



May 8, 2025

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

With profound gratitude and heartfelt joy, I write to you today as the universal church welcomes Pope Leo XIV's election as its new Holy Father.

Cardinal Robert Prevost has been elected the 267th successor to Saint Peter. In the wake of Pope Francis's passing, our prayers have been answered, and the Holy Spirit guided our choice of our new pontiff.

Pope Leo, the first American elected to the papacy, brings a wealth of pastoral experience and a deep commitment to the Gospel. There is great anticipation that our new bishop, a faithful shepherd whose spirit of peace and commitment to building bridges, will guide us toward greater unity, healing and hope.

His experience in South America, particularly Peru, and Europe gives him a unique perspective on unifying the church across continents. Though relatively new to the College of Cardinals, he is a spiritual leader serving as prefect of the Dicastery of Bishops, a prominent role in the Catholic Church.

As we embark on this new chapter, let us unite in prayer for our Holy Father, that he may be granted wisdom, strength and grace to lead the Catholic Church in these times.

I encourage each of you to participate in this momentous occasion by attending Masses offered for the intentions of Pope Leo, and by including him in your prayers. May we, as a diocesan family, support our new Pope through our faith and sense of community.

Let us also remember the words of Pope Francis, who reminded us that "the church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open." May we continue to embody this spirit of openness and love in our communities.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Lawrence T. Persico

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie

