

WELCOME, POPE LEO XIV



We ask God's Blessings on the new leader of the Catholic Church around the world, Pope Leo XIV, voted into the position by his peers, the College of Cardinals last Wednesday, May 7, 2025. Pope Leo XIV's formal inauguration Mass will take place May 18 during which he will be [given the pallium](#), a wool scarf that symbolizes his jurisdiction over the church, and his "fisherman's ring," one of the main symbols of the papal office. Each pope has his own specially made ring, which is destroyed or marred when he dies.

Interesting Facts about our new Pontiff . . .

Pope Leo XIV used to 'play priest' as a child growing up.

He was born Robert Francis Provost in Chicago. But inside the Vatican, where he eventually lived and worked, he was considered the "least American" of the US cardinals.

He worked for a decade in Trujillo, Peru, and was later appointed bishop of Chiclayo, another Peruvian city, where he served from 2014 to 2023.

He speaks fluent Spanish and Italian – both of which he displayed during his first address to the public in St. Peter's Square.

He was well regarded by Pope Francis—The late Pope respected him and thought of him very highly. "Clearly Pope Francis saw in him something – he saw him as a capable leader."



A CNN Correspondant met the new Pope Leo XIV when he was a cardinal and said he came across "a very thoughtful person, a very measured person." Overall, he came across understated.

Pope Leo is a member of the Augustinian religious order, which is spread across the world. He led the order for more than a decade as its prior general. The

new pontiff used his first remarks to say he is a son of St. Augustine, and he quoted the saint's famous phrase: "For you, I am a bishop, with you, after all, I am a Christian." That reflects the idea that all the people in the church hierarchy – from leaders to everyday members – walk together.

He has strong leadership experience—Pope Francis appointed Prevost to be the prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, which is in charge of assessing bishop candidates and making recommendations for new appointments. He also served as the president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. From very young, he was appointed to leadership roles. He's seen as somebody who is calm and balanced, who is even-handed and who is very clear on what he thinks needs to be done ... but he's not overly forceful in trying to make that happen.

He has a missionary focus—"I still consider myself a missionary. My vocation, like that of every Christian, is to be a missionary, to proclaim the Gospel wherever one is," Prevost said in an interview with [Vatican News](#) shortly after he moved into his leadership role in Rome.

He once said in an interview his time in Peru was the life experience that shaped him the most. "He's somebody that, even though he's from the West, would be very attentive to the needs of a global church," Allen said. "You're talking about somebody who spent over half of his ecclesial career abroad as a missionary in Peru."

He's also a Peruvian citizen—Leo is a dual citizen of the United States and Peru. The American-born pontiff obtained Peruvian citizenship in August 2015, according to Peru's National Migration Registry. Peruvian President Dina Boluarte called his election a "historic moment for Peru and the world."

His papal name reflects commitment to poor—The last pope to take the name Leo, Pope Leo XIII, was a pope on the side of the poor and who stood up for workers. Leo XIII, who was pope from 1878 to 1903, had a strong emphasis on workers' rights and Catholic social doctrine – so the choice of that name for the new pontiff makes a strong statement.

He's seen as a centrist unifier—He is in line with Francis on the direction of the church and on the process to foster a more inclusive global church, but he is expected to lead as his own man. Leo is expected to lean more progressive on social issues like migration and poverty but fall more in line with moderates on moral issues of Catholic doctrine. In order to get a two-thirds majority in the College of Cardinals, he would have had to have had broad appeal, even among more moderate or conservative members.

He studied math at Villanova—Prevost earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from Villanova University in Pennsylvania and went on to receive his diploma in theology from the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago. He was eventually sent to Rome to study canon law, and later in his career, he taught canon law in the seminary in Trujillo, Peru.

He's a fan of tennis—"I consider myself quite the amateur tennis player," Prevost said in an interview with the Augustinian Order shortly after he became a cardinal. "Since leaving Peru I have had few occasions to practice, so I am looking forward to getting back on the court." He also said in his free time he liked reading, walking and travelling to "new and diverse places."

