviews the new pope’s similar thinking to Pope Francis, including in terms of social justice and care for the environment. Others have remarked that his years of ministry in Peru and his dual U.S. and Peruvian citizenship make him a native of both countries.

The Criterion spoke with Catholics in central and southern Indiana whose thoughts on the new pope shine light on different aspects that could shape his papacy.

‘Conscious of integral ecology’

John Mundell couldn’t be more enthusiastic about the new pope. “I’m walking on air right now,” said the member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.

He expects that air will get cleaner, given Pope Leo’s alignment with Pope Francis’ focus on care for creation.

“I’m completely confident he has values in line with “*Laudato Si’*” and will continue Pope Francis’ legacy in this area,” said Mundell, who is president and senior environmental consultant for Mundell & Associates in Indianapolis.



Tony Talbert speaks with a woman at a free vegetable table outside David’s House, the ministry building of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Tri-County Good Samaritan conference, in Richmond on Sept. 10, 2023. (Photo by Natalie Hoefer)

He also just finished serving as global director of the Vatican’s Laudato Si’ Action Platform—a service to help individuals and institutions with sustainability efforts—since its inception in 2022.

“I’m so happy about this announcement of the new pope,” Mundell said. “Him being an American is great, but it’s really because of his whole ministry. He ministered and lived in Peru, and Peru is known to have a lot of environment issues impacting the community there.

“I’m confident he’s faced these needs where he served and is dedicated to caring for creation and the importance of being conscious of integral ecology, not just in terms of the environment but in its impact on people and cultures.”

Social justice workers Mundell knows in Peru confirmed his confidence.

“They were lighting up [a message] group with comments about how excited they were because Pope Leo brings North and South America together,” Mundell said. “They said he made quite a name for himself in Peru.”

Mundell also finds promise in the pope taking the name Leo XIV.

“Leo XIII represents everything about Catholic social teaching that I’ve been educated on over the years,” he said. “That was another sign for me that he’ll



John Mundell, right, a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis, speaks with Pope Francis in this undated file photo. (Submitted photo)

continue the road Pope Francis took and provide structure to make it more of a reality for the poor and those in need.

“I think Pope Leo will be a uniting force for care for creation and in efforts to build peace.”

‘Connection of spiritual nourishment’ for the world

Between 1985-2023, Pope Leo served more than 20 years in Peru in various capacities—in parishes, for his Augustinian Order’s Mother of Good Counsel Province, as a bishop and more.

It’s no wonder, then, that Peru natives in the archdiocese share national pride in his election as pope.

Peruvian native Andres Pecho had an emotional response to the election of Pope Leo.

“I am so very happy, on the verge of tears,” he said. “There is a connection of spiritual nourishment for Peru, for Latin America, for North America and for the world.”

Pecho moved with his wife Ena to Indiana from the southwestern city of Nazca, Peru, in August of 2018. He now serves as assistant to the director of faith formation at the couple’s parish, St. Monica in Indianapolis.

Pecho said he likes the “beautiful coincidence that there is this connection with Pope Francis, the Argentinian pope,”

and Pope Leo, who has citizenship in the South American country of Peru.

He also appreciates Pope Leo’s fluency in five languages.



Andres Pecho

“I think when a person speaks more than two languages, his sensitivity is better,” he said—an important attribute, given what Pecho calls the “pastoral vocation” of the pope.

Pecho’s fellow parishioner, Percy Consiglieri, is also a native of Peru.

“I am so happy—it’s something very special,” he said of Pope Leo’s election.

Consiglieri, who moved to the United States 30 years ago, noted that for many Latinos, “America” refers to the northern and southern continents rather than the United States.

“So, some Latinos may say he’s not the first from America, because Pope Francis was from South America,” he said. “But still, I like to see that he’s North American!”

Vulnerable ‘are to be included’

On May 8, after hearing a new pope had been elected, “A calmness came to

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Catholics throughout the archdiocese share reactions, thoughts on new pope

Compiled by Natalie Hoefer

“I was shocked that an American was elected, shocked that it was so quickly done, and thrilled with the results. I think reading Pope Leo’s bio, he seems to be in the same vein as Pope Francis, the same inclusive, thoughtful way of doing things, which to me was a really good way to attract people to the Church.” —Harriet Neill, St. Michael Parish, Cannelton

“It was really exciting to watch. When they said he was an American pope—I’m not the town crier, but I got tears in my eyes. The few things I’ve read about him are that he has similar thoughts to Pope Francis, and he may have some good ideas of his own, too. He seems to be a very warm, humble person, and I like the fact that he’s only 69 years old.” —Linda Ricke, St. Mary Parish, Greensburg

“[My wife and I] were both really surprised because we were talking about the chances of it being a U.S. cardinal were pretty low. I think [Pope Leo XIV] is kind of [universal], actually. He’s been in Peru and everywhere. But he is a Midwestern guy, and we’re really proud of that.” —Craig Moorman, St. Rose of Lima Parish, Franklin

“Tom Allen, the previous IU football coach, his acronym for his team was LEO. And it means ‘Love Each Other.’ So, when I saw [the new pope] chose Leo, I thought that was a perfect name.” —Diana Moorman, St. Rose of Lima Parish, Franklin

“I was delighted, and a bit surprised, with what seemed like quick results of the election. It seemed like the Holy Spirit was working overtime. I like very much what I have read of Pope Leo XIV’s background—not only his Peru, North American and U.S. connections but his Chicago roots! His comments seem to align with Pope Francis’ world view and being a shepherd to the world. I’m looking forward to his Papacy.” —Rosalie Hawthorne, Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish, Indianapolis

“When I first heard that an American had been selected as our new pope, I was honestly shocked, but also very excited! As a nation, I think it places a lot of responsibility on our shoulders but also presents amazing opportunities to present the faith. I’m very encouraged by what I have heard from Pope Leo XIV thus far and look forward to learning more. God bless his endeavors!” —Jessica Murphy, St. Joseph University Parish, Terre Haute, and development manager for Terre Haute Catholic Charities

“I was so surprised when I heard that the cardinals had chosen an American for our new pope. It is an exciting time for our Church. I think he will bring a new perspective to the papacy. I’m thrilled to have Pope Leo XIV lead our Church!” —Laura Roggenkamp, St. Mary of the Knobs, Floyd County

“My initial reaction was surprise that he was an American. I see him as a man who gives us hope, and

I love the fact he chose the name Leo. Pope Leo XIII was the pope of the common working man, like our dads. Working men who went to work every day and responsibly raised their families with the help of their wives and sent their children to Catholic schools. Pope Leo XIII was devoted to Mary, and I consider him a pope of the rosary. So, I hope Pope Leo XIV will bring a renewed devotion to the rosary.” —Thomas Stader, St. Susanna Parish, Plainfield

“I am so excited for Pope Leo XIV’s papacy! Pope Leo XIV gives me so much hope for the young people of the Church. Young people can relate to Pope Leo because of things like his being a baseball fan and loving to play Wordle. Because of this relatability, young people can be more attentive to his teachings. Pope Leo XIV already seems to be such a bright light in the world, and I cannot wait to see all that he does to help build the Kingdom of God!” —Lily Bauman, SS. Francis and Clare of Assisi Parish, Greenwood, and a senior at Roncalli High School, Indianapolis

“When I heard that a new pope had been announced I was hopeful—hopeful that God had his hand in who would fill this important role, not just for the Church but for the whole world. And as I’ve listened to Pope Leo XIV, I’m very hopeful that he will lead us forward in love and resemblance of Jesus Christ.” —Larissa Cullens, St. Gabriel Parish, Connersville

The story of the life-changing bond with the friend who has become Pope Leo XIV

By John Shaughnessy

A day before the conclave to elect a new pope began on May 7, Bill Bickel sent an e-mail to his friend of 46 years, Cardinal Robert F. Prevost.

In the e-mail, the associate director of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis wrote, “Please know that Flor and I are holding you in our prayers during this historic moment in our Church. We trust the Holy Spirit will be with you, guiding you with wisdom and filling you with peace.”

A short while later, Cardinal Prevost responded, “Thanks, Bill. We all pray that the Spirit will be our guide!—Bob”.

Two days after that e-mail exchange, Bickel became overwhelmed with emotion when he watched on television as his friend was introduced as Pope Leo XIV, the new leader of the universal Church.

He listened in amazement as the person he credits with giving him powerful, compassionate advice that changed his life appeared on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica, greeting the roaring crowd in the square below and people around the world with this initial message, “Peace be with you all,” and later with this hope, “May we all walk together toward that homeland that God has prepared for us.”

