

POPE LEO XIV

RESTLESS HEART, FAITHFUL SHEPHERD

SR. GEMMA MORATÓ SENDRA, OP



Catholic. Pastoral. Trusted.

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INTRODUCTION

A NEW ERA FOR THE CHURCH AND FOR HISTORY

There are people whose presence doesn't impose, but transforms. These people don't seek the spotlight, yet they "illuminate," as St. Thomas Aquinas once said. They don't raise their voices, yet they leave a lasting impression. They walk quietly behind the scenes, without a desire for prominence, yet they are often the soul behind key decisions—the whisper that orients; the listener who sustains.

Such has been the path of Robert Francis Prevost for decades: Augustinian friar, missionary in distant lands, bishop among the poor, prefect entrusted with discerning and appointing pastors throughout the world, and now Successor of Peter under the name Leo XIV. Yet, above all, he has been a seeker: a tireless seeker of truth in the spirit of St. Augustine, his spiritual teacher. Like St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, Prevost has understood the Christian life as an interior journey of constant searching—sustained by faith and nourished by prayer, study, and community.

His vocation was not born of strategy or calculation,

but of that restlessness of heart to which Augustine gave immortal expression: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” For St. Augustine and for Prevost, truth is not an abstract concept or intellectual construction, but a living person: Jesus Christ.

Following the Augustinian spirit, Prevost never felt the need to defend truth but to proclaim it with his life and let it speak for itself. As St. Augustine famously said, “The truth is like a lion. You don’t have to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself.” This radical trust in the power of the gospel has shaped Prevost’s style: humble yet firm, quiet yet courageous.

Robert Francis Prevost—now Pope Leo XIV—is a man who avoids rigid formulas and easy certainties. He is a shepherd who walks with seekers, unafraid of their questions and patient in accompaniment. For he knows, with Augustine, that only someone who has sincerely searched can help others to find. And that truth, once found, liberates, transforms, and sends forth.

Leo XIV’s life has not been an ecclesiastical climb to the top, but a pastoral path marked by service, empathy, and quiet fidelity. He never sought to stand out, yet he was chosen for one of the most demanding roles on earth. And he accepted it with the simplicity of someone who did not pursue the position, but who responds to a call. For him, as for many before him, service is not ambition, but—in the way of Jesus—a form of love.

From a young age, Robert Prevost responded generously to God’s call to live in fraternity, embracing communal life as an Augustinian friar. He held a deep

intuition that God is best sought and found in community, as Augustinian spirituality teaches. He understood that Christian life cannot be lived in isolation; it is lived in shared bread, shared faith, shared questions, and shared dreams with fellow seekers of God.

The Augustinian charism is not a romanticized ideal; it is a concrete way of following Christ by living in unity, “with one heart and one soul directed toward God,” as *The Rule of Saint Augustine* expresses. This choice, made in youth and sustained over the years, formed Leo XIV’s pastoral heart and has proven to be the foundation of his style as pope: humble, fraternal, engaged in dialogue, and always open to walking with others.

From the moment he stepped onto the central balcony of Saint Peter’s Basilica after the eagerly awaited “*habemus Papam*,” we could tell that the new pope had much to say. And he did not speak with pomp or solemn proclamations, but with humble signs that spoke more deeply than any speech. His reverent silence, serene gaze, restrained emotion, and delicate gestures—and that quiet gulp to hold back tears—spoke volumes. Leo XIV wasn’t just beginning a new pontificate; he was initiating a new chapter in the Church and in history.

In those first moments, the hallmarks of the Pope’s style were already clear: humility without artifice, closeness without condescension, service without conditions. A pontificate rooted in the logic of the gospel, not in power; of fraternity, not of privilege—all within the frame of a symbolic year: the Jubilee of Hope.

A new era began for the Church. And it began with the demeanor of one who knows that true change starts not

in grand gestures, but in a heart open to the Spirit—the same way that Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost conducted himself in the conclave.

Few had imagined Prevost on the balcony in front of the crowd. Yet many, upon seeing him appear, understood that his time had come. Not because of charisma or eloquent speeches, but because he embodies something essential: traits of the Good Shepherd, who is straightforward, missionary, and full of God. Someone who brings no personal agenda; someone with the availability of a person who has learned to live in a posture of listening. His election has been a surprise of the Spirit, as so often are the most beautiful passages of the gospel.

HOW CAN WE BE MORE FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL?

What can we do to ensure that Christ remains the center of our lives?

Pope Leo XIV said the following in his first homily:

In [Christ], God, in order to make himself close and accessible to men and women, revealed himself to us in the trusting eyes of a child, in the lively mind of a young person, and in the mature features of a man (cf. Gaudium et Spes, 22), finally appearing to his disciples after the resurrection with his glorified body. He thus showed us a model of human holiness that we can all imitate, together with the promise of an eternal destiny that transcends all our limits and abilities.

In this same spirit, Leo XIV invites us to live a faith that is incarnate, alive, and open to the world and to others—a faith that neither retreats nor hides but becomes proposal, testimony, and encounter.

Over the course of ten chapters, we will explore key themes inspired by the message Pope Leo read—not improvised—with his first *Urbi et Orbi* blessing as Peter’s successor. As if wishing to leave nothing essential unsaid at such a meaningful moment, Leo XIV revealed his intent with the simple gesture of bringing a sheet of paper in hand so that he could offer from the start a message that was well thought out, prayed about, and deliberate. He did not seek the emotional impact of spontaneity but the clarity of a well-considered message to set the tone—serene, pastoral, and forward-looking—for his pontificate.

This book is not a theoretical analysis; it is a spiritual and ecclesial meditation on the pontificate that is unfolding and an opportunity to know the man who now wears the fisherman’s sandals. A new time has indeed begun. And the Lord, as always, invites us to walk forward in trust.

POPE LEO XIV’S FIRST *URBI ET ORBI* BLESSING

On the afternoon of May 8, 2025, the newly elected Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, preceded by the cross, appeared on Saint Peter’s Basilica’s central balcony—called the Loggia of the Blessings—to greet the people and impart his first *Urbi et Orbi* (which means “To the city [of Rome] and to the world) papal blessing. Before the solemn blessing, the new Pope addressed the faithful with the following words: