



Friday - May 9, 2025

It still feels surreal! We have a new Pope! Throughout the day today, there were moments when I was struck by the reality of what has just occurred in the last 24 hours, and the great privilege of witnessing it here firsthand in Rome.

First impressions are kind of like checking the weather forecast — important but limited and subject to change. However, I would be lying if I said I was not a little nervous watching the video of Pope Leo XIV celebrating his first mass with the Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel. Hoping for a good first impression, especially his preaching, to give us a taste of his preaching style. After his first Homily, let's just say the forecast looks very good! I was blown away by both his simplicity and yet bold authority in proclaiming Jesus as Lord, the Son of God, and irreducible to simply a charismatic teacher.

Two quotes to give you a taste:

“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God: the one Savior, who alone reveals the face of the Father.”

“Today, too, there are many settings in which Jesus, although appreciated as a man, is reduced to a kind of charismatic leader or superman. This is true not only among non-believers but also among many baptized Christians, who thus end up living, at this level, in a state of practical atheism.”

If you have not read or watched it, I encourage you to go do so, twice!

Two other unique moments, specifically here at the College, were both the return of several of the English-speaking Cardinals from the Conclave to the NAC, and a massive press conference with them that we helped host. Both moments were filled with energy and excitement. Many reporters were understandably asking the Cardinals about the significance of an American-born Pope and what ramifications it will have for the Church in America. I am sure you will be able to watch many a video of their response in the media over the next 24 hours.

For now, only God knows exactly what kind of papacy Leo XIV will have and how that will form, shape, and inspire the faith in America. Personally, my first impressions are, I like him, I am excited and inspired to follow his invitation to us all in his homily, “[to] repeat, with Peter: *‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’* (Mt 16:16). *It is essential to do this...*”

Let us all pray with Pope Leo XIV that we and the whole Church may recommit our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and share the Joy of life in Him