“It was just unbelievable, unbelievable,” said Bickel, a day after his friend was elected pope. “My phone started blowing up, but I just wanted to take in the moment to see Bob. And then as he was addressing the people in the square and around the world, I started to get a little nervous for him, thinking this weight is just unreal.

“But then I swung to, ‘God’s providence is in this.’ The e-mail he sent me on Tuesday where he said the Spirit is in this is absolutely right. Since then, I’m praying for him. And I will say this: There is no one better to lead the global Catholic Church than him. I’m still in awe.”

‘He’s a grace from God’

The story of all our lives is the story of our relationships—our family that forms and nurtures us, our friends who embrace us and lift us, our loves who light our lives and lead us to hopes and dreams we never imagined, our relationship with God.

The friendship of Bickel and the man who will forever be known now as Pope Leo XIV started with a shared dream to serve God and his people. As a young man, Robert Prevost not only embraced that dream, he served as a role model for Bickel and many other younger men who aspired to live that same dream.

Seven years older, Prevost was already deep in his formation as an Augustinian priest in 1979—the year Bickel was a high school senior who was exploring his own desire to be an Augustinian. He and two other young men joined with Prevost on a road trip from Chicago to Villanova University near Philadelphia to learn more about the Augustinian path to the priesthood.

On that trip, as one of the other young men became sick and vomited in the van, Bickel took note of how Prevost didn’t hesitate to clean up the van. During the road trip, Bickel and Prevost, two sons of the Midwest from strong Catholic families—Bickel from South Bend and

Prevost from Chicago—talked about the order’s foreign missionary program, as Bickel had an interest in serving in Peru after earlier spending three weeks at the missions in that South American country.

The trip to Villanova convinced Bickel of his desire to be an Augustinian priest. It also gave him his first extensive look into the heart and soul of the future pope, a glimpse that has turned into a revelation about his friend through the years—and the way he believes Pope Leo XIV will approach his papacy.

“I think of Augustine when I think of him,” Bickel said. “He has the intellect of Augustine. He has the brother community of Augustine. And he has Augustine’s profound belief that caring for the poor is not merely an act of charity but a fundamental expression of love and humility.

“I think about the global Catholic Church and, as large as that is, I know he looks at it as he looks at his community. Living under the Augustinian rule as a community—‘one mind, one heart’—he sees the global community in that way. It’s innately in him.

“I’m sure the Augustinian charism is going to be a guiding light for a lot of things, perhaps difficult things that he’s going to face. Community, of course, is a big thing. So is the idea that we need to bear and support our brothers’ and sisters’ burdens. He has an immense love for the poor. I think those are going to be strong factors in his papacy.”

Bickel paused before he added, “If somebody can thread the needle of whatever divisions the Catholic Church has, I think it’s him. I really do. It’s a grace from God. He’s a grace from God.”

‘He always had time for you’

While the story of all our lives is the story of our relationships, it’s also about the choices we make concerning our relationships.

In their journeys toward the priesthood, the paths of the two friends are extremely similar, with Bickel following his Augustinian brother on many of the same stops along the road: attending minor seminary in Michigan, graduating from Villanova, studying at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, entering the novitiate in St. Louis, professing first vows.

And all through that journey, Bickel looked up to his friend, admiring his faith and his personal qualities.

“Just a humble, generous, intelligent brother Augustinian,” Bickel said, noting that Pope Leo XIV was a math major at Villanova and earned a doctoral degree in canon law. “Intelligent but incredibly approachable. He always had time for you.”

Bickel smiled as he added, “Bob has a great sense of humor. I can hear his laugh right now. His laugh is super distinctive.”

So is Bickel’s, but there’s no laughter—just deep emotion again—as he talks about another similarity in their journeys: the time they both served the poor and vulnerable in Peru, wanting to give people there an embrace of hope and dignity, wanting to share the promise of God’s love.

It was also a time that led Bickel to turn to his friend—the man he admired so deeply—for advice about the toughest, most heart-wrenching choice he has ever had to make.



People react at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Chiclayo, Peru, on May 8, the day Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected pope. He chose the papal name Leo XIV. As an Augustinian priest, then-Father Prevost spent many years as a missionary in Peru. (OSV News photo/Sebastian Castaneda, Reuters)

During those roughly 18 months of serving together in Peru in the late 1980s, Bickel worked in the villages of the northern west coast and the Andes mountains of Peru while the future pope served the poor in similar areas farther south. Among the few American Augustinians from the Chicago Province serving in the Peruvian missions at the time, they connected and shared stories, challenges and hopes at meetings of members of their order.

In a private meeting between just the two of them, Bickel shared his heart with his friend about the soul-searching choice he had to make.

As he shared the story of that meeting more than 35 years later, Bickel’s anguish was still raw and emotional.

The heart-wrenching choice of two loves

“I met Flor, who was a Peruvian working in similar mission-based work,” Bickel recalled. “As time went on, I knew I needed to speak openly about it. I went to Bob, and I said, ‘I’m thinking a lot more about Flor than I’m thinking about renewing my vows.’

“He gave me the advice that set the trajectory of my life. I mean it.

“He told me, ‘You have to determine whether this is genuine joy and love or it’s infatuation. We—*he didn’t say me, he said we*—are away from our homes, away from our families, we’re in a foreign country. There is absolute loneliness in this work. You need to distinguish between the two, and you need to take the time to do that.’ ”

The emotion swelled up for Bickel again as he said, “I did. And I chose Flor. “I told Bob, ‘I’m leaving something I love very much for someone I love more.’

“He literally counseled me as a brother.”

Bickel then shared one more part to that turning point, a part that is important for him.

“When I did decide, I told my Irish-Catholic mother. She would never let pride get in her heart, but I’m sure it meant something to her that I was studying for the priesthood. When I told her that I met this woman and I’m not going to renew my vows, my mother said nothing but words of encouragement. She said, ‘When I met your father and we were dating, I felt genuine joy and love.’ ”

When she said, “genuine joy and love,” Bickel remembered those were the exact words his friend had shared in his advice to him.

“This is without me telling her what Bob had told me. I thought, ‘This has to be providential because my own mother is saying this to me.’ ”

While their paths have diverged since

then, the commitment of the two friends to the vulnerable has continued.

A love for a friend

Before being elected, Pope Leo XIV kept the poor of Peru a priority during much of his service to the Augustinians and the Church.

Married to Flor for more than three decades, Bickel has served the archdiocese for the past 30 years as a leading advocate for the homeless in central and southern Indiana. He has led the growth of the archdiocese’s commitment to homeless families, not only by giving them a place to live in times of desperation, but also guiding staff members in helping the parents of these families find jobs and housing.

Flor has also long served the legal needs of immigrants and refugees who come to Catholic Charities for help, assisting them in starting a new life in the United States. And their marriage has led to the lives and love of their daughter, Susana, their son, Gabriel, and their grandchild, Omar.

The friendship of Bickel and Pope Leo XIV has also continued through the years, so much so that Bickel still finds himself in the adjustment period of calling his friend “Pope Leo” instead of “Bob.”

As the Church and the world look forward to what the papacy of Pope Leo XIV will offer, Bickel looks back to all the ways his friend has touched his life for 46 years. Bickel’s love for the Augustinians and the Augustinian rules of life still continues. So does his love for his friend who counseled him so compassionately at a turning point in his life.

As Pope Leo begins a turning point in his own life, Bickel offers his friend a prayer of thanks, hope and love.

“I know his belief that this is a Church for the poor. I know that his guidance comes from the Holy Spirit. That was evident in the conclave. That was evident in the e-mail he sent me—‘the Spirit will be our guide!’

“There’s a strong belief that the Holy Spirit is not just in the middle of this. The Spirit is in all ends of his decision-making and his papacy. I just pray that continues, and he has the support he needs.

“This has given me tremendous optimism about the direction of the Church.”

Bickel shared that belief—and the promise that he and Flor will continue praying for him—with his friend in an e-mail on the day of the new pope’s election. He began the message with this wish, “God bless you, Pope Leo XIV!”

Two days later, the new pope sent Bickel an e-mail, thanking him. The pope ended his reply with a simple “Leo”.

Lives change, sometimes suddenly and dramatically. Still, a friendship lasts. †



‘If somebody can thread the needle of whatever divisions the Catholic Church has, I think it’s him. I really do. It’s a grace from God. He’s a grace from God.’

—Bill Bickel, associate director of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis



An undated file photo shows Pope John Paul II greeting then-Augustinian Father Robert F. Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV. He became the first American in history to be elected pope. (OSV News photo/Augustinian Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel handout via Reuters)



Religious sisters cheer as Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, who has chosen the papal name Leo XIV, appears on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on May 8, following his election during the conclave. He is the first American pope in history. (OSV News photo/Marko Djurica, Reuters)



Pope Leo XIV carries a white rose to the tomb of Pope Francis in Rome's Basilica of St. Mary Major on May 10. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



A man holding a rosary and U.S. flag reacts as Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, who chose the papal name Leo XIV, appears on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on May 8 following his election during the conclave. (OSV News photo/Dylan Martinez, Reuters)



A worker counts printed newspapers for circulation with a picture of the newly elected Pope Leo XIV, Cardinal Robert F. Prevost of the United States, at the Nation Media Group printing press on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya, on May 8. (OSV News photo/Thomas Mukoya, Reuters)



Pope Leo XIV, on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, leads the midday chanting of the "Regina Coeli" prayer for the first time on May 11. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



Cardinals are seated at their places in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican as the conclave to elect a new pope begins on May 7. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

*'Peace be with you all!
... I would like this greeting
of peace to resound in your
hearts, in your families,
among all people, wherever
they may be, in every nation
and throughout the world.
... God loves us, God loves
you all, and evil will not
prevail!'*

*—Pope Leo XIV's
first words to Rome and the world
on May 8, 2025*

Priests praise new pope for being a ‘witness to Jesus and his resurrection’

By Sean Gallagher

When Pope Francis was elected bishop of Rome in 2013, Father Douglas Marcotte was in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican and experienced the “electric atmosphere” in the massive crowd that greeted the new pontiff as he came out on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica.

At the time, Father Marcotte was a transitional deacon in formation at the Pontifical North American College



Fr. Douglas Marcotte

in Rome, months away from being ordained a priest for the archdiocese. In an interview with *The Criterion*, Father Marcotte spoke of how he sees now more divisions among the faithful than he perceived in 2013. “Whatever the reasons for this division, I have found myself craving a Holy Father that will be able to bring us all together, to help us see how much we have in common and how much good we could do together to help the world know our risen

Lord,” Father Marcotte said. “In being a pastor, I have gained an appreciation for how important it is for leaders to be unifying figures, to gather folks around Jesus Christ.

“With that being said, you can imagine how edified I was to hear Pope Leo proclaim to the world, ‘Without fear, united, hand in hand with God, and with one another, let us move forward.’ ”

Other priests who serve in the archdiocese spoke with *The Criterion* about the significance of the election of Pope Leo for Catholics in central and southern Indiana.

A pope who is ‘a missionary disciple’

Father Sengole Thomas Gnanaraj, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, was excited about the election of an American as pope.

A priest of the Diocese of Palayamkottai in southern India, Father Gnanaraj has ministered in the archdiocese for 14 years and has appreciated the vitality he’s seen in the Church in the United States.

“The Church in America is very alive,” he said. “It has advanced so much the new evangelization, forming people intentionally in many ways. Lay people are being educated theologically. The Church here is thriving. It’s alive.”

Father Gnanaraj can also identify with Pope Leo, who spent many years in ministry in Peru and whom he described as “a missionary disciple who has become a pope.”

Both were born and formed for ordained ministry in one country and went far away to serve as a missionary.

“Leaving one’s country is not easy,” said Father Gnanaraj. “I went through that. It took me three years to get used to [the reality] that this is my place, these are my people.”

He said that he and Pope Leo both went to faraway countries “for the sake of the Church, for the sake of the mission and, of course, for the sake of Christ. We’ve immersed ourselves in a different community ... for the mission of Christ.”

“I feel so welcome here,” Father Gnanaraj said. “I don’t see myself as a stranger. This is my place. This is my community. Being here for 14 years has given me so much joy, being with the people that I serve. I never feel out of place. I never feel strange or challenged. I think Pope Leo XIV had the same experience [in Peru].

“Working in the Church in any part of the world is much different than working for other organizations, because the Church is primarily our family.”

‘Our faith is universal’

Like Father Gnanaraj, Father Mauro Rodas was born and formed for ministry far from the U.S. but has spent most of his 60 years of ordained ministry in central and southern Indiana.

He was born in Ecuador, a country neighboring Peru where Pope Leo spent decades of ministry. Father Rodas



Father Sengole Thomas Gnanaraj, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Richmond, gives two books he wrote to Pope Francis after a Feb. 7, 2024, general audience at the Vatican. (Submitted photo)

was ordained in 1965 for the Diocese of Guaranda, Ecuador.

Father Rodas became an archdiocesan priest in 1979. A year earlier, he was appointed to lead the archdiocese’s first organized ministry to Hispanic Catholics. During the past nearly 50 years, he’s witnessed how much the ministry has grown and has continued to play a part in it, even in retirement.



Fr. Mauro Rodas

“It is satisfying to me to know that I made a little contribution to the Church in this particular area,” Father Rodas said.

He was amazed to see how God worked “in mysterious ways” to lead the 133 cardinal electors to select a pope who was born and formed in the U.S. for ministry and then served for decades in South America.

“He served people who needed help and direction,” Father Rodas said. “They needed hope and faith. I did the same thing in the United States. I came from Ecuador to a foreign country and learned the language. I love this ministry. I love the Hispanics. I care for them. I feel love for them from my heart.”

What he believes makes it possible for him and Pope Leo to serve in places faraway from their homes is that “our faith is universal.”

“Our faith is everywhere,” Father Rodas said. “It does not have limits. We have an unlimited faith. That’s why we call it Catholic. So, I feel like I belong to the whole world in relation to my faith. I don’t belong to only part of this Earth.”

‘A witness to Jesus in the world’

At the heart of that universal faith is Jesus Christ. Father Eric Augenstein was impressed by how, in his first remarks as pontiff, Pope Leo “came out to proclaim Christ Jesus, the peace of the risen Christ.”

The pastor of Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish in Indianapolis and archdiocesan director of seminarians noted how the Acts of the Apostles said that a successor to Judas Iscariot in the ministry of the Apostles should be “a witness to [Christ’s] resurrection” (Acts 1:22).

“Pope Leo came to us as a witness to Christ and his resurrection,” Father Augenstein said. “That, in many ways, is one of the primary roles of the pope, to be a witness to Jesus in the world.”

He also noted that the attention that has been given to the Church through the death of Pope Francis through the election of Pope Leo is a chance for all Catholics to share the faith with others.

“It’s an opportunity for us as Church to remember the place and responsibility that we have in the world to pray for and support our Holy Father, but also through him and with him to spread the news of Jesus,” Father Augenstein said. “This is an opportunity for evangelization.

“As others have been fascinated by or curious about the Church in these days, we can say to them that we are here to proclaim Jesus to them just as Pope Leo does.”

Father Marcotte said he has been praying for Pope Leo and will continue to do so.

“I cannot imagine the weight of the cross he carries as the successor of St. Peter,” he said. “I am hopeful that Pope Leo’s pontificate will be one that testifies in both word and deed to the power of Jesus Christ’s resurrection to transform ... the whole world.

“Many in the world are drowning in what seems like a darkness that is going to completely swallow them. They must know that, although the darkness may be vast, it has not—it will not—overcome Jesus Christ who is our light. If Pope Leo’s reign is known for and remembered for that testimony, we will thank God, for that will have done much to advance the kingdom.” †



Fr. Eric Augenstein

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me, thinking how quickly our Catholic leaders could discern and know what was best for the Church,” said Mark Casper, agency director of St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities in New Albany and a member of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Jeffersonville.

As he watched a live feed of the announcement, Casper said he gasped in astonishment when the commentators started saying quietly in the background, “We have an American Pope.”

He was so excited, he “yelled down our office hallway at St. Elizabeth

Catholic Charities, ‘He’s American!’ I was convinced there would never be an American pope in my lifetime.”

After the initial excitement, the social service agency director took time to reflect on the election of Pope Leo.

“I’m hopeful that this American pope’s understanding of the social justice issues here in America and throughout the world will be a focal point in the coming years,” said Casper.

“I am happy to hear Pope Leo is a bridge builder and sees the Church’s role as a missionary Church so that the vulnerable are not forgotten but are to be included.”



Mark Casper

Tony Talbert agreed with Casper. Talbert is president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul’s Tri-County Good Samaritans conference, serving Fayette, Union and Wayne counties in east central Indiana.

After listening to Pope Leo’s comments from the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica, “What resonated well with me was his comment on building bridges,” said Talbert. “That is exactly what we do for the poor at St. Vincent de Paul—build bridges of hope and comfort to a better life. We show them love without judgment.”

In a global society fraught with

division, “I feel like there is an opportunity with the new pope to see unity in a world that is not what God wants it to be,” said the member of St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty.

Every person in the pew can help the pope in this mission, said Talbert.

