

## **POPE LEO XIV STEPS ONTO THE WORLD STAGE**

"Peace be with all of you!" Those were the first words of Pope Leo XIV, the newly appointed leader of the Catholic Church.

"To all people, wherever they are, to all the people of the earth," he continued, in fluent Italian, "may peace be with you." He is now tasked with delivering it.

Prevost's appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica was the culmination of a centuries-old election ritual in which specially selected cardinals, sworn to secrecy, gathered behind the closed doors of the Sistine Chapel to decide who could best lead the church through a period of immense change.

He succeeds Pope Francis, who died on April 21, onto the world stage, and will be expected to continue in the globally beloved leader's path toward a more open, inclusive church that advocates for the poor and the marginalized.

The voting began on Wednesday night with an inconclusive result. Another three rounds were held on Thursday, before Cardinal Prevost obtained the required two-thirds majority. The fact that the voting took less than two days shows that the cardinal-electors were largely united in their choice of a man known for his solid judgment, his sharp insight, and a steady hand to lead the church through a tumultuous time.

The papal tradition of a cardinal taking a new name as he is announced pope symbolizes his rebirth as custodian of the church. The chosen name often signals the direction the new Pope intends to take. By choosing the name Leo, Prevost was making a powerful statement. Pope Leo XIII, whose turn-of-the-20th century pontificate marked a period of global turmoil defined by the industrial revolution, was known for his defence of the rights of workers, his advocacy for immigrants and his care for the poor.