

**Sent:** Monday, May 12, 2025 9:02 AM

**Subject:** Around the Diocese: May 12, 2025





*CNS photo/Vatican Media*

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 May 8, 2025. The new pope was born in Chicago and has connections to Tulsa (see story below).

## **Habemus Papam! Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost Elected Pope, Takes Name Leo XIV**

By FAITH Catholic Staff

ROME — On May 8, 2025, at 6:08 p.m. in Rome, the bells rang as white smoke lifted from the Sistine Chapel. St. Peter's Square filled with thousands of people waiting to hear who was elected the new leader of the Catholic Church. At 7:13 p.m., Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, the protodeacon of the College of Cardinals, announced in Latin: "Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!" ("I announce to you a great joy: We have a pope!") He announced Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the 266th successor to St. Peter – the first-ever American pope.

He went on to say: "Peace be with you! Dearest brothers and sisters, this was the first greeting of the risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the flock of God. I, too, would like this greeting of peace to enter your hearts, to reach your families and all people, wherever they are; and all the peoples, and all the earth: Peace be with you."

His blessing to those watching from St. Peter's Square and around the world ended with the recitation of the Hail Mary.

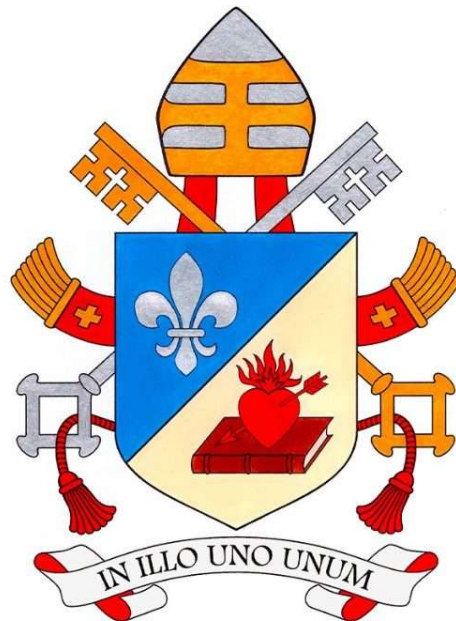
Born in 1955, the pope grew up on the South Side of Chicago. After working for more than 20 years with the poorest people of Peru, Pope Leo XIV became a naturalized citizen of Peru. Pope Francis appointed him to the College of Cardinals in 2023.

The largest-ever conclave that elected Pope Leo lasted just over 24 hours and consisted of 133 cardinals. Only members of the College of Cardinals who are under the age of 80 are allowed to vote. The College of Cardinals now includes men from countries that never before had a voice in a papal election. Diversity in the Church was important to Pope Francis, and he made sure this was reflected in the men he appointed as cardinals during the 12 years of his pontificate.

The cardinals were sequestered in the Sistine Chapel under the frescos created by Michelangelo 500 years ago during the conclave. A two-thirds majority was reached on the third vote taken by the cardinals, following the first vote on Wednesday evening and the second vote on Thursday morning.



*Leo XIV*  
8 maggio 2025



Pope Leo XIV official portrait, signature, and coat of arms courtesy of Vatican News

## Things to Know About Pope Leo XIV

- Robert Francis Prevost was born in 1955 in Chicago. He has two brothers. His father was a World War II Navy veteran and school superintendent, and his mother was a librarian.
- He earned a BS degree in mathematics from Villanova University in 1977 before pursuing his religious vocation.
- He finished secondary studies at the minor seminary of the Augustinians in Michigan in 1973. In 1977, he became a member of the Order of St. Augustine and took his solemn vows in 1981.