“It is up to us as Catholics to lead the world in showing others hope, love and compassion, for each of us to make our part of the world a better place,” he said, and for each Catholic “to reach out to those in need, to be ‘Good Samaritans’ who do God’s work every day.”

(Criterion editor Mike Krokos contributed to this story.) †

Chicago abuzz with ‘unbelievable’ joy as pope is a hometown son

CHICAGO (OSV News)—Catholics and non-Catholics alike were abuzz with excitement in Chicago on May 8, after one of the city’s native sons became pope. Taking the name Leo XIV, the new pontiff has made many firsts.

On the sunny street outside Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, a cab driver, Veronica Canadas, sat in her white taxi, listening intently to media coverage of the announcement of the new pope. She had just learned that Cardinal Robert F. Prevost was elected.

With a big smile on her face, Canadas told OSV News she was “more happy than I can be” to know there was a new successor to St. Peter. And on learning he was a local, Canadas said she was “even more happy ... because I live in this city, and for me it’s meaning that we are not alone, especially in these times. God [gave] us this pope for hope.”

A native of Ecuador, Canadas who has lived in Chicago since 1995, said she was also happy that Pope Leo XIV spent a significant part of his priesthood in Peru. This meant he knew Latin American culture, she said. And having him as pope would give hope to Latinos “because of the situation in this country right now, against all immigrants and against, especially, Latino communities.”

Pope Leo XIV, 69, has been with the Augustinian order almost since childhood, having wanted to be one of their priests since he was 13 years old, according to Bishop Daniel T. Turley, another Augustinian from Chicago and a retired bishop of Chulucanas, Peru. As Father Robert Prevost, the future American pope served under Bishop Turley in the order’s vicariate which includes Chulucanas, Iquitos and Apurímac, Peru, starting in 1988.

“This is unbelievable,” Bishop Turley told OSV News. “It’s the first American pope in the history of the Church, and our Church is 2,000 years old. So that’s really something. He’s the first Augustinian in the history of the order to become pope, and of course, he’s the first one from Chicago ... so he is special.”

Bishop Turley, 82, said the new pope, who grew up in the south suburban towns of Dolton and Riverdale, was “very gifted” as formation director, professor and manager of the Augustinians’ seminary project at the order’s mission in Trujillo, the third largest city in Peru, just south of Chulucanas. He said then-Father Prevost oversaw building the seminarians’ housing and chapel, and was “an excellent professor” whose students “loved him” at the major seminary, Colegio Seminario de San Carlos y San Marcelo in Trujillo.

Bishop Turley said he had no doubt Pope Leo XIV would work hard to promote world peace and to “do everything possible to respect the dignity of every human being.”

The bishop wrote out numbers on scraps of paper at his desk in the Midwest Augustinians’ pre-novitiate house at St. Rita Parish, and remarked that while they were

both originally Chicago Southsiders, they each also became dual citizens of Peru.

“So yeah, he was about 33 years outside of the country” in Rome and Peru,” he said. “I was 56 years [in Mexico, then Peru] outside.”

Augustinian Father John Lydon, retired president of Catholic University of Trujillo, is now formator at his order’s theologate in Chicago, where the future Pope Leo had the same role. He lived with the new pope for 10 years when they both taught at the major seminary. They also were classmates at Villanova University near Philadelphia, where he said they would grab an occasional beer together.

Father John said his good friend becoming pope was “great news!” He described Pope Leo, both as a priest and bishop, as being very personable and an intellectually gifted teacher, with great concern for the poor, especially in the part of Trujillo where they served.

Across the street from the Augustinian theologate in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood is the Catholic Theological Union, where Pope Leo studied before being ordained a priest. The outgoing president, Dominican Sister Barbara Reid, beamed before a row of TV cameras at a news conference.

“We are overjoyed that someone who was formed initially for ministry here at Catholic Theological Union ... that someone who is beloved and known to us is now the beloved leader of the whole, entire Church,” she said. “And even others who are not Catholic claim the pope as their own.”

Outside Holy Name Cathedral downtown, a man who said he was Jewish took photos of the cathedral. He told OSV News he was “very happy” for Catholics and especially glad that Pope Leo XIV was a native Chicagoan.

The Archdiocese of Chicago’s vicar general, Bishop Lawrence J. Sullivan, told a news conference inside the cathedral that it was an exciting day for the Church.

“Additionally, it’s a day of great excitement for Chicago, for the United States to have one of our own be elected as the pope, as the Holy Father,” he said.

Bishop Sullivan acknowledged that he did not know the new pope personally, but he knew of his “humble and very prayerful” way.



Students from Everest Academy in Lemont, Ill., cheer on May 8 after it was announced that Chicago-born Cardinal Robert F. Prevost was elected as the 267th pope. He chose the papal name Leo XIV. (OSV News photo/Vincent Alban, Reuters)

Longtime Chicago Southwest Side resident Imelda Salazar, a member of the Augustinian-administrated St. Rita Parish, told OSV News she knows the new pope and has joined him for dinner hosted at a close friend’s house at least once a year during the past decade.

“I’m still digesting [the news],” said Salazar, 52. “But the first thing is, it’s one of us. I thought, what a pride, that he’s from the Southwest Side. He’s an Augustinian!”

Salazar is heavily involved in the grassroots Southwest Organizing Project, which has a goal to get Chicagoans involved in public leadership. She said, with Pope Leo XIV as head of the universal Church, “It’s like, wow! Let’s really work with him to continue the legacy of Pope Francis on synodality, like let’s journey together as Catholics.”

Salazar said she met then-Bishop Prevost of Chiclayo, Peru, about nine years ago, when her friend, an Augustinian seminarian, was going to be ordained by him. She was struck by how “very, very welcoming” he was, and took a real interest in her community organizing work.

Bishop Turley said he “truly believes” the late Pope Francis had a hand in Pope Leo XIV becoming the next vicar of Christ through assigning him greater leadership roles in the Church, ultimately making him prefect of the Holy See’s Dicastery for Bishops and a cardinal.

“Pope Francis really liked very much Cardinal Prevost. He’s the one who named him, ‘I want you to be bishop of Chiclayo, ... I want you to come to Rome.’ That was all Pope Francis directly,” he said.

The bishop said he believes the late pope is in heaven, and he has no doubt his intercession had a hand in conclave.

“I think his first miracle is that the Holy Spirit moved the cardinals to choose Cardinal Prevost,” he said. †

Faithful of Peru diocese celebrate papal election of one of their own

CHICLAYO, Peru (OSV News)—Thousands of Catholics packed the plaza outside the Cathedral of Santa Maria de Chiclayo in this northern Peruvian city to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving on May 10 for an adoptive son: Pope Leo XIV.

The new pope, who as Bishop Robert F. Prevost served as the spiritual leader in Chiclayo from 2015 to 2023, was fondly remembered by attendees for prioritizing the poor, bringing the Church closer to the people and embracing his adopted country.



Someone holds a placard with an image of Pope Leo XIV on the day of a Mass at the Cathedral of Santa Maria de Chiclayo in Peru on May 10 celebrating the election of Pope Leo XIV on May 8 at the Vatican. The new pope was bishop of Chiclayo between 2015 and 2023. (OSV News photo/Sebastian Castaneda, Reuters)

“We want to thank the risen Lord for having given us this Thursday, May 8, a new successor of Peter, of Christ, Pope Leo, our beloved bishop,” said Bishop Edinson Farfán Córdova of Chiclayo, who succeeded Bishop Prevost when he was made prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops in January 2023 and elevated to cardinal in September that same year.

“He was among us here. He lived here, learned here. He allowed himself to be evangelized by the simple and faithful people of our lands,” Bishop Farfán Córdova continued in his homily.

“[Bishop] Roberto Prevost was also a man of communion and interiority, who was close to and sensitive to current reality. How can we not thank God for our beloved Diocese of Chiclayo?”

Peruvians have greeted the election of Pope Leo with elation, pride and even disbelief that an adopted prelate whose pastoral formation came as an Augustinian missionary in poor and undeveloped parts of Peru could become pope and represent the country on the world stage.

The elation was especially strong in Chiclayo, where attendees at the Mass shouted “¡Viva el Papa León!” (“Long live Pope Leo!”) and “¡El papa es chicleyano!” (“The pope is a native of Chiclayo!”) Many recalled with pride how he acknowledged Chiclayo in his opening remarks after being introduced to the world as Pope Leo XIV.

“I don’t know if this can be called a miracle, but it’s an extraordinary thing,” said Eduardo Lisboa, a mechanic who regularly attended Sunday Mass celebrated by the future Pope Leo. “[It’s] like thinking

that a priest, a bishop from a town like ours, suddenly becomes the pope.”

