



May 8, 2025

We have a pope! We are so grateful to God to welcome Pope Leo XIV!

I don't know about you, but the experience of the death of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and the election of a new Holy Father has been an experience of death and resurrection. The Church, which is one throughout the world, is united around our Holy Father at the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even when the Holy Father dies, our mission goes on and receiving a new Holy Father is an experience of the resurrection.

It feels like such a real connection to Christ, as this is the 267th successor to St. Peter. We know the names of the other 266 which connects us all the way back to Christ himself. And when Pope Leo came out on the balcony he began with the words Jesus spoke on the day of his resurrection, "Peace be with you!" He then spoke of the peace which only Christ can give. Pope Leo becomes for us a living connection to the resurrection of Jesus, and he witnesses to the power of that resurrection just as Jesus did.

And this Holy Father is from the United States! I told many people that we will never have an American pope in my lifetime — boy was I wrong! We know our new Holy Father will bring us different gifts than his predecessor, and we are grateful to be able to receive those gifts of God which will come to us through the Holy Father. Like Pope Francis, Pope Leo brings with him deep love for the poor having served the Church in some of the poorest places of Peru. He also brings with him his experience of the Church in the United States, having grown up in the Midwest in Chicago.

I have now talked to two people who have encountered Pope Leo personally when he was a cardinal. Both told me how kind he was, how well he listened, but also that they sensed great interior strength in him.

Let us pray that that interior strength is deepened as he is called to surrender his life to this new office. On May 8, Robert Cardinal Prevost died, and Pope Leo was born. Cardinal Prevost will never get to go home; he will never live a normal daily life again. His life has been taken for the service of Christ and his Church. It is a service that will bring him close to the Cross of Christ, and he will have to suffer much for the sake of the Gospel, as his Master did, and all his successors. Let us pray he might be a faithful witness to Christ in the midst of that suffering.

Although each pope brings with him different emphases and encouragement, the mission of the Church remains the same — the mission of proclaiming the Life of Christ to the

world of today. Together with our Church, throughout the world, we seek to make the world anew. By sharing the life of God, we are inviting those we meet to share with us the life of God through the sacraments.

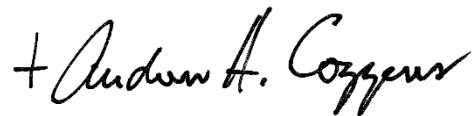
As we begin this new moment in the life of the Church in the third millennium with our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, let us commit ourselves to the mission Jesus gave us when he ascended into Heaven to make disciples of all those around us.

Together let's pray for our Holy Father, that the Lord might grant him grace and sustain him. Let us seek ourselves to live the holiness of the mission of the Church so the Church might be strong in our day — not just in Rome, but even here in northwest Minnesota.

We're so grateful to God for the gift of the Church and for the gift of the leadership of the Church which allows us to continue our mission. Let's seek to draw deeply in our relationship with Jesus Christ so we might live that mission, and many people will come to know him.

Congratulations to Pope Leo XIV! May you live long and lead us all closer to Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew H. Cozzens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Above the first name, there is a small cross symbol.

The Most Reverend Andrew H. Cozzens
Bishop of Crookston