

Pope Leo XIV.

Cardinal Robert Prevost becomes 1st American Pope.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/new-american-pope-leo-xiv-robert-prevost/story?id=121604332>

He will be the Catholic Church's 267th leader.

Newly elected Pope Leo XIV, Robert Prevost addressed the crowd from the main central loggia balcony of the St Peter's Basilica for the first time, after the cardinals ended the conclave, in The Vatican.

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The temporary chimney atop the Sistine Chapel released a plume of white smoke on Thursday, signalling that the 133 cardinals working inside had reached a two-thirds majority to elect a new pope for the Catholic Church. American cardinal Robert Prevost was announced as the choice to replace Pope Francis. Bells at St. Peter's Basilica rang and crowds cheered as the white smoke billowed from the chimney. The new leader of the Catholic Church was chosen amid the third and fourth round of conclave voting.

What to know about the 1st American Pope.

Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost has become the first-ever American elected as the leader of the Catholic Church -- now known by his pontifical name of Pope Leo XIV.

The 69-year-old, born on the Southside of Chicago, is seen as a diplomat of the church and was an important adviser to his predecessor, Pope Francis. He became a front-runner to the papacy in the days before the conclave began, said Rev. James Martin, a papal contributor to ABC News. Leo emerged from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on Thursday evening to throngs of cheering crowds, following the signal of white smoke that emanated from the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel.

Leo is the fifth-most-popular name chosen by popes. Pope Leo XIV's full authority and jurisdiction begins immediately upon his acceptance of the office.

Pope Leo XIV is a 'very down-to-earth person'.

The Rev. James Martin, a papal contributor to ABC, said he knows Pope Leo XIV, previously Cardinal Robert Prevost, describing him as “very-down-to-earth.” Martin told ABC News the new pontiff is a “very kind person, very reserved.” Martin previously said days before the conclave’s start that the American cardinal was a front-runner for the papacy.

Leo XIV addresses crowd for first time as Pontiff.

Pope Leo XIV, American-born Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, has addressed thousands of people gathered in Vatican Square for the first time as pontiff. Leo took a moment to take in the crowd after stepping onto the centre balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica, before delivering his remarks.

"Greetings, brothers and sisters. This is the first greeting of the risen Christ. May the peace be with you," Leo said in Italian. "This is the peace of the risen Christ." Leo asked the crowd to pray for the late Pope Francis and expressed gratitude to his predecessor -- encouraging followers to continue Francis' mission "for building bridges." "We have to be a church that works together to build bridges and to keep our arms open, like this very piazza, welcoming," Leo told the crowd. The new pope also thanked the cardinals who elected him as Francis’ successor before reciting the "Hail Mary" prayer.

Cardinal Prevost announces papal name as Leo XIV.

Cardinal Robert Prevost selected the name Leo XIV, a senior cardinal deacon announced. John, the most popular name selected among cardinals, has been used 23 times. Gregory has been used 16 times, and Benedict has been chosen 16 times. The only name that is not allowed to be used is Peter, which is an unwritten rule in the Catholic Church, paying respect to the first pope, Saint Peter.

What we know about Leo XIV, the new American Pope.

American Cardinal Robert Prevost has been elected the 267th pontiff. He has chosen the name Leo XIV, a senior cardinal deacon announced. The 69-year-old Chicago native is the first American pope and is seen as a diplomat in the church. Following the death of Pope Francis on April 21, the 133 cardinals -- the church's highest-ranking clergy -- gathered to elect a new pope for the Catholic Church in the secret conclave in Rome.

On Thursday afternoon local time, white smoke billowed from the stovetop chimney atop the Sistine Chapel and the bells of St. Peter's Basilica rang out, signifying the cardinals had elected a new pope. The cardinals cast at least four ballots at the Vatican before a cardinal received at least two-thirds of the vote. Over an hour after the white smoke emerged, the new pope, clad in his papal vestments, stepped out onto the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica and greeted the world. He mentioned Pope Francis twice and explicitly said he wants to pick up where the late pope left off on that very balcony on Easter, before giving the Urbi et Orbi blessing -- meaning to "the city and the world."

"We have to be a church that works together to build bridges and to keep our arms open, like this very piazza, welcoming," Leo told the crowd while speaking in Italian.

His full authority and jurisdiction begin immediately upon his acceptance of the office, prior to the public announcement.

Significance of papal name.

Leo is the fifth-most-popular name chosen by popes.

Pope Leo XIII, who headed the Catholic Church from 1878 until his death in 1903, was a founding figure of the Catholic social justice tradition. While popes aren't obliged to change their name, every pontiff for the past 470 years has done so, usually choosing the name of a predecessor to both honour them and signal their intention to emulate his example. Pope Francis was a notable exception, choosing not the name of a former pope but that of St. Francis of Assisi, the 13th century cleric and patron saint of animals and the environment.

Seen as front-runner.

The new Pope Leo started to emerge as a front-runner for the papacy in the days before the conclave began, according to the Rev. James Martin, a papal contributor to ABC News.

Following the announcement of the new pope, Martin told ABC News on Thursday that he knows Leo, describing him as “very down-to-earth” and a “very kind person, very reserved.” Pope Leo was the only U.S. cardinal on a short list of front-runners for pope, also known as “papabiles,” compiled in the aftermath of Pope Francis’ death by The Associated Press.

Brought to work at the Vatican by Pope Francis.

He received priestly ordination on June 19, 1982, after studying canon law at the Pontifical Saint Thomas Aquinas University, according to his bio on the Vatican Press website. Francis brought Pope Leo to work at the Vatican after first appointing him in 2014 to serve as the bishop of Chiclayo, Peru. He has spent most of his time in Peru, where he has also worked as a teacher, missionary and parish priest. In April 2020, Francis appointed him to be the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Callao, also in Peru, his profile said. Since 2023, he has held the position at the Vatican as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, in charge of vetting nominations for bishops around the world. Pope Leo told Vatican News in October 2024 that a “bishop is not supposed to be a little prince sitting in his kingdom, but rather called authentically to be humble, to be close to the people he serves, to walk with them and to suffer with them.” He also currently serves as the president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. In a 2023 interview with the Catholic News Service, he was asked how he responds to problems with bishops or dioceses -- to which he said he reminds clergymen to reflect on their oath to “live and work in communion with the Holy Father.” “The spirit of synodality includes a need and desire to listen to not only the bishop himself, but to many people in the diocese to see what’s the best way to promote authentic church in each and every diocese in the world,” he said at the time.