- He completed a Master of Divinity at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and earned a licentiate and doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical College of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.
- He was ordained a priest in 1982.
- He served in Peru from 1985 to 1998, working as a parish pastor, seminary teacher, and diocesan official. He was also part of the leadership of Caritas Peru, the Church's charitable organization.
- After being elected the head of the Augustinian Province of Chicago, he returned to the U.S. in 1999. He was elected prior general of the Augustinians in 2001 and then reelected in 2007, serving as head of the order until 2013.
- Pope Francis appointed him apostolic administrator and then bishop of the Diocese of Chiclayo, Peru, in 2014 and 2015.
- He was made a cardinal by Pope Francis on Sept. 30, 2023.
- While serving the Church in Peru, Pope Francis made him a member of the Dicastery for the Clergy in 2019 and then a member of the Dicastery for Bishops in 2020. In 2023, Francis made him prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops.
- He speaks multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Italian, French, and Portuguese.
- His episcopal motto is *In illo uno unum*, which means "In the one Christ we are one."

Source: CNA/Francesca Pollio Fenton, May 9, 2025



## In First Public Appearance Since April, Bishop Celebrates Mass of Thanksgiving

*“I share in the joy of the Universal Church at the announcement of our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. The Holy Spirit has faithfully animated the Church since Pentecost when the first apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and sent out into the world to share the Good News. Today, the Roman Catholic Church gives thanks to almighty God for sending us our next Supreme Pontiff. Please join me in praying for Pope Leo XIV as he begins his Petrine Ministry.”*

**Most Rev. David A. Konderla**  
**Bishop of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma**

TULSA — Most Rev David Konderla, Bishop of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving Friday evening at Holy Family Cathedral in gratitude for the election of Pope Leo XIV one day earlier.

In his first public appearance in about a month since suffering previously from an illness that dramatically impacted his ability to speak, the Bishop’s voice grew stronger and stronger as he offered his homily about the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the Papal transition. He expressed his own surprise that it had only been 17 days since the passing of Pope Francis and at all that had transpired since.

“It seems like it's been a lot longer because so much has happened,” said Bishop Konderla. “Seventeen days in which we mourned for our Pope, we buried him with due



honor, and we elected the next successor of St. Peter, Pope Leo XIV, so that led by the Spirit the Church barely breaks its stride as it continues its pilgrim journey of announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person.”

Bishop Konderla explained that the Holy Spirit's presence is strongly felt as the Church transitions in the wake of one Pope's death and the election of a new Pope. With its biblical foundations and teachings, he said the Church's mission goes on.

“In Caesarea, Jesus once asked his disciples who they thought he was. It was Peter who said, ‘You are Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ In response to his confession of faith, Jesus said to Peter that he would found his Church upon him, and the gates of hell would not prevail against his Church,” said the Bishop. Speaking alternately in English and Spanish, he continued, “...before our eyes in these last two weeks, we have seen the Holy Spirit fulfill that promise once again with the election of a new Pope.”

Once the dozens of assembled priests and deacons of the diocese processed out of the cathedral at the close of Mass, they gathered in a large square on the steps and sidewalk and gave a hearty applause of appreciation to Bishop Konderla for his visible recovery and return to public activities. Indeed, before the start of Mass, the Bishop personally greeted and welcomed everyone who ascended the steps to the cathedral. He also conducted multiple interviews with local TV stations before and after the Mass.



*EOC photos by Daniel McCay and Chris Rush*

## **Before He Was Pope: Fr. Robert Prevost, aka 'Father Bob,' Served on Cascia Hall Board**

TULSA — When Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was announced as Pope Leo XIV on Thursday, interested viewers everywhere suddenly realized that the College of Cardinals had surprisingly selected an American — previously thought very unlikely.

And just minutes after the new pontiff strode onto the famous balcony overlooking St. Peter's Square in Rome to the applause and shouts of joy from the thousands of faithful gathered below, word of a direct Oklahoma connection began circulating on social media.

Sure enough, the 267<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome and first American Pontiff has a direct connection to one of Tulsa's Catholic high schools. The former Fr. Robert Prevost, OSA, previously led the Midwest Province of Augustinians and served on the Board of Directors at Tulsa's Cascia Hall Preparatory School from 1999-2001.

"We have a special connection to the new pope," Fr. Philip Cook, OSA, the school's headmaster, said at a hastily organized press conference held later that afternoon at Holy Family Cathedral. "He's an Augustinian Prior, a member of our religious order, and for a couple of years there, he served as our regional superior for our province."

Like many other schools throughout the diocese that assembled to watch the live telecast, celebrations broke out at Cascia Hall as students, faculty, and staff saw the announcement via live stream from St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.

In another unique connection, Br. Jack Hibbard, OSA, Prior of the local Augustinian order, remembers the new pope as a child growing up together in his hometown of Chicago, Ill.

"My time goes back a little bit further — the two of us went to the same parish grammar school. I still remember him as the first grader who would come into the classroom every once in a while," said Brother Jack. "He's got two other brothers, Louie and John, and I was in the class with his oldest brother."

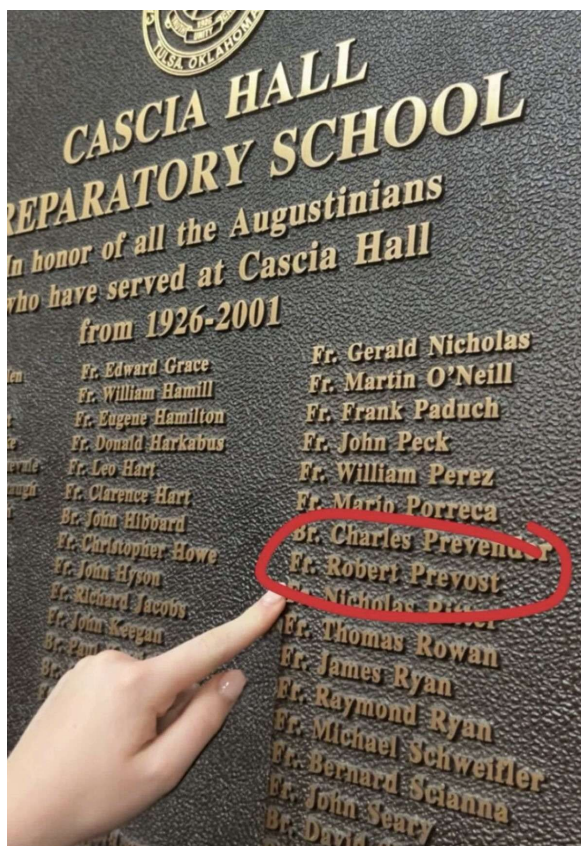
Closing out the press Thursday press conference at Tulsa's Holy Family Cathedral, Fr. Cook said it was a wonderful day of energy and hope. "...We're filled with joy and gratitude to Almighty God for our new pope, for the new shepherd that the Spirit has sent to us as Catholics."





*EOC Photo by Daniel McCay*

**ABOVE:** Fr. Philip Cook, OSA, Cascia Hall Preparatory School headmaster, and Br. Jack Hibbard, OSA, Prior of the local Augustinian Monastery, address the media as Fr. Gary Kastl, vicar general for the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, looks on. **BELOW:** In these submitted photos, the former Fr. Robert Prevost, OCA, or "Father Bob" as he was known to Augustinian colleagues and friends, is shown during his time serving on the Cascia Hall board of directors from 1999-2001.





## What Tulsans Who Know Him Are Saying About Pope Leo XIV...

TULSA — Several Tulsans have been interviewed recently by local and national media to speak about their connection and friendship with the former Father Robert Prevost, OCA, now Pope Leo XIV. Here is a sampling with links to the original sources:

*"He's a good man. He's got a good heart. He loves people. My experience of him is that he has a very pastoral heart, and I think he will be one that will continue the legacy of [Pope Francis](#) for the world."* — Father Philip C. Cook, OSA, Headmaster of Cascia Hall Preparatory School, told [Newson6](#)

*"He's a wonderful man, very kind, very caring, gentle, listens, doesn't jump to conclusions. I think he's going to be awesome in this position as Pope, and hopefully see the church continue to move on to where it needs to go to today, especially in this crazy world."* — Br. Jack Hibbard, OSA, Prior of the local Augustinian Monastery, told local media at the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma press conference.

*"He is fun. And he has an open heart, and he's brilliant. Although he is so humble. You could see it in his face yesterday, how happy he was to lead in Christ. He has love for the whole world... the less fortunate. He was a missionary for years."* — [Milann Siegfried](#), former chair of the board at Cascia Hall Preparatory School, told [Newson6](#).

*"Never thought I'd see something like that - to see someone you know that well become the Pope, and he's going to be a fantastic Pope. He's very balanced, he's judicious, he's calm, but he's also very smart."* — Francis Rooney, former Cascia Hall parent and board member, and former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, told [CNN's Anderson Cooper](#)

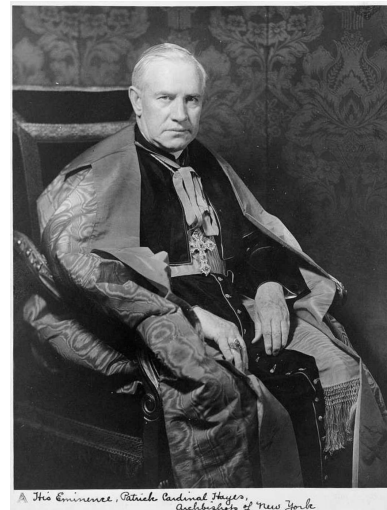


At left is former Fr. Robert Prevost, OCA, when he served as head of the Midwest Province of Augustinians and on the Board of Directors at Tulsa's Cascia Hall Preparatory School from 1999-2001. To his left are Tulsans Phyllis and Anthony J. Lauinger.

## 100 Years Ago: Cardinal Hayes Makes Historic Visit to Oklahoma

*(Editor's Note: This is Part 1 of an excerpt from historian Rev. James D. White's book Tulsa Catholics detailing the May 1925 visit of Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York. Part 2 will appear next week.)*

"On Sunday morning, May 10, 1925, the train pulling the private coach of the cardinal archbishop of New York drew alongside the depot in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. As he waited on the platform, Bishop Kelley must have reflected on how well his plan had succeeded. Besides the several dozen churchmen present, including a number of bishops invited from around the country, the station area was crowded with Okmulgee civic officials and townspeople who were vying for elbow room with reporters from all over



His Eminence Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York

the state. As Cardinal Hayes stepped from the train, it was the culmination of weeks of excitement and expectation engendered by a masterful publicity campaign.

"That afternoon, in the midst of a large crowd, the red-robed cardinal laid the cornerstone of the ambitious new Saint Anthony's church in Okmulgee. He and his entourage then boarded the train for Tulsa, where he was again received by throngs of people, even though it was nearly midnight when the train arrived.

"Monday, the Cardinal began his first full day in Tulsa as 'a simple priest' (in the words of one reporter) by offering Mass at Holy Family. Then he stepped out of the spotlight to permit Bishop Kelley to honor the man who, more than any other, had made the festive week possible. At nine o'clock Mass, the Bishop conferred on Holy Family's pastor the title and insignia of a domestic prelate, making him a member of the papal court with the privilege of being addressed as Right Reverend Monsignor. Father Renier Sevens, diocesan vicar for missions, was also created a monsignor in that ceremony.

"At noon, the two monsignori were guests of honor with Cardinal Hayes at a dinner hosted by the Knights of Columbus, who were holding their state convention in Tulsa. That evening, T. Austin Gavin presided as toastmaster at a civic banquet at the Mayo Hotel, followed by a public reception at Convention Hall.

"Tuesday, May 12, was the day set for the consecration of Holy Family Church. The five-hour ceremony began at 7:30 in the morning..."



His Excellency Francis Clement  
Kelly, Bishop of Oklahoma



St. Anthony's Church, Okmulgee





*Diocese of Tulsa Archives*

This image taken on the occasion of Patrick Cardinal Hayes', Archbishop of New York, historic visit to Oklahoma in 1925 and the consecration of what was then called Holy Family Church in downtown Tulsa.

