

Pope Leo XIV 267th Successor of Peter

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools greets with filial affection the Holy Father, **Pope Leo XIV**, elected on 8 May 2025 as the 267th Successor of Peter.

“The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools offers our prayers and union with the newly elected Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV. (Robert Francis Prevost) With him, we will continue to construct bridges that foster universal fraternity in the Church and our world through the educational mission entrusted to us”, has stated the Superior General and the General Council of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

“His missionary experience – as an Augustinian religious – gives us great hope as we continue to look to encounter the God of the peripheries in those who find themselves on the margins of our societies and the Church”, assure Brother Armin Luistro, Superior General, and the Brothers of the General Council.

Who is the new Pope?

Leo XIV is the first Augustinian Pope in the history of the Church, and the second Roman Pontiff from the Americas. Unlike Pope Francis, however, the 69-year-old Robert Francis Prevost is from the northern part of the continent.

The new Bishop of Rome was born on September 14, 1955, in Chicago, Illinois, USA, to Louis Marius Prevost, of French and Italian descent, and Mildred Martínez, of Spanish descent. He has two brothers, Louis Martin and John Joseph. He spent his childhood and adolescence with his family.

He studied first at the Minor Seminary of the Augustinian Fathers and then at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, where in 1977 he earned a Degree in Mathematics and also studied Philosophy. On September 1 of the same year, Prevost entered the novitiate of the Order of Saint Augustine (O.S.A.) in Saint Louis, in the Province of Our Lady of Good Counsel of Chicago, and made his first profession on September 2, 1978. On August 29, 1981, he made his solemn vows.

He received his theological education at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. At the age of 27, he was sent by his superiors to Rome to study Canon Law at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum). In Rome, he was ordained a priest on June 19, 1982, at the Augustinian College of Saint Monica by Archbishop Jean Jadot, then pro-president of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, which later became the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and then the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue.

Prevost obtained his licentiate in 1984 and the following year, while preparing his doctoral thesis, was sent to the Augustinian mission in *Chulucanas, Piura*, Peru (1985-1986). In 1987, he defended his doctoral thesis on "The Role of the Local Prior in the Order of Saint Augustine" and was appointed vocation director and missions director of the Augustinian Province of "Mother of Good Counsel" in Olympia Fields, Illinois (USA).

The following year, he joined the mission in Trujillo, also in Peru, as director of the joint formation project for Augustinian candidates from the vicariates of *Chulucanas, Iquitos, and Apurímac*.

Over the course of eleven years, he served as prior of the community (1988-1992), formation director (1988-1998), and instructor for professed members (1992-1998), and in the Archdiocese of Trujillo as judicial vicar (1989-1998) and professor of Canon Law, Patristics, and Moral Theology at the Major Seminary "San Carlos y San Marcelo".

At the same time, he was also entrusted with the pastoral care of Our Lady Mother of the Church, later established as the parish of Saint Rita (1988-1999), in a poor suburb of the city, and was parish administrator of Our Lady of Monserrat from 1992 to 1999.

In 1999, he was elected Provincial Prior of the Augustinian Province of "Mother of Good Counsel" in Chicago, and two and a half years later, the ordinary General Chapter of the Order of Saint Augustine, elected him as Prior General, confirming him in 2007 for a second term.

In October 2013, he returned to his Augustinian Province in Chicago, serving as director of formation at the Saint Augustine Convent, first councillor, and provincial vicar – roles he held until Pope Francis appointed him on November 3, 2014, as Apostolic Administrator of the Peruvian Diocese of Chiclayo, elevating

him to the episcopal dignity as Titular Bishop of Sufar.

He entered the Diocese of Chiclayo on November 7, in the presence of Apostolic Nuncio James Patrick Green, who ordained him Bishop just over a month later, on December 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the Cathedral of Saint Mary.

His episcopal motto is “In Illo uno unum” – words pronounced by Saint Augustine in a sermon on Psalm 127 to explain that “although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one.

On September 26, 2015, he was appointed Bishop of Chiclayo by Pope Francis. In March 2018, he was elected second vice-president of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference, where he also served as a member of the Economic Council and president of the Commission for Culture and Education.

In 2019, Pope Francis appointed him a member of the Congregation for the Clergy (July 13, 2019), and in 2020, a member of the Congregation for Bishops (November 21). Meanwhile, on April 15, 2020, he was also appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Peruvian Diocese of Callao.

On January 30, 2023, Bergoglio called him to Rome as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, promoting him to the rank of Archbishop. Pope Francis created him Cardinal in the Consistory of September 30 that year and assigned him the Diaconate of Saint Monica.

On October 4, 2023, Pope Francis appointed him as a member of the Dicasteries for Evangelization (Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches), for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the Eastern Churches, for the Clergy, for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, for Culture and Education, for Legislative Texts, and of the Pontifical Commission for the Vatican City State.

As head of the Dicastery for Bishops, Prevost took part in the last apostolic journeys of Pope Francis and in the first and second sessions of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, held in Rome from 4 to 29 October 2023 and from 2 to 27 October 2024, respectively.

His experience in synodal assemblies goes back to his years as Prior General of the Augustinians and representative of the Union of Superiors General (UGG), where he shared closely with Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, who was Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools between 2000 and 2014.

His closeness to the Brothers

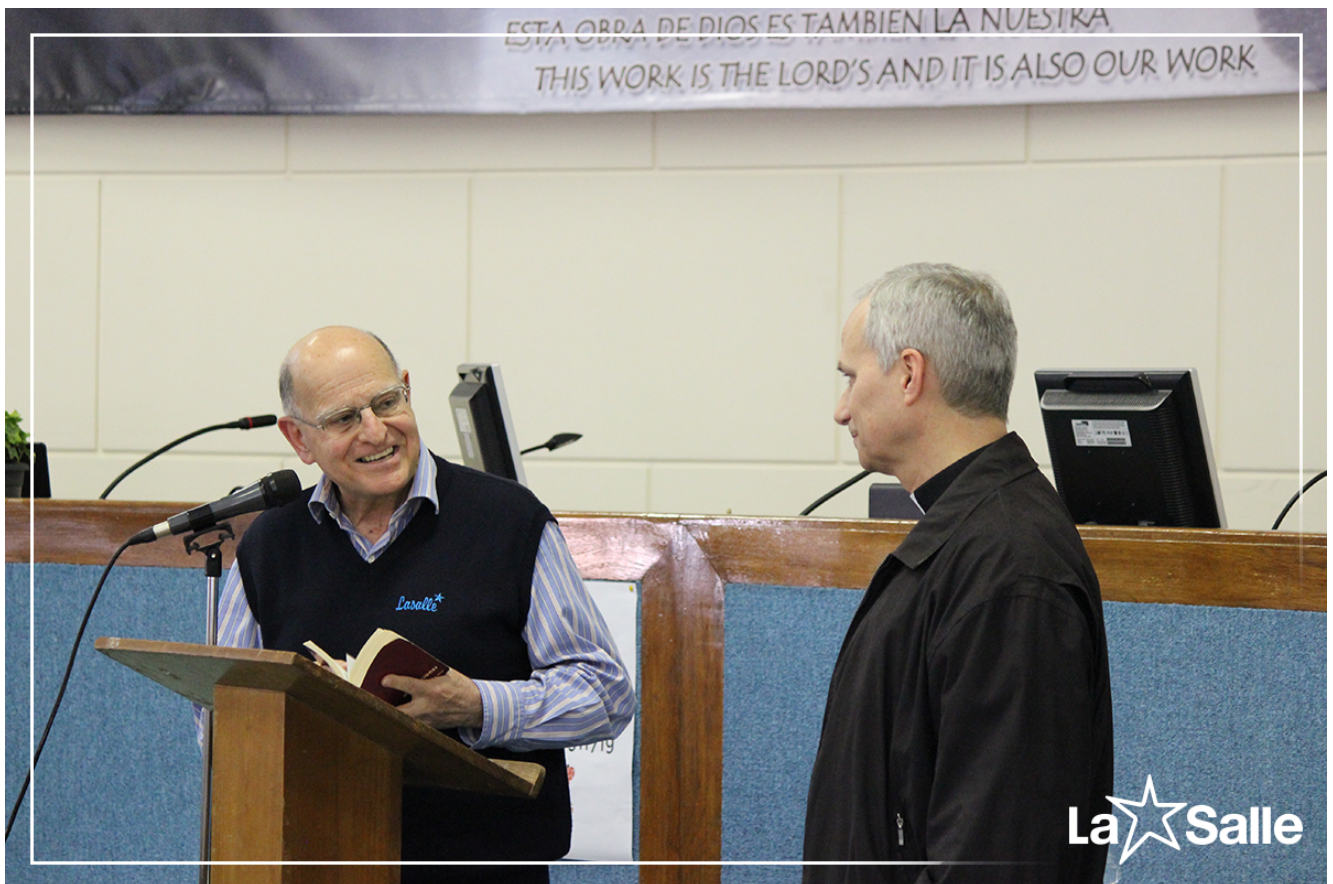
In May 2014, Robert Francis Prevost was invited to preach the spiritual retreat for the members of the 45th General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, at which Br Robert Schieler was elected Superior General.

His closeness, fraternity and teachings had an impact on the Brother capitulants; he encouraged them to live their vocation with authenticity and to respond generously to the Lord's call in these times, for 'this work of God is also yours', as the motto of the General Chapter stated.

On that occasion, the now Pope Leo XIV, sensitive to the educational mission of Lasallians, declared how important the Lasallian mission in the Church is,

“not only because of what you do in terms of education, but because of who you are. And even though it may be a challenge for you today to understand this and to see the reality of the Brotherhood in the light of vocation crises and a Church that perhaps does not always appreciate [...] be assured that your mission is necessary, deeply appreciated by many of us, and important for the future of the Church”.

We, Brothers of the Christian Schools and the entire Lasallian Family thank the Lord for the election of Pope Leo XIV and express our best wishes for his Pontificate, with the commitment to continue walking together, 'always seeking peace, justice, always striving to operate as men and women faithful to Jesus Christ, without fear to proclaim the Gospel, to be missionaries', as he expressed to us in his first blessing *Urbi et Orbi*.



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IS THE LORD'S AND IT IS ALSO OUR WORK

Friday April 25 - This w

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** With information from Vatican News on the biography of Pope Leo XIV.*