



HOLY PROTECTION OF MARY

BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PHOENIX

Office of the Bishop

May 8, 2025

Dear beloved in Christ!
Христос Воскрес!

Joyful news from Rome came with the extraordinary words: “Habemus Papam”. The eyes of the whole world were focused on the square of St Peter in Rome as the newest Successor of the Apostle Peter of our time, Pope Leo XIV, was announced. The first words the newly elected Pope spoke to the world were: “Peace be to you!”

Holy Father Leo XIV was born in Chicago to an active Catholic family. He is of French, Italian, and Spanish ancestry, and fluent in English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, plus reads Latin and German. A graduate of Villanova University and the Chicago Theological Union; Robert Francis Prevost was ordained as an Augustinian priest-monk in 1982. He served in Peru as a missionary priest and bishop from 1985 through 2023. The concordat between the Holy See and Peru required that he take Peruvian citizenship. As a bishop he visited remote villages and was active in evangelization efforts. In addition, he served as the Prior General of the entire Augustinian Order, which required him to make visitations around the world.

In 2023, Pope Francis appointed then Bishop Robert as the head of the Dicastery for Bishops for the Latin Church. As a result, he is known to the Curia and is familiar with the work of the administration of the Holy See and Vatican City.

Our new Pope Leo XIV has a reputation for being pragmatic, humble, soft-spoken, and a good administrator. His choice of name is significant: Leo the Great was the theologian who sent the famous Tome to the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The last Leo was Pope Leo XIII (reigned 1878-1903), who is famous for his Marian devotion, bringing the Church out of its isolation following the takeover of Rome, affirming that the Church supported both science and the work of objective historians, and supporting the missions, but above all for founding Catholic social teaching. Pope Leo XIII was devoted to helping the poor, defending the rights of the working class, and showed great concern for migrants. Our new Holy Father has shown similar concern given his long ministry in Peru, and his collaboration with the late Pope Francis.

As we celebrate the election of our new Pope, may we devote ourselves in prayer on his behalf. He, himself, commemorated the Mother of God in his first speech, acknowledging it was, on the Latin calendar, the feast of Our Lady of Pompeii, and led the vast crowd in the Hail Mary. May we, as an Eparchy dedicated to the Protection of Our Lady, ask her intercession on his behalf.

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