



The Catholic Citizen

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Pope Leo XIV, the First American Pope

Pope Leo XIV, who was born Robert Prevost, is the first U.S. citizen to lead the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic Church has a new pope: Leo XIV.

Prior to his historic election, Leo was known as Cardinal Robert Prevost. The 69-year-old was born in Chicago, making him the first American to be elected to the papacy. Prevost's selection on the fourth ballot ended the search for a successor to Pope Francis following the latter's death on April 21.

Pope Leo greeted followers for the first time from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City about an hour after white smoke billowed from the Sistine Chapel, signaling the cardinals had agreed on a new leader. "Peace be with you all," he began his short remarks in Italian.

"We can be a missionary church, a church that builds bridges, that is always open to receive everyone—just like in this square, to welcome everyone, in charity, dialogue and love," he told the large crowd, per *The Washington Post*.

Although he has decades of experience within the church, Prevost's selection came as a relative surprise given his origins. The only other pope to come from the Americas was Francis, who hailed from Argentina. As the world becomes familiar with the new holy leader, here's what you need to know about Pope Leo XIV, America's First Pope

A Guide to Pope Leo XIV's Family

He has two brothers

Prevost was born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago and raised in the nearby suburb of Dolton.

His parents were Louis Marius Prevost, an educator, and Mildred Martínez, a librarian. Robert also has two brothers, Louis Martin Prevost and John Joseph Prevost.

According to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the Prevosts were members of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish near the Chicago border. The family participated as musicians, altar boys, and lectors. "To think about we knew him when he was a kid," a childhood friend, Noelle Neis, told the newspaper. "He's just like one of us. Before [the papacy] was so out of reach for anybody."

He studied mathematics in college.

Prevost completed his undergraduate education at Villanova University, where he earned a bachelor of science in mathematics in 1977. Prevost then earned a master of divinity degree from Chicago's Catholic Theological Union in 1982 and was ordained a priest that same year. He later received a licentiate and doctorate degrees in canon law from the Pontifical College of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

Prevost holds dual citizenship in the United States and Peru

Much of Prevost's early ministry took place in Peru. He joined the country's

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On Pope Leo's Desk: The Vatican-China Deal

While options might appear limited, Leo does have some moves he can make to redress the balance with Beijing

Ed. Condon, May 16, 2025

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The bonds between Leo and Francis run much deeper than geography.

Ever since the Vatican-China deal on the appointment of mainland bishops was first agreed in 2018, the deal itself and the resulting episcopal nominations have been shrouded in controversy and confusion.

The exact text of the agreement itself is not public, and it is likely that Pope Leo XIV will, as pope, be getting his first real look at the text and what it is, exactly, the Vatican signed up for, and signed away, with the Chinese Communist Party nearly seven years ago.

What the new pope reads, and how acceptably it accords with what has been happening on the ground in China, will be a first-order consideration for Leo as he shapes his pontificate.

And while the pope's options might appear limited in redressing the balance with Beijing, Leo does have some first moves he can make to tilt the board in the Vatican's direction.

Leo *continued from page 1*

Augustinian mission in 1985 and, while in the country, oversaw the Augustinian seminary in Trujillo and taught canon law before returning to Chicago in 1999.

Prevost went back to Peru in 2014 after Pope Francis appointed him apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chiclayo. A year later, he acquired Peruvian citizenship.

A reflection of his global outreach, Prevost is fluent in five languages—English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and French—according to *The Washington Post*.

He was close with Pope Francis

Of the now 267 popes in the history of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV is only the second from the Americas along with his immediate predecessor. It'll be a long time before any country or region catches Italy, which has produced 217 popes from its mainland or related territories.

However, the bonds between Leo and Francis run much deeper than geography. In January 2023, Francis called Prevost to the Vatican to serve as leader of the Dicastery for Bishops, the office that selects bishops around the world. According to PBS, Prevost presided over

one of Pope Francis' most notable reforms that added three women to the voting base that decides which bishop nominations are forwarded to the pope.

Later that year, on September 30, Francis appointed Prevost a cardinal. Yet another new responsibility was added to his plate in 2023 when he became president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

Prevost was previously linked to a pair of sexual abuse cases involving priests in Chicago and Peru. In each instance, he was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Ultimately, the investigations didn't affect his chances of election.

He advocates on progressive social issues

According to CBS News, Prevost is considered an overall centrist in his ideologies. However, he is more progressive when it comes to social issues and champions the poor and migrants. Leo has also forcefully supported efforts to manage the impacts of climate change.

Tyler Piccottti joined the Biography.com staff as an associate news editor and is now the news and culture editor. He previously worked as a reporter and copy editor for a daily newspaper recognized by the Associated Press Sports Editors.

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Pope Leo XIV Removes Controversial Archbishop Paglia as Head of John Paul II Institute

new
appointment

The nomination is the first major appointment made by Pope Leo XIV in the various offices of the Roman Curia, and is being welcomed by pro-life advocates.

by Michael Haynes, Senior Vatican Correspondent

VATICAN CITY (LifeSiteNews)—In one of the first major appointments of his pontificate, Pope Leo XIV has replaced the controversial president of the John Paul II Institute, which was itself gutted by Pope Francis in 2019.

As announced by the Holy See Press Office today, Leo XIV has named Cardinal Baldassare Reina as the grand chancellor of the Pontifical Theological Institute “John Paul II” for the Sciences of Marriage and the Family.

As of October last year, Reina—created cardinal in December 2024—is the vicar general of the Diocese of Rome, having been an auxiliary of the diocese for two years prior to that.

The 54-year-old cardinal’s appointment comes as the first major nomination made by the new pope in the various offices of the Roman Curia, and is being welcomed by pro-life advocates. Though his public role has largely revolved around curial issues in the Diocese of Rome in recent years, his record on pro-life matters is believed to be more orthodox than that of the man he is replacing.

The institute, more commonly known as the “John Paul II Institute” has been led by Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia as grand chancellor since 2016.

In was in August of that year that Pope Francis named Paglia to lead the John Paul II Institute and also to serve as president of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Both of these pontifical institutions were subject to drastic overhauls at the hands of Pope Francis and Paglia.

Paglia—who turned 80 a few weeks ago—enjoyed notable prominence during

Francis’ pontificate, and was a key figure in implementing the changes to both pontifical institutes as ordered by Francis.

The gutting of the John Paul II Institute began in earnest in 2019, with the dismissing of its president Monsignor Livio Melina and the immediate suspension of all professors.

Staff were subsequently selected who advocated for moral positions contrary to those previously defended by the institute—such as defending homosexuality and contraception.

Melina commented shortly afterwards that “if the decisions taken by Archbishop Paglia are not revoked, then what they are saying is: ‘The interpretation of the magisterium of Pope Francis in continuity with the previous magisterium is intolerable in the church.’”

Veteran Catholic journalist Phil Lawler echoed such thoughts, writing that “the purge at the John Paul II Institute has eliminated the faculty members most closely associated with the thought of the pope —and canonized saint—after whom the institute is named.”

Subsequent presidents after Melina began advocating for the acceptance of blessings for homosexual couples and their reception of the sacraments.

Francis’ gutting of the John Paul II Institute faced considerable pushback from theologians and ethicists around the world, concerned about the direction the Vatican office was taking. Indeed the gutting of the institute is still named today as one of the key controversies of the Francis papacy.

Similar scenes took place at the Pontifical Academy for Life (PAV). The academy has

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His record on pro-life matters is believed to be more orthodox than that of the man he is replacing.

Prayer for Pope Leo XIV, Vicar of Christ on Earth and Shepherd of the Universal Church

O Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the Lord of Heaven and of Earth, Our Lady of Guadalupe, guide and protect the Roman Pontiff, Pope Leo XIV. Through your intercession, may he receive in abundance the grace of the Successor of Saint Peter: the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of our bishops and of all our brothers and sisters in the Mystical Body of your Divine Son. Unite Pope Leo's heart to your Immaculate Heart, leading him to rest his heart ever more securely in the glorious-pierced Heart of Jesus, so that he may confirm us in the Catholic faith, in the worship of God in spirit and truth, and in a good and holy Christian life.

In the tumult of the present time, keep Pope Leo securely within the hollow of your mantle, in the crossing of your arms, protecting him from Satan, the Father of Lies, and from every evil spirit. Implore Our Lord to grant him, in particular, the wisdom and courage to be a true Shepherd of the Church throughout the world. With you, I place all my trust in Christ, the Good Shepherd, Who alone is our help and salvation. Amen.

Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mother, have mercy upon us! Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of the Apostles, pray for us! Saints Peter and Paul, pray for us! Pope Saint Leo the Great, pray for us!

—Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke

**... members
were no longer
required to sign
a declaration
that they
uphold the
church's pro-life
teachings, ...**

Institute *continued from page 3*

been described as being permeated by “heretical gnosticism” after it was overhauled by Francis beginning in 2016. The pope released new statutes for the PAV in November 2016, in which members were no longer required to sign a declaration that they uphold the church's pro-life teachings, while also expanding the PAV's mandate to include a focus on the environment.

Over the years Paglia himself has become increasingly controversial due to his comments on a number of issues relating to life and family.

At the time of his appointment to lead both institutions in 2016, Paglia was already known as an advocate for the divorced and “re-married” to receive Holy Communion.

Since then he has garnered even more controversy due to remarks in which he defended assisted suicide and advocated for contraception.

The archbishop attacked Catholics who held moral objections to abortion-tainted

COVID-19 injections, and has further been embroiled in allegations of significant financial corruption—diverting charitable funds away from their intended purpose to renovate his Vatican apartment.

Most infamously, Paglia commissioned a homoerotic mural to be painted in his cathedral in which he also featured amongst the scene of naked figures.

The artist was a homosexual Argentinian, known for his speciality in depicting male bodies, and the image prompted widespread scandal in many corners of the globe.

Whilst Paglia has been removed from his position, the president of the John Paul II Institute—who is subject to the grand chancellor—remains in place. Since 2021, that office has been held by Monsignor Philippe Bordeyne, whose views on traditional Catholic morality and homosexual advocacy have also given many cause for concern.

Paglia remains as president of the PAV.

EXCLUSIVE: Cardinal Müller Says Pope Leo XIV's Election Was the Work of the Holy Spirit

'You have to wonder why this decision was able to emerge so quickly from such a heterogeneous college,' Cardinal Müller said about Pope Leo XIV's election, crediting it to the Holy Spirit.

(LifeSiteNews)—Cardinal Gerhard Müller expressed his belief that Pope Leo XIV's election was the work of the Holy Spirit.

In an interview conducted in German with LifeSiteNews journalist Andreas Wailzer, Cardinal Müller recalled his participation in the conclave that elected Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as Pope Leo XIV.

"Despite the predicted partisan fights, it all happened in 24 hours," he said. "That shows that there was a great deal of unanimity, that it was not possible to push a candidate, but that someone who was relatively unknown to the public was elected so quickly."

"You can only really understand this if you are a Christian believer and believe in the Holy Spirit, *i.e.*, in the work of grace," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Müller reiterated his belief that the Holy Spirit was at work during the conclave by stressing the cardinals' heterogeneity and unfamiliarity and the fact that they nevertheless agreed on a candidate so quickly.

"After all, the [College of Cardinals] was set up so heterogeneously by the will of Pope Francis that all nations and languages—some of them couldn't speak Italian or even English—were represented, so you have to wonder why this decision was able to emerge so quickly from such a heterogeneous college."

"That's because we think like Catholics; we think about the good of the church."

The former prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stressed that the church must not be viewed in "purely

political categories" and as an institution that is about power.

"On the contrary, the church as a whole, the Gospel, should also be critical of our politicians and lead them beyond the mere exercise of power, opening up a sense of sharpening the conscience that politics is there to promote the common good of all citizens and thus, in the overall context of the world, for the human family," he stated.

Pope Leo XIV and JD Vance

Cardinal Müller told LifeSiteNews that, as the first American pope, Leo may have "better approach, perhaps also to Trump or to the American administration or to both parties," as well "to American society," which could have "a positive effect."

He said that Leo and U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, who is a practicing Catholic, have a "common Catholic basis in order to recognize the responsibility" of the United States with its "enormous military and political power."

Cardinal Müller implied that Leo and Vance would get along well. However, the pope, when he was a bishop, had criticized Trump and Vance for their more restrictive immigration policy, showing a possible point of contention in the future.

Will Pope Leo bring unity to the church?

The German prelate said that Pope Leo "will certainly contribute to greater unity and reduce unnecessary conflicts."

Cardinal Müller specifically mentioned the restriction of the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) as an instance of "unnecessary conflict" introduced by Pope Francis.

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"You can only really understand this if you are a Christian believer and believe in the Holy Spirit, *i.e.*, in the work of grace," the cardinal said.

