



**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
OFFICE FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299
Telephone (215) 587-3747 • commof@archphila.org • www.archphila.org

For Immediate Release
May 8, 2025

Contact: Kenneth A. Gavin
Chief Communications Officer
215-587-3747 (*office*)

**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP NELSON J. PÉREZ UPON THE
ELECTION OF OUR NEW HOLY FATHER, POPE LEO XIV**

Archbishop Nelson J. Perez issued the following statement regarding the election of Pope Leo XIV as the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church by the College of Cardinals.

On this historic occasion Catholics in the Philadelphia region and around the world rejoice abundantly! The election of our new Holy Father and his appearance on the balcony at Saint Peter's Square in Rome today fills us with great hope and joy.

Together with the bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated religious, and lay faithful of the Church of Philadelphia, I express prayerful fidelity to Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert F. Prevost. People from our area already have a special closeness with the Holy Father. He is the first pope from the United States of America and a graduate of Villanova University! With glad hearts, we lift up prayers of Thanksgiving for his election and eagerly anticipate all that will flow from his Petrine Ministry for the good of souls and the good of our world.

I have had the pleasure of working and conversing with the Holy Father as a member of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America during his time as its president. I witnessed first-hand a wonderful, gentle, humble, and spiritual man of God who is a true gift to the world.

Pope Leo XIV will be a pastor not just for Catholics, but for every person of good will. He is a man of deep faith and extraordinary intellectual ability who understands the pastoral needs of our richly diverse Church as well as the challenges of our modern society. I know that his papacy will be marked by a desire for genuine Christian encounter with all people and that it will be filled with the compassionate love of Jesus Christ.

As a family in faith, our union with Pope Leo XIV is part of God's plan for His Church on earth. We stand ready to serve as Missionary Disciples for Christ relying upon the Holy Father's wisdom and pastoral guidance.

Let us all join in giving thanks to almighty God for His providential care and for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit working through the College of Cardinals. May Mary, Queen of the Apostles, Saint Peter, and his saintly successors present the prayerful intentions of Pope Leo XIV to God

our Father.

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Editor's Note: Attached is a photograph taken during a meeting of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America in Rome in June of 2024. It features Archbishop Pérez with Pope Leo XIV, then-Cardinal Prevost.

It can be used for publication and broadcast purposes with credit to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.