



SUMMER 2025

Volume 20, #2

VOICES OF OUR WORLD

Contact us!
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Liên lạc chúng tôi!



Director's Greetings

Habemus Papam!

For the past twelve years, Pope Francis led the Church as an intellectual who happened to be a pastor – and a pastor who happened to be an intellectual. I will personally remember him for encouraging priests to spend time crafting their homilies in ways that touch not only the ears but the hearts of the faithful.

How can we forget the moment when, in the gloom of a rainy evening, he walked from the middle of St. Peter's Square to pray for a world absorbed in fear from the emerging global COVID-19 pandemic? There are so many portraits and gestures, words of mercy, and grace-filled moments that will stay with us forever. Among Pope Leo XIV's first public remarks from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, upon being elected pontiff, was "Thank you, Pope Francis!" We echo these words in gratitude to a holy man who came from, as Pope Francis said of himself, "the ends of the earth" to lead the Church through tumultuous times. He leaves a legacy that will inspire vocations to mission in years to come. Viva El Papa!

I'm often asked, by those discerning missionary priesthood or Brotherhood, about our Maryknoll admission requirements. Here are the basics: you need to be between 21–40 years old; have some work experience; hold a high school degree; have some college credits, preferably a bachelor's degree; be in good health and largely debt-free, to name some. Those discerning from abroad would also need to be from a country where we currently serve. When you contact me, I can explain more about these requirements.

But, there's more – that "something more" that has to do with passion, prayer and people. It's that "something more" we could recognize in Pope Francis and see, even now, in the life story of our new pope, Leo XIV. It's a sense of life and purpose that draws one's heart to God and humanity, bringing both together in the same moment, prayer and open hand of service. It's the passion to seek what makes you come alive, and then doing it. As the great American theologian and mystic, Howard Thurman observed, "What the world needs right now are people who have come alive."



Are you one of them? Or, do you long to be? If so, contact us! Let's talk, explore and seek together life where it yearns to be found – in Christ.

So, where do we go from here? In June, Maryknoll celebrates two priesthood ordinations. We are blessed to have the Bishop of El Paso, Bishop Mark J. Seitz, travel to our mother house in New York to ordain our two soon-to-be priests. Their first assignment is Taiwan! 祝你們平安.

Finally, the next time Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter Sunday on the same day will be in the year 2028. As pilgrims of hope, we pray for Christian unity. Though our languages and cultures may seem unintelligible, may the fire of life and Spirit unite us all in Christ through Pentecost. *Habemus missionem!*

Be assured of my prayers! Thanks for reading our newsletter. Until next edition...

– Fr. Rodrigo



Come & See



A retreat for men discerning
missionary priesthood or Brotherhood



October 17th - 19th, 2025, Chicago, IL
Contact Fr. Rodrigo for information

HOLY WEEK RETREAT - EL PASO, TX

APRIL 16TH - 20TH, 2025



"We proclaim the resurrection of Christ when his light illuminates the dark moments of our existence, and we are able share it with others."

-- Pope Francis



Photos clockwise from top left: 1. Warm hospitality from las Hermanas Dominicas de la Doctrina Cristina; 2. Historic El Paso Mission Trail excursion; 3. Holy Thursday service at Opportunity Center; 4. Painted rocks from Holy Family ministry; 5. Mount Cristo Rey prayer hike; 6. "What about it @ Whataburger?" - late night faith sharing; 7. Easter Vigil celebration at Sagrada Corazon parish.

Maryknollers celebrate Pope Leo XIV



(CNS photo/Vatican Media)

A Shared Experience

When I saw the headlines that the first American Pope had been elected, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the new Pope, formerly Cardinal Robert Prevost, OSA, had received his Master of Divinity degree from Catholic Theological Union (CTU), the same seminary where I had begun studying just ten years later. CTU is located on the south side of Chicago; it prides itself in not only being a seminary, but a school of ministry located in a large urban area with diverse opportunities for serving people from all walks of life. The mission of CTU is to prepare leaders for the Church who are rooted in Catholic tradition and who respond to the needs of contemporary society with a special emphasis on cross-cultural ministry and global mission.

When I studied there, CTU hosted students from more than twenty different countries. Over half of the student body were laity preparing for ministry, many of them women. This gave seminarians a unique opportunity to be formed in a church marked by diversity – experience important for any church leader today, especially those preparing for a missionary vocation.

CTU is unique in that it is sponsored by more than twenty different Catholic religious communities. It also maintains strong relationships with theological schools of other Christian denominations as well as non-Christian faith traditions. This helped to instill within me a deeper appreciation for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.

It gives me great pride to know that Pope Leo XIV most likely had similar experiences in his formative years as he approached ordination. He obviously also has a strong grounding in Augustinian spirituality as a member of that religious

community. In addition, he served for many years as a missionary in Peru, both as priest and bishop. This is an experience in itself that can be deeply transformative, especially when one walks closely alongside the local people.

Perhaps because of this, Pope Francis showed tremendous trust in Bishop Prevost by bringing him to Rome, making him a key person in the appointment of new bishops, and elevating him to cardinal. We can be confident that Pope Leo XIV shares Pope Francis' pastoral values and vision of ministry. Finally, Cardinal Prevost's choice of the name, Leo, is significant – recalling Pope Leo XIII, the pope considered to be the father of modern Catholic Social Teaching. In this way, Pope Leo XIV signals his own commitment to human dignity, social justice, economics in service to humanity, and the just organization of society. All of this gives me great hope for the Church under the leadership and vision of Pope Leo XIV.

- Fr. Dennis Moorman, MM



Fr. Dennis greeting parishioners on mission in Brazil

Peace Be With You All

I was listening to the radio while driving when the news broke; white smoke arising from the Sistine Chapel's chimney. I pulled over at the next restaurant – a pizzeria – and rushed in to find patrons watching the news from Rome on CNN.

I ordered a slice of pizza not because I was hungry but to pass the time while awaiting the new pope to emerge; a European I expected. When Cardinal Robert Prevost – a native of Chicago and long-time missionary in Peru – stepped up to the balcony as our new pontiff, I thought, "Wow, this is truly a work of the Holy Spirit!"

But the surprise turned more personal when, moments later, Fr. Beck, a commentator, remarked that our new pope is a graduate of Catholic Theological Union (CTU) – my alma mater for seminary studies. Fr. Beck mentioned Sister Dianne Bergant, CSA, a CTU faculty member and Biblical scholar; both Pope Leo XIV and I studied under her. She was my favorite professor! I felt a sense of pride in seeing a CTU graduate ascend to the position of the