U.S. Sunday Mass Attendance back to Pre-pandemic Levels

by Gina Christian

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Sunday mass attendance in person at Catholic churches in the United States is back to pre-pandemic levels—although just under one quarter of the nation’s Catholics are in the pews on a regular weekly basis.

The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University noted in a Feb. 5 post on its Nineteen Sixty-four research blog that Sunday mass attendance in person has risen to 24 percent since the declared end of the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2023. That rate has held through the first week of 2025.

From the start of the pandemic lockdowns in March 2020 to May 2023, attendance had averaged 15 percent. Prior to the pandemic, the average attendance was 24.4 percent.

Mark Gray, CARA’s director of polls and editor of the blog, told *OSV News* that attendance figures recently released by the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, had underscored a trend he and his colleagues had identified.

“It’s something I noticed, and then when the Diocese of Arlington posted their October headcount numbers ... I thought, all right, I’ll go ahead and put this (data) out there,” said Gray, referencing an annual tally of mass attendance undertaken by many U.S. dioceses.

Gray—who is also a research associate professor at Georgetown University—and

his colleagues relied on data from their various national surveys, along with Google Trends queries that he said “allow you to see variations in how frequently people are searching for” certain terms that “would correlate with mass attendance.”

“It’s not a direct measurement, but it’s a proxy,” Gray explained.

He also noted that the dip in data does not account for those who relied on livestreamed and televised liturgies during the pandemic lockdowns.

“We’ve looked at those numbers, too,” he said. “We can alter the search terms and Google Trends to different queries. And we did that in the past, and we saw that about the same percentage of Catholics were participating in mass during lockdowns, if you included watching on television or watching on the internet. And then we’ve got surveys on engaging in-person mass attendance, and watching on television or the internet.”

Gray said the mass attendance data “almost looks like a straighter distribution once you include the television and internet numbers” during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. He also noted that pandemic lockdowns were “a local situation” in which some areas “opened up ... quickly” and “others stayed closed for much longer.”

But since “this last Christmas in 2024, things are back to normal,” he said.

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Müller *continued from page 5*

“The unity of the church exists in matters of faith, in the liturgical sacramental life, but not simply in external discipline, which is also important, but as we say at home, you have to be able to give a little now and then,” he stated, implying that the TLM should not be restricted.

“You also have to be pastorally wise and adapt to the situation and the mentality of the people. And I believe that he brings this foresight to the table, that the focus is on what is crucial, but that there are no tensions or divisions on secondary issues.”

The Council of Nicaea at 1,700 Years Old

The Bishops of Nicaea were towering pillars of faith. We, mere shadows upon their shoulders, boast of seeing beyond their ability.

by Fr. John A. Perricone

Perchance, you haven't noticed. But for the past 60 years or so a pitched battle has been waged in the church, something close to Jacobin revolution. Of course, its birth was simultaneous with a most prominent event. But even mentioning it would earn immediate censure, so, I will not. (So much for Synodal listening. I suspect Orwell was correct in *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.")

On the one side, there are heroic Catholics who treasure the riches of their church, from its metaphysical foundations, its infallible teachings, and its ancient liturgy and piety. On the other, we have a coterie of zealots bent on redefining the faith, leaving it barely a shadow of its former self. Faithful Catholics have suffered greatly for over a half-century beneath the heavy jackboot of this band of agitators. Their project was a grand redesign of the Nicene Creed, if not casting it whole and entire into the dustbin of history. Need proof? Watch Cardinal Tagle only recently spinning about a stage in dance garb chanting John Lennon's "Imagine."

Tweet This

This is the denouement of the Modernist project.

Nicaea is a decisive blow to this fey counterfeit of faith. Its articles stand like a mighty Alpine range, each peak more imposing and elegant than the next. How many parishes this year will celebrate this auspicious anniversary? Rejoice in its muscularity? Celebrate its summons to heroic struggle to defend it? Stand in rapt awe of the saints of millennia who embraced unspeakable deaths to defend it? Eagerly imitate St. Nicholas in coming to blows with Arius, the arch-enemy of the salvific Nicene Catholic faith?

If they will not, we must!

Raise your fiery torches and lift your voices till they grow hoarse. All in gratitude for the Nicene articles which are the sure steps of our ladder to paradise.

If you were present at Nicaea in May of 325, you likely would have shed tears.

Standing with throngs of other Catholics, you would have witnessed lines of regally clad bishops filing into the great Cathedral of Nicaea. Eusebius of Caesarea estimates that 318 bishops solemnly processed into the principal church and central hall of Emperor Constantine where the council would transpire.

That, however, would not have been quite the cause of your tears. It was the sight of bishops who had suffered sadistic brutalities for the Holy Faith at the hands of the Roman Imperium of Maximin and Licinius. Many of them limped, their limbs having been torn out by the torturers. Your stare would have been frozen as you witnessed Bishop Paphnutius from Upper Thebes, whose eye sockets were hollow, his eyes having been torn out by the Roman soldiers of the Praetorian Guard because he refused to deny the holy faith.

This procession into the Church in Nicaea was the march of spiritual titans. They cared little for the approval of the world or secure positions. The only security they coveted was the comfort of Christ.

Long deliberations ensued. Very long deliberations. For the council fathers appreciated that the salvation of the human race hung upon the absolute precision of each and every word of their doctrinal formulations. These singular bishops understood that their holy obligation was simply to pass on "what they had received" (in the

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the nicene
creed

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This solemn obligation clung to their conscience with terrifying consequence, lest the priceless treasure of the faith be obscured.

Nicaea *continued from page 7*

Latin construal traditio; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:7; 15:1; Philippians 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). They would not dare change it, add to it, subtract from it, dilute it, or mute it.

This solemn obligation clung to their conscience with terrifying consequence, lest the priceless treasure of the faith be obscured. They recognized that the doctrinal formulae were chiseled into what would forever be the foundation of the Catholic faith. This held all of them in frightful thrall.

Paul Claudel gives memorable, poetic expression to the earth-moving gravity of what these Nicaean bishops accomplished:

When in my village church I hear the credo being recited, one article after another, by the harsh voice of the soloist, to which the naive whine of the little girls' response, I tremble with an inner ecstasy: it seems to me that I am present at the creation of the world. I know the cost of each one of those formulae printed in eternal truth. With what rending of heaven and earth, what rivers of blood, by what effort, what mental travail, and with what overflowing grace they came to be born.

I see those great masses of dogma emerge and take form before my eyes one after the other; I see man struggling painfully and finally succeeding in tearing out of his own heart the final affirmation. It is like a cathedral, immovable and yet advancing with all its columns from porch to choir.

Claudel is only to be outdone by Chesterton. Here are his soaring words in Orthodoxy. Every Catholic has likely read these sentences over and over, causing their hearts to race. His prose is so beautiful, so electrifying, that they not only deserve repetition but memorization:

Last and most important, it is exactly this which explains what is so inexplicable

to all the modern critics of the history of Christianity. I mean the monstrous wars about small points of theology, the earthquakes of emotion about a gesture or word. It was only a matter of an inch: but an inch is everything when you are balancing.

The church could not afford to swerve a hair's breadth on some things if she were to continue her great and daring experiment of the irregular equilibrium. Once, let one idea become less powerful, and some other idea would become too powerful.

It was no flock of sheep the Christian shepherd was leading, but a herd of bulls and tigers, of terrible ideals and devouring doctrines, each one of them strong enough to turn into a false religion and lay waste the world.

Remember that the church went on specifically for dangerous ideas: she was a lion tamer.

The idea of birth through a Holy Spirit, of the death of a divine being, of the forgiveness of sins, or the fulfillment of prophecies, are ideas which, anyone can see, need but a touch to turn them into something blasphemous or ferocious.

He continues with historical and theological precision wedded to arresting insight:

The smallest link was let drop by the artifices of the Mediterranean and the lion of ancestral pessimism would burst his chain in the forgotten forests of the north.

... It is enough to notice that if some small mistake were made in doctrine, huge blunders would be made in human happiness. A sentence phrased wrong about the nature of symbolism would have broken all the best statues in Europe. A slip in the definitions might stop all the

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Nicaea *continued from page 8*

dances: might wither all the Christmas trees or break all the Easter eggs.

Doctrines had to be defined within strict limits, even in order that man might enjoy general human liberties. The church had to be careful, if only that the world might be careless.

Then he concludes with bombastic crescendo, like the clanging of cymbals:

This is the thrilling romance of orthodoxy. People have fallen into a foolish habit, of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There was never anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy.

It was sanity: and to be sane is more dramatic than to be mad.

It was the equilibrium of a man behind madly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and to sway that, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic. She swerved to left and right, so exactly as to avoid enormous obstacles.

... She left on the one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving in to avoid an orientalism, which would have made it too unworldly. The orthodox church never took the tame

course or accepted the conventions: the orthodox church was never respectable. It is easy to be a madman: it is easy to be a heretic. It is always easy to let the age have its head: the difficult thing is to keep one's own

To have fallen into any one of the fads from Gnosticism to Christian Science would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure: and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresy sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect.

As we heartily celebrate the 1,700th anniversary of this epoch-making council, let us repel the silliness that has struggled to replace doctrinal Catholicism. The Nicaean Fathers arrived at the council maimed, trophies of their heroic defense of the faith.

Contrast that with too many of our hierarchy today who wear the sunny smile of compromise, hoping the world will love them, even as they show no love for the truth.

Not us. Never us.

Fr. John A. Perricone, Ph.D., is an adjunct professor of philosophy at Iona University in New Rochelle, New York. His articles have appeared in St. John's Law Review, The Latin Mass, New Oxford Review and The Journal of Catholic Legal Studies. He can be reached at www.fatherperricone.com.

Mass *continued from page 6*

Some masses during the year generally reflect "spikes" in attendance, Gray said, with Christmas, Easter and then Ash Wednesday the most well-attended liturgies.

"We're always interested in Ash Wednesday," since "it's probably one of the most unusual days," said Gray.

"It's not a holy day of obligation, but it's the third highest attendance of mass historically, according to the data," he said. "And it

also has probably the highest participation of young adult Catholics."

And, Gray added, "If there's any moment that the church has to reach out to young adult Catholics, Lent and specifically Ash Wednesday is the time. So it's always a good barometer to see what activity looks like during that period, because it gives you a little view into the future of the next generation of Catholics."

Gina Christian is a multimedia reporter for OSV News. Follow her on X @GinaJesseReina.

"Doctrines had to be defined within strict limits, even in order that man might enjoy general human liberties."

Pope Leo XIV's Emotional Moment Receiving the Fisherman's Ring Goes Viral

'The office is embraced by a man who knows its meaning and weight and understands the privilege he has. What a gift...'

by Alyssa Murphy, Blogs, May 19, 2025

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"The office is embraced by a man who knows its meaning and weight and understands the privilege he has. What a gift."

Many viral moments are circulating online after Pope Leo XIV's inauguration mass yesterday, but one that is especially striking is the new pope's reaction when receiving the Fisherman's Ring.

Occurring just moments before the new pontiff delivered his homily as the vicar of Christ, Pope Leo XIV is emotional; he seems to be holding back tears as the symbol of the Petrine office is placed on his finger.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, presented the ring, and the two prelates spoke briefly, but most viewers noticed the utter catharsis that Pope Leo had upon accepting it.

Father Harrison Ayre, of Nanaimo, British Columbia, said the exchange showed the humanity of the new pope.

"I think what is quickly winning everyone over to Pope Leo is his humanity is visible for all to see," the priest wrote on X. "The office is embraced by a man who knows its meaning and weight and understands the privilege he has. What a gift."

The Holy Father also commented in his homily on being the successor of Peter and the qualities that are expected of the Roman pontiff: "If the rock is Christ, Peter must shepherd the flock without ever yielding to the temptation to be an autocrat, lording it over those entrusted to him."

Pope Leo had been wearing his episcopal ring during his days serving as cardinal, but Sunday, he received the gold Fisherman's Ring, a part of the papal insignia since the first millennium. Adorned with the image of St. Peter with the keys and fisherman's net, it is a symbol of authority and the duty entrusted to St. Peter by Jesus to be "a fisher of men."

Katie Prejean McGrady, Catholic radio host, also noted how profound the moment was, recalling another pontiff:

As I watched Pope Leo XIV gaze upon his fisherman's ring, I couldn't help but think about the time Pope St. John XXIII told Vatican visitors that he sometimes would wake up in the middle of the night, remember some serious problem of the church, & think "I must tell the pope" before he remembered "Oh ... I'm the pope."

Prominent Dutch philosopher and recent Catholic convert Eva Vlaardingbroek noticed the moving moment as well, noting on X, "The way Pope Leo XIV looked at the Fisherman's Ring and got visibly emotional for a moment was truly moving."