Pope Leo was born in Chicago, but spent nearly 20 years in Peru and became a citizen. People remember his fondness for local dishes such *tortitas de choclo*—a popular corn cake—along with tireless travels through the diocese, especially in times of crisis such as catastrophic flooding.

“Peru was where he learned to be a priest,” Father Jorge Majail, spokesman for the Order of St. Augustine in Peru, told OSV News. “It means a lot for Peru to have Pope Leo in Rome and that he encourages us and inspires us and reminds us that we are a land that God loves.”

People have spread memes of the new pope on social media such as the pontiff eating ceviche and drinking Inca Kola, a yellow soda that outsells Coca-Cola in Peru. Others proudly show their own photos of the pope on their smartphones, while stories of the pope serving as a godparent at baptisms are rife.

“[There’s] joy for someone who not only lived with us, but also lived with us in a unique way, knowing the Peruvian context, the culture, knowing the virtues, knowing the defects, knowing the intricacies, knowing the best and the worst that can exist in a country like ours or in all of Latin America,” Jesuit Father José Gordillo, a priest in Lima, told OSV News.

“He really identifies with all the roots here, with all of people’s idiosyncrasies. He accepts the people’s popular religiosity. And he identifies with people’s culture and customs,” said Sister Nilda Ortiz Jiménez, a member of the St. Joseph of Tarbes community. She first met Pope Leo as a

young missionary serving in the community of Chulucanas.

“I admire him for his spirit of service, his humility, always being attentive to the needs of the poorest,” she added. “When people suffered greatly there in Chiclayo, where he was, he waded into the mud to bring aid to towns that had been isolated by the downpours.”

Many people posted photos of Pope Leo working in difficult situations; a picture of him wearing rubber boots, while ministering in a flood zone, made the rounds on social media. That pastoral work has not been forgotten in a country where the official response to the COVID-19 pandemic and catastrophic floods in 2017 were lacking.

“The bishop at the time ... taught us that we can move things forward together,” said Delcy Núñez, a Chiclayo resident. “Despite the pandemic, he was able to knock on doors.”

Pope Leo put special attention on young people. “Almost everyone in Chiclayo” with children, has “a photo with him at their confirmation,” said Núñez, whose three sons were confirmed by the future pope.

As pope, Father Majail expects Leo XIV will draw extensively on his experience as an Augustinian and a bishop in Peru. “He will be a pope who seeks communion, ecclesial unity,” he said.

“He is a pope who has made his life in Latin America and specifically in Peru. And that will definitely mark his ministry as time will show us. Let’s also remember that he is a pope who learned to be poor with the poor and a missionary among the poor.” †

Choice of an American as pope gives hope to Church’s young adult leaders

By John Shaughnessy

After hearing the wonderful, shocking news of an American being elected as pope on May 8, Cheyenne Johnson and Rachel Levy quickly became excited about the potentially powerful impact that Pope Leo XIV could have on young adults across the United States.

“With Pope Francis, so many people from South America and Argentina related to him as ‘our pope,’ ” said Johnson, the Catholic campus minister at Butler University in Indianapolis, shortly after the announcement that Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, a native of Chicago, was elected on the fourth ballot



Pope Leo XIV

by the cardinal electors. “In the same way, I can see and hope that a lot of young Americans will be able to relate to him, especially people from the Midwest.”

For Levy, the American connection is an opportunity to build on a recent trend that she has seen as the coordinator of young adult ministry in the archdiocese.

“I’ve heard that across the country and even in different countries that a lot of young adults are coming into the Church in larger numbers than in recent years,” Levy said. “I’m interested in seeing what happens in the U.S. now that we have a pope who is close to home, and what impact that may have.

“There’s a lot of hope to be had—especially having this first American pope—that there will be that link to allow people, especially young adults in the United States, to relate to the Church in a deeper way.”

The news about Pope Leo XIV came

just 10 days before Johnson and Levy will take part in the 2025 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage across most of the United States.

The two young Indianapolis women are among the eight “perpetual pilgrims” who were selected from across the country to make the 3,300-mile pilgrimage, which leaves Indianapolis on May 18 and arrives in Los Angeles on June 22.

Amid their preparations for the pilgrimage, Johnson and Levy have experienced the sadness of Pope Francis’ unexpected passing on April 21 and the unexpected selection of Cardinal Prevost to be the next pope.

“I was shocked,” Johnson said. “I never thought I’d see an American pope. Historically, most popes have been from Europe, and then Pope Francis was from South America. I was hearing one of the commentators talk about how the 266th successor to St. Peter is a son of the United States. Now to have an American as the head of the universal Church is incredible.”

Beyond the shock, Levy soon focused on the initial words and message that Pope Leo XIV shared after he was introduced from the balcony of the Vatican.

“I was watching the livestream with someone who was translating what he was saying, and the first thing the pope said to all the people of the Church was, ‘Peace be with you all,’ ” Levy noted.

“I’ve been sitting with that for the last couple of hours because peace has been a really big part of my thinking about the pilgrimage we’re about to go on. Peace has been a really big factor in my devotion to the Eucharist, and how it’s grown a lot in the past year—how I’m finding a deep sense of peace when I’m in the presence of the Eucharist.

“I have a deep desire for the people in my life—and anyone else I encounter—to have that deep peace



Rachel Levy and Cheyenne Johnson are young adult leaders in the archdiocese who believe the choice of Pope Leo XIV, an American, could re-energize young Americans about the Catholic faith and lead them into the Church. (Photo by John Shaughnessy)

that I have found by just being in the presence of the Lord.”

Levy even wrote those words, “Peace be with you all” on the dry-erase board leading into her office.

“For the pope to start out with ‘Peace be with you all’ was like a comfort to me and gives me a lot of hope for his papacy.

“I hope peace will sprout up and hope will shine through in some big ways especially in this Jubilee Year of Hope. People are in need of a lot of hope and a deeper sense of peace in these days.”

Johnson nodded and added her

thoughts regarding the importance of hope in connection to the new pope.

“Especially with young people, we’re seeing a shift in this being a time of hope,” Johnson said. “I personally hope that he will build on it this year and reach out. Being from Chicago, he’s someone that young people can see as closer to them.

“He’s the Holy Father, but there’s the relationship there that I hope will inspire people to come back to the Church and really dig deep into it and see that everyone is welcome here. There’s a place for everyone in the Church.” †

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POPE LEO XIV

A BIOGRAPHICAL TIMELINE



1955
Born Sept. 14 in the Chicago area.



1978
Professed first vows as a member of the Order of St. Augustine.



1982
Ordained a priest of the Order of St. Augustine.

1985
Sent to work in the mission of Chulucanas, in Piura, Peru, until 1986.

1988
Moved to Trujillo, Peru, to direct a joint formation project for the region's Augustinian aspirants. Over the course of a decade in Trujillo, he served as the community's prior (1988-1992), formation director (1988-1998) and as an instructor (1992-1998).



1999
Elected prior provincial for the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Chicago.

2013
Served for a year as a "teacher of the professed" and provincial vicar.

2018
Served as second vice president of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference until 2023.



2023
Appointed prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, named president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America and granted the title archbishop Jan. 30; installed in those roles April 12. On Sept. 30, elevated to the College of Cardinals.

2025
Elected pope May 8, taking the name Leo XIV.

1977
Graduated from Villanova University near Philadelphia and entered the novitiate for the Order of St. Augustine in St. Louis.



1981
Professed solemn vows as a member of the Order of St. Augustine.

1984
Earned a licentiate in canon law from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome.



1987
Elected the vocations director and missions director for his order's Midwest province, Our Mother of Good Counsel.



1989
Began serving the Archdiocese of Trujillo for nine years as its judicial vicar; was also a professor of canon, patristic and moral law in the San Carlos e San Marcelo Major Seminary.

2001
Promoted to his order's prior general, considered its supreme authority that oversees its administration and governance. He was reelected to that role in 2007, holding it for a total of 12 years until 2013.

2014
Appointed apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo, Peru, and named a bishop with the titular diocese of Sufar. Was later appointed bishop of Chiclayo in September 2015; in 2020, he concurrently served as apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Callao, Peru, until May 2021.

2019
Appointed a member of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy. The following year he was appointed to the Congregation for Bishops.



Evangelizing Catechesis/Tim Rathz

Retreat ministry offers us an opportunity to rest in God’s mercy and love

In May of 1917, the Blessed Mother first appeared to three young children in Fatima, Portugal, with a message of faith, repentance and a renewed devotion to God, a message that holds true to this day.



As mere humans, a renewed spirit is essential in our prayer life. Nearly 110 years after Mary appeared at Fatima, Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis is celebrating its 75th year of devotion to Mary and encounters with our Lord.