## **Saint of the Month: St. Dymphna, Patron Saint of Those With Mental Illness**

**Feast: May 15**

BY CANDACE BRYANT-LESTER/FATIH CATHOLIC

Dymphna was born in the seventh century to a Christian mother and a pagan father who ruled over a part of Ireland. Dymphna took to the Christian faith, consecrating herself to Christ and taking a vow of chastity at age 14. Her mother died not long after this dedication, and her father, King Damon – having loved his wife deeply – experienced a rapid deterioration of his mental health.

The king's advisors suggested he remarry, which he agreed to do if a woman as beautiful as his former wife could be found. But when his messengers searched all throughout the land for a noblewoman who resembled his beloved and would consent to marriage, none could be found – none except his own daughter, who looked just like

her late mother. The advisors then suggested that the king marry his own daughter. Blinded by grief and illness, King Damon agreed to the arrangement.

Dymphna, however, would not consent. Determined to keep her vow to Christ, she refused the union and fought off her father's advances. Dymphna fled the court with her confessor, Gerebran, sought refuge in Belgium and stayed in a town now known as Geel.

Desperate, the king followed their trail, and upon locating them, he ordered Dymphna's traveling companions to be killed and sought to force his daughter to return to Ireland with him. Dymphna held fast to her refusal, enraging her father to the point of drawing his sword and beheading her.

Dymphna was celebrated as a martyr for defending her purity and became known as the "Lily of Éire." A church was built in Geel in honor of St. Dymphna, where many pilgrims sought healing and treatment for their mental illnesses, venerating the saint due to her struggle with her father's deteriorating mental health. This created a tradition where the townspeople opened their homes to the mentally ill and cared for them as part of the community – a tradition which continues even to this day.



*Illustration By Matt Watters*

## From the Editor...

There's a lot to talk about this week, so let's delve right into it.

The Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, and the Catholic Church as a whole, received a tremendous amount of "positive press" during the mourning for Pope Francis, his funeral, and the build-up to the Conclave. But, at least locally, it was nothing like the thrilling and unexpected announcement our new pontiff, Pope Leo XIV, was an American and has lots of connections to Tulsa! Our coverage above is just a small fraction compared to the volume of reporting by secular media.

As you might imagine, it has been a busy and sometimes a little chaotic, time within the diocese. That is especially so once we learned more about our new Holy Father. Known simply as "Fr. Bob" to many Augustinian colleagues and friends dating back to his days serving on the board at Cascia Hall Preparatory School in Tulsa, he is described as a humble and dedicated servant of Christ by those who know him.

In other media-related news, last week, local TV stations picked up on the diocese's release of "[A Sign of Hope](#)," a short documentary film by Catholic filmmaker and local parishioner Manny Marquez about the aftermath of the 2024 tornado at Barnsdall's St. Mary Church. In case you missed it, here is a [link](#) to that the beautifully done 8-minute film. It's well worth your time.

And finally, a word of deep gratitude to our three volunteer correspondents in Rome these past several days. Our own Dcn. Robert Williams, Fr. Michael Pratt, and filmmaker Manny Marquez have filed insightful first-hand accounts, photos and videos from the Vatican during this historic period. Under the banner, "Rome Report," you can catch up on all of these dispatches here on [our website](#), or check out our diocesan social media platforms.

Well, that is certainly not all there is to talk about, but that's all that I have space for today. Until next week, thanks for reading!

**Chris Rush**  
**Chief Editor**

*"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" — Philippians 4:8*

Eastern Oklahoma  
**Catholic**





Watch us on YouTube



Follow us on Instagram



Follow us on X



Find us on Facebook

**Subscribe  
to EOC Magazine**

**Subscribe  
to EOC extra**



Sent by Chris Rush

Direct replies to this email can only be seen by admins.  
Email me when people reply to this note

To ensure that these emails land in your inbox and do not go into spam, please add [mail@flocknote.com](mailto:mail@flocknote.com) to your email address book or safe senders list.



[my info](#) • [unsubscribe](#)

12300 E. 91st Street, Broken Arrow, OK 74012 • [dioceseoftulsa.org](http://dioceseoftulsa.org)