The moment also led many Catholics to remember the importance of praying for the Holy Father, especially in these first days of his papacy.

The Fisherman's Ring is one of several rings typically worn by the Roman pontiff. The ring takes its name from its image of St. Peter as a fisherman, which became the standard design around the mid-15th century.

The first record of the ring's use was on two letters of Clement IV in 1265 and 1266. It was used as a wax seal in private letters in place of the official lead seal used for solemn papal documents.

In 1842, the use of the ring and wax seal was replaced by a stamp, but each pope still receives a unique Ring of the Fisherman at the start of his papacy. Outside of papal ceremonies, Pope Francis typically wore only his episcopal ring.

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Upcoming Speakers 2025–26

upcoming
speakers

- **Sept. 16—Annual Dinner** **Steven W. Mosher**, Catholic convert, pro-life activist, president of the Population Research Council and China expert, will deliver an address entitled *With respect, Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, It is long past time to end the secret agreement with China: The Devil is in the Details*.
- **October 10—Bishop Mark Turley, O.S.A.** is a brother Augustinian, fellow missionary in Peru and close friend of Pope Leo XIV. Bishop Turley will speak on the ways in which the theology and spirituality of St. Augustine are likely to impact the papacy of our new pontiff.
- **November 14—Christopher Carstens**, director of the Office of Sacred Worship in the Diocese of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and co-founder of the new Institute for Liturgical Formation at Christendom College, will speak about ongoing efforts to restore reverence and integrity to the Catholic liturgy, particularly as spearheaded by the recent writings of Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.
- **December 12**—In keeping with our tradition of hosting Advent-themed speakers during the month of December, CCI will host **Judy Sunbold**, director of Campus Support and Conferences at Loyola University with a talk on the university art museum's magnificent James and Emilia Govan Christmas Crèche collection of Nativity scenes from around the world.
- **Speakers in 2026**—On dates yet to be confirmed, we will host **Professor Kenneth Calvert** from Hillsdale College to speak on the extraordinary number of recent conversions to Catholicism—including his own—among students and faculty at that institution.

Professor Eric Jenislawski, a theology and philosophy professor at Christendom College and a computer buff from a young age will provide a non-technical introduction to the technology of artificial intelligence with an emphasis on the moral and intellectual threats it may pose to the Catholic understanding of the human person.

Luncheons are held at The Carlisle, 435 E. Butterfield Rd., Lombard, Ill., beginning at 11:30 A.M. Parking is free. Business attire. Reservations can be made at the website or by calling 708-334-2627.

Ring *continued from page 10*

The Fisherman's Ring is destroyed after a pope dies. The destruction of the ring and seal is part of several security measures overseen by the camerlengo (who oversees Vatican affairs until the election of a new pope) after a pontiff's death, including the sealing of the papal apartments) until the election of a new Vicar of Christ.

Alyssa Murphy is the Register's managing editor of digital assets. Starting her career on the airwaves in San Francisco, she has worked in all facets of media. Alyssa enjoys writing and covering stories that inspire and uplift. Register readers may be familiar with her voice from EWTN radio's Morning Glory. Alyssa currently lives in New Jersey just outside Manhattan with her husband Andrew and young daughter, Annabelle.

report

by Mary Anne Hackett

Update Spring 2025

Dear Friends,

This will be my final Update. After many years of editing The Catholic Citizens newsletter, I am retiring from this position. The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter has continued to increase, making it too costly to continue. The Board of Directors of Catholic Citizens is considering other options to reach the members with the latest news on our beloved church. Some possibilities would include e-mailing the newsletter to our members or posting the newsletter on the website as an alternative. Stay tuned!

I have enjoyed my years of preparing the newsletter and have been particularly

pleased with the positive comments about the various articles I have included. I always regarded the newsletter as a personal connection with our members and friends—those who have attended the events—luncheons and dinners, the opportunity to meet our speakers and attendees at our events.

I look forward to continuing to be an active member of Catholic Citizens of Illinois. May our Lord continue to bless Catholic Citizens of Illinois with a growing membership, monthly luncheons and special speakers. May God continue to bless you and your families and keep you close to his Blessed Mother and His Sacred Heart.

CatholicCitizens.org
Catholic Citizens of Illinois

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