Retreat ministry plays a vital role in the Catholic experience, offering an opportunity to reflect and truly focus

on what is important in our lives. Whether it’s learning about the message of Jesus, how to share it, outward worship or internal prayer, dedicating some of our time exclusively to the Lord is essential for our spiritual

health—and, of course, our salvation.

As an employee of Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, I’ve been able to witness this impact firsthand for the last several years. In this ever-changing, fast-paced world we live in, the need for intentional withdrawal has never been greater. This inner renewal can be not only personally transformative, but it can also strengthen Christ’s community when individuals return to their families and parishes.

“Retreat” isn’t necessarily a physical space (although it certainly can be)—we can renew our spirit anywhere. God will always meet us where we are and welcome us, regardless of whether we are at a retreat house, a chapel or in our car. There is always an opportunity to talk with God, pray, ask for forgiveness and renew our hearts.

Dictionary.com defines “retreat” in this regard as “a retirement or period of retirement for religious exercises and meditation.”

These words don’t give justice to what a retreat can actually do for someone. In my years at the retreat house, I have witnessed healing beyond measure. I’ve seen broken people forgive themselves. I’ve seen lost people find God in their hearts again. I’ve seen people, who live in regret, finally accept God’s forgiveness and in turn forgive themselves. Retreats can be extremely powerful experiences.

I’ve learned that you get out of a retreat exactly what you put into it, no matter where you are. It’s all about your connection with God and your willingness to be open to his love and grace. As the late Pope Francis said, “God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.”

Let us take the time to rest in God’s mercy.

(Tim Rathz is assistant director for operations at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House in Indianapolis.) †

That All May Be One/Fr. Rick Ginther

Our Creator loves those who live with gentleness, solidarity and compassion

As I write this, the conclave to elect a new pope has commenced. This is the eighth conclave of my lifetime; the first was 1958. In succession, they included: the deaths of Popes Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II, and the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI. And now, Pope Francis’ death.



In this Jubilee Year of Hope, we pilgrims journey toward our destination of eternal life. That journey is to be an example to the world—especially to people of faith, whatever that faith may be.

During a memorial Mass for Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Basilica on April 29, Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, the archpriest of St. Peter’s Basilica, preached on Mt 25:31-36 in which

Christ described the final judgment when the Son of Man will separate the sheep from the goats.

Following is a lengthy excerpt:

Th[is] Gospel passage is well known. A grand scene with a universalistic character: All peoples, living together in the one field that is the world, are gathered before the Son of Man, seated on the throne of his glory to judge,” Cardinal Gambetti said.

The message is clear: In the lives of all, believers and nonbelievers alike, there is a moment of discrimination; at a certain point some begin to share in the same joy of God, others begin to suffer the tremendous suffering of true loneliness, because, ousted from the kingdom, they remain desperately alone in their souls.

The Italian translation [CEI] speaks of sheep and goats to distinguish the two groups. The Greek, however, alongside the feminine próbata—flock, sheep—uses èrífia, which indicates primarily goats, the males of the species.

Sheep, who do not rebel, are faithful, meek, take care of the lambs and the weakest of the flock, enter the realm prepared for them since the creation of the world; goats, who want independence, defy the shepherd and other animals with their horns, jump over the other goats as a sign of dominance, think of themselves and not the rest of

the flock in the face of danger, are destined for eternal fire.

It is natural to ask: On a personal and institutional level, which of the two styles do we embody?

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, we pilgrims journey toward our destination of eternal life. That journey is to be an example to the world—especially to people of faith, whatever that faith may be.

Clearly, then, whether or not we belong to the kingdom of God does not depend on explicit knowledge of Christ: Lord, when did we see you hungry ... thirsty ... a stranger ... naked ... sick or in prison?

In the Greek text, the verb ‘to see’ is expressed by Matthew as òraō, which means to see deeply, to perceive, to understand. Paraphrasing: Lord, when did we “understand,” “detect,” “distinguish” you?

Jesus’ answer suggests that it is not the profession of faith, theological knowledge or sacramental practice that guarantees participation in God’s joy, but qualitative and quantitative involvement in the human story of the least of our brothers and sisters.

And the price of the human is the kingship of Jesus of Nazareth, who in his earthly life shared in all the weakness of our nature, even to the point of being rejected, persecuted, and crucified.

Ultimately, the parable of the Last Judgment manifests the secret on which the world stands: The Word became flesh, that is, “God wanted to make himself in solidarity with humanity to such an extent that whoever touches man touches God, whoever honors man honors God, whoever despises man despises God” [quote by Elias Citterio].

Indeed, the parable reveals the supreme dignity of human acts, defined in relation to compassion, solidarity, tenderness, and closeness in humanity.

What a challenge for us who believe in the salvific action of Christ! We have been so named by him to manifest this love, compassion, tenderness and closeness!

Such witness can evangelize the world!

(Father Rick Ginther is director of the archdiocesan Office of Ecumenism and Interreligious Affairs. He is also the pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Indianapolis.) †

Called to Holiness/Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

Blessed Carlo Acutis’ life shows how he embraced his universal call to holiness

Eighty thousand adolescents thought they were traveling to Rome for the much-anticipated canonization of Carlo Acutis. Instead, many were in the Eternal City for the Holy Father’s funeral.



A pope’s death isn’t like a presidential election or even the death of a king. Popes don’t have heirs. So, when the chair of St. Peter is empty, everything comes to a standstill.

No bishops can be named—or retired. No treaties can be signed. And no new saints can be canonized. There is, of course, a way to work around that; but not on a week’s notice. And

so, Carlo Acutis, the “first millennial saint,” will remain “blessed” for a while longer.

I imagine the kids are disappointed. I would be. But the hiccup in scheduling gives us all a little extra time to learn more about Carlo—and why the Catholic Church has deemed him worthy of canonization. I’d recommend the new documentary film, *Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality*.

The Acutis popularity bandwagon is broad and deep. That’s why it shouldn’t surprise us that a degree of skepticism about his cause has been brewing, not only among some of the faithful but in the secular world. As a recent article by John Phipps in *The Economist* observes, “Even people with a special devotion to him find it hard to say exactly what Carlo did. Nothing in his sparse life story explains that this ordinary-seeming teenage boy is about to become the first great saint of the 21st century.”

I won’t argue with anyone who considers Carlo’s resumé unimpressive. He died of leukemia, after all, at 15. But I will challenge the notion that authentic sanctity produces a biography that reads like a fantasy or adventure novel. Few saints are suitable subjects for a Marvel movie. They are heroes, but not in that way.

Living in relationship with God makes us more fully who we were created to be. And God creates a whole lot of ordinary people with thin résumés. Holiness is a universal call. “Ordinary” is precisely what holiness is supposed to be.

The canonization process is long and arduous. It took 500 years for Joan of Arc. Building a cause requires time, money and expertise. Carlo’s skeptics note that his parents, and his mother in particular, did everything they could to push their son’s process along.

Perhaps that is the case. Even so, that wouldn’t be any different than the religious orders who appoint their members to the tasks of documenting the cause, promoting it, and funding whatever costs are involved to achieve the canonization of their founders or members.

The timing is another source of controversy. God makes saints, and the Church merely recognizes them. When someone is raised to the altar, it often seems that God is trying to reach the people of a particular time.

A Church encrusted with wealth and corrupted by worldly power needed the poverty of men like Francis and Dominic. A world of burgeoning complexity where people struggled with the changes brought about by industrial and technological advancements needed the

childlike simplicity of St. Thérèse’s “little way.” A society in which marriage and family life are derided and attacked needs the devotion of Louis and Zélie Martin and the courage of the Ulma family.

So, what of Carlo Acutis? In our utilitarian culture, achievements are everything. Perhaps we need a saint who wasn’t extraordinary at all, one who searched for purpose the way so many of us do but found it in Christ Jesus.

We have never been lonelier. Perhaps we need someone who enthusiastically engaged digital technology, but had the wisdom to limit himself to an hour of video games a week; someone who prioritized sharing his life with others and spending time with Jesus in eucharistic adoration.

Living in a world mediated by filters and images, screens and social media has made us more virtual and less real. Maybe we need a normal teenage boy to remind us that we are not mere spectators, but children of God redeemed and reborn in Christ.

Jesus does not call digital disciples or ask us to live lives of virtual virtue.

Instead, he perpetuates his real and personal presence to us in the Eucharist. What Carlo Acutis shows us is that the Gospel is not disconnected from reality, and a completely ordinary life in our world can be holy.

(Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.) †

Fifth Sunday of Easter/Msgr. Owen F. Campion

The Sunday Readings

Sunday, May 18, 2025

- Acts of the Apostles 14:21-27
- Revelation 21:1-5a
- John 13:31-33a, 34-35

The Acts of the Apostles supplies the first reading for the Mass this weekend. It reports some of the missionary activities of St. Paul and St. Barnabas. Although eventually they parted, Paul and Barnabas (a disciple of Paul) visited several prominent cities in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) in the Roman Empire of the first century.

While ancient traditions see all the Apostles as missionaries, since most of them went far and wide to proclaim the Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles concentrates on Paul’s evangelization efforts.

The reading is more than a travelogue. It is a lesson about the faith of Paul and Barnabas and about their uncompromising determination to make Jesus known. It also reveals the conditions in which these two great figures in early Christianity lived.

As they spoke to Christians in the cities that they visited, they warned these fledgling followers that hostility and difficulties faced them. Their warnings sprang from their own personal experiences. Paul and Barnabas met opposition and endured difficulties. And it is not surprising that these two great champions of the Gospel faced hardships.

The culture of the Roman Empire was hostile to the Gospel. The political order and the law were becoming hostile as well.

Nevertheless, Paul and Barnabas were undaunted. They continued to move from city to city, reassuring believers in Christ there and promoting Gospel values. It was a risk, but despite the dangers and the rejection they at times faced, their faith inspired them and impelled them.

For the second reading, the Church this weekend offers a passage from the Book of Revelation. This book, the last book of the New Testament, is highly poetic and symbolic. Its symbolism is often so complex or so unique to life in the first century that understanding the book is not easy without reading

scholarly commentaries along with the text itself.

For example, in this reading, the vision is of heaven, but symbolizing heaven is the holy city of Jerusalem, the ancient geographical heart of the Jewish people. Jerusalem, however, is presented as having been transformed and glorified because Jesus had been crucified there and had risen again. The reading is a statement of faith.

St. John’s Gospel is the source of the last reading. This is not a Resurrection narrative. But it is strongly reminiscent of the resurrection and of the Lord’s death on Calvary, because Jesus obliquely refers to the crucifixion.

He also refers to rising from the dead. Eternal life is possible with the help of God’s grace for humans who follow the Lord in obedience to God, in sacrifice and in faith. With Jesus, the faithful will die but also rise to eternal life.

Reflection

A month ago, the Church called us, with joy and confirmed faith, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus after the terrible event of the crucifixion.

Since then, unrelentingly, the Church has called upon us personally to respond to Jesus, to respond to his grace and bond ourselves with the risen Lord Jesus, the Savior.

The Apostles and other early members of the Church encountered obstacles and problems special to their time. But believers today confront many of the same difficulties. Contemporary culture often runs counter to the Gospel.

The call to be strong in faith and witness is sent to us just as much as it was to the first followers of Christ. We need the grace and strength of Jesus as much as the first Christians needed Christ.

While still in this life, we authentically become disciples by loving God, each other and all people as Jesus loved. It is hard.

The first Christians found encouragement and guidance in Paul and Barnabas. We are not alone in our effort to be with God, to love as Jesus loved. The Apostles are with us still in the Church in their successors, the bishops. †

Daily Readings

Monday, May 19
Acts 14:5-18
Psalms 115:1-4, 15-16
John 14:21-26

Tuesday, May 20
St. Bernardine of Siena, priest
Acts 14:19-28
Psalm 145:10-13ab, 21
John 14:27-31a

Wednesday, May 21
St. Christopher Magallanes, priest, and companions, martyrs
Acts 15:1-6
Psalm 122:1-5
John 15:1-8

Thursday, May 22
St. Rita of Cascia, religious
Acts 15:7-21

Psalm 96:1-3, 10
John 15:9-11

Friday, May 23
Acts 15:22-31
Psalm 57:8-12
John 15:12-17

Saturday, May 24
Acts 16:1-10
Psalm 100:1b-3, 5
John 15:18-21

Sunday, May 25
Sixth Sunday of Easter
Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23
John 14:23-29

Question Corner/Jenna Marie Cooper

Indulgences can still be earned during a papal interregnum

When a pope has died, how do Catholics fulfill the requirement of praying for the intentions of the pope for an indulgence? (North Dakota)



The general understanding among canon lawyers is that indulgences can still be earned during an “interregnum period”—meaning, during the period between the death or resignation of a pope and the election of his successor—because there does not need to be a reigning pope in order for the faithful to pray for the pope’s intentions.

For some background, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes indulgences as being “obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishments due for their sins” (#1478).

The catechism goes on to tell us that “through indulgences, the faithful can

or after completing the indulgenced act; being free from a personal sense of attachment from sin; and praying for the intentions of the Holy Father.

While it might seem odd or contradictory to pray for the intentions of the pope when there is no pope, there are a few practical work-arounds.

First, it is generally understood that to satisfy the requirements of an indulgence, it’s enough to pray for literally just “the intentions of the Holy Father,” even if we’re not aware of what these intentions are explicitly.

But also, be aware that the Holy See in Rome regularly publishes the Holy Father’s specific stated intentions up to a year in advance. For example, although Pope Francis died in April, we know that his requested prayer intention for the month of May 2025 is “that through work, each person might find fulfillment, families might be sustained in dignity, and that society might be humanized.” Of course, we can still pray for this praiseworthy intention even if Pope Francis is no longer with us on this Earth.

This reasoning is echoed in a private reply from the Apostolic Penitentiary (the Vatican office responsible for indulgences) to a “*dubium*” (a question) submitted in April 2005, after the death of Pope St. John Paul II, about the possibility of praying for a deceased pope’s intentions.

This written response was not widely published, but has still been shared among canon lawyers in professional circles for reference. In it, the representative of the Apostolic penitentiary notes that: “Even though the Apostolic See is vacant, the conditions of praying for the intention of the Supreme Pontiff are fulfilled [by reciting once the ‘Our Father’ and the ‘Hail Mary’ once; nevertheless, the opportunity is also given to the individual faithful to recite another prayer which pleases them according to the piety and devotion of each one], ... since the ends of the pope’s intention, the ends for which one must pray—undoubtedly the spiritual good of the whole Church—persist.”

In other words, we know that the Holy Father, no matter who he is or what his personal spirituality is like, will always have the good of the Church as the ultimate intention in all his prayers and prayer requests. And the good of the Church is a “goal” which will always exist, regardless of whether the chair of St. Peter itself is occupied or temporarily vacant.

(Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News. Send your questions to CatholicQA@osv.com.) †

My Journey to God

Let Go My Why

By Sandy Bierly

A patch of blue
In a dark gray sky,
Brings hope to my downcast soul
As I let go my “Why?”
And accept what comes to me.

God is a God of love,
I have only to look up to see.
He tells me to let go my “Why?”
He knows what is best for me.
I just have to trust and believe.



(Sandy Bierly is a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany. Photo: The sky over Badlands National Park in South Dakota is a duality of dark and light on June 20, 2022.)
(Photo by Natalie Hoefler)



We have
a pope!

Fifth-graders at St. Malachy School in Brownsburg react to the announcement in St. Peter's Square on May 8 of Cardinal Robert F. Prevost as the newly elected Pope Leo XIV. A native of Chicago, the new pontiff, 69, was ordained an Augustinian priest in 1982 and spent many years of his ministry in Peru. He was appointed a bishop for the Diocese of Chiclayo, Peru, by Pope Francis in 2015 and elevated to the College of Cardinals in 2023. (Photo by Michael Harker)

Leaders of religious orders show joy, prayerful support for Pope Leo XIV

By Sean Gallagher

On May 8, the 12 Discalced Carmelite sisters of St. Joseph Monastery in Terre Haute were living their ordinary cloistered life, a day suffused with prayer in the midst of daily chores like gardening, cooking, sewing and other work on the grounds of their community.

But that day turned into something extraordinary when the community's superior, Carmelite Mother Mary Joseph Nguyen, learned that white smoke was coming forth from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican, a sign that the 133 cardinal electors had chosen a new pope.



Mother Mary Joseph Nguyen, O.C.D.

Mother Mary Joseph quickly sent out a message to the sisters through the monastery's phone system. "When the sisters heard the call, they abandoned whatever we were doing, including the sisters who just came in from the garden, quickly gathered in front the TV in the recreation room, turned on Vatican media live stream and waited excitedly for the curtain to open to see who the new pope would be," she explained. "When the curtain opened and we heard the official announcement that the new pope was Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, an American, Chicago born, an Augustinian, we were very happy and delighted."

Meals in the Carmelite monastery are often eaten in silence, but not on May 8.

"We spent the rest of that day in a celebratory spirit with talking meals, thanking God for the gift of a new successor to Peter to lead his Church," Mother Mary Joseph said.

Leaders of other religious communities shared with *The Criterion* their reaction to the election of Pope Leo XIV, their prayerful support for him and their hopes for his ministry in leading the Church.

'A global vision of the Church'

Providence Sister Dawn Tomaszewski, general superior of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in St. Mary-of-the-Woods west of Terre Haute, had the bells in the sisters' church rung after they learned about Pope Leo's election.



Sr. Dawn Tomaszewski, S.P.

"He has so many gifts to offer the Church and the world," she said. "He has a missionary's heart—a deep passion and desire to share one's faith and beliefs with others, to serve others no matter who they are or their circumstances.

"I feel like he embodies the message Pope Francis proclaimed throughout his time as pope: 'Everyone is loved by God; everyone belongs.' "

Sister Dawn was also excited because, like the new pope, she is both a native of Chicago and a graduate of Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago.

"I feel like I know his roots, the kind of solid Midwestern values and work ethic that shaped him," she said. "I have a sense of his theology. I don't think you can leave CTU without a global vision of the Church or an understanding of the generous nature of our God."

She added as a humorous aside, "I've already forgiven him for being a White Sox fan and not a Cubs fan."

Franciscan Sister Maureen Irvin, congregational minister of the Franciscan sisters in Oldenburg, appreciated Pope Leo's broad experience as a missionary priest and bishop in Peru.

"I think we need to realize that ours is a universal Church that is growing in the global south," she said. "Pope Francis was wise to

appoint so many bishops from all parts of the world. I think Pope Leo will continue that practice."

An 'Augustinian moment'

Conventual Franciscan Father Martin Day, provincial of his order's Province of Our Lady of Consolation, based in Mount St. Francis in the New Albany Deanery, reflected on having a second consecutive pope come from a religious order.



Fr. Martin Day, O.F.M. Conv.

Pope Francis had been a Jesuit priest before becoming a bishop. Pope Leo had been an Augustinian missionary priest in Peru before being elected to serve as the order's worldwide superior. In 2014, Pope Francis appointed him to serve as a bishop in Peru.

Father Martin called the papacy of Pope Francis "the Franciscan moment" for the Church when so much of the spirituality of the family of religious communities founded by St. Francis of Assisi came to the fore in the life of the Church.

"As an Augustinian friar, Pope Leo will surely have occasion to access the works and witness of St. Augustine, and maybe this will be an 'Augustinian moment,' " Father Marin said. "I wish our brothers in the Augustinian Order all the best, if that is the case."

Father Martin said that the new pope will have the support of Conventual Franciscans around the world.

"One of the particularities of the Conventual branch of the Franciscan Order has always been to be especially available to the intentions and directives of the pope, so I expect that to continue," he said. "The impression I have is that Pope Leo fully intends to continue the work of Pope Francis, which will make that commitment easier."

Benedictine Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, the leader of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, described the election of a second consecutive pope who had previously been a member of a religious order as "a nice trend."

"We feel that a good part of his formation in the Church came through his formation as an Augustinian," he said. "And, while it's different from Benedictines, there's a certain kinship there. A lot of their values are the same."

Archabbot Kurt also spoke about how the election of the new pope was observed in the daily praying of the Liturgy of the Hours by the monks of his community.

"I made a 'ritual announcement' of the election results at Vespers, and we concluded by singing the *Te Deum*," said Archabbot Kurt, referring to the ancient hymn of praise sung of special occasions in the Church. "After the 'Angelus,' our novices rang all six bells for five minutes—as we do the evening before and the morning of ordinations to the priesthood and solemn vows."

'Journeying together toward Christ'

Benedictine Sister Julie Sewell, prioress of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, commented on the first message that Pope Leo gave when he came out on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica after being elected bishop of Rome, noting that he "mentioned the need for dialogue, carrying on the call to continue journeying together toward Christ as his motto is 'In one Christ, we are one.' "

"He would have us open our hearts and minds to all our brothers and sisters in dialogue with one another," Sister Julie said.

Prayerful dialogue is an important part of the synodality in the Church that Pope Francis promoted in the later part of his pontificate.

Sister Dawn saw Pope Leo embrace this priority when, in his remarks from the balcony, he spoke of "a Church that moves forward, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close above all to those who are suffering."

"I'm not sure I could outline a better agenda for all of us as the people of God," she said.

As Pope Leo moves forward in promoting synodality in the Church and other priorities that he will discern and speak about to the Church and the world, he will have the continual prayerful support of religious communities across the archdiocese, including the Carmelite sisters in Terre Haute.

"Our vocation is to pray for the Church and the world," Mother Mary Joseph said. "We thank God for the gift of Pope Leo to the Church and thank Pope Leo for the courage to embrace the huge responsibility of being the successor of Peter.

"We hold the pope and his intentions in our daily Mass, communal and personal prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give him wisdom and strength and all the graces he needs to care for the flock entrusted to him." †



Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, O.S.B.



Sr. Julie Sewell, O.S.B.

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victimassistance@archindy.org

Archbishop: Allow pope time ‘to bring forth his vision for the Church’

By Natalie Hoefer

The entrance to SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis was draped with gold and white bunting on May 13 in celebration of the election of Pope Leo XIV.

It made for a festive decoration for those who walked through the cathedral doors that day to worship at a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Election of Pope Leo XIV, as did the portrait of Pope Leo on a white cloth-covered easel at the foot of the sanctuary. A dozen priests concelebrated the Mass with Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

In his homily, the archbishop noted the common inclination to fast-forward to the end of a film or skip to the back of a book to see how the story ends.

“We just want to know the outcome,” he said. “So, it seems, with the election of a new pope.

“Various news outlets and blogs, both secular and Catholic, have been trying to pin down the next pope since the death of Pope Francis was announced Everybody was trying to pinpoint, kind of peg this person.”

Since the election of Pope Leo on May 8, he continued, “everything seems to be about trying to label, pigeonhole or pre-determine his papacy,” said Archbishop Thompson. “We will learn more about Pope Leo XIV in the coming days, weeks, months and, God willing, years ahead.

“In the meantime, we must give him a fair chance to be himself, to become familiar with his new ministry, to bring forth his vision for the Church, carrying

forth the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.”

Still, looking at Pope Leo’s past can give indications of what his papacy might look like.

“Pope Leo, exemplifying the role of the pope as bridge builder, has already spoken of the need for encounter, dialogue, welcoming, and continued focus on being intentionally a synodal Church,” the archbishop said.

“... Described as being humble and reserved, Pope Leo XIV is the first to remind us of how necessary it is to listen and heed the voice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, above all else.”

And, as he went on to say, “He has already revealed much in his choice of a name, pointing to the need for Catholic social teaching.”

Archbishop Thompson noted that the date of the Mass coincided with the feast of Our Lady of Fatima.

“On this memorial of Our Lady of Fatima, recalling the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917, we do well to hold our new Holy Father in prayer, to entrust him to the protection of the Blessed Mother,” he said.

“Trusting our Holy Father to Our Lady, we invoke her grace, her intercession. Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us.”

John Herr was among those who came to the cathedral to worship at the Mass of thanksgiving for the new pope.

“I wanted to give God thanks for selecting such a wonderful new Holy Father for us, and to pray that his papacy



A portrait of Pope Leo XIV stands at the foot of the sanctuary in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 13 as Archbishop Charles C. Thompson elevates the Eucharist during a Mass of thanksgiving for the election of the new pope. (Photos by Natalie Hoefer)

is fruitful for doing the work of Jesus Christ,” said the Butler University faculty member, who is a member of St. Malachy Parish in Brownsburg.

He admitted he was surprised that the new pope was from the United States.

“But it’s not so surprising after you discard [his nationality], because he’s been a very effective leader in a bunch of different roles for quite some time.”

Sara Cabrera also worshiped at the Mass at the cathedral, enjoying the opportunity to commemorate both the feast of Our Lady of Fatima and the election of Pope Leo.

“So far what I’ve heard about him, I’ve agreed with” said the 18-year-old member of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville.

“And I also learned that he started a Students for Life [of America] group when he was in college, which was pretty neat to know,” said Cabrera, who is involved in pro-life ministry. According to Students for Life of America, Pope Leo started a group at Villanova University while he was a student there in the 1970s.

“I really like the values that he’s been bringing so far,” she said. “I’m really excited for the upcoming papacy.” †



The Cabrera family, members of St. Thomas More Parish in Mooresville, leave SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 13 after a Mass of thanksgiving there for the election of Pope Leo XIV.



John Herr, left, and Andrew Torrella kneel in prayer after Communion in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on May 13 during a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Election of Pope Leo XIV.

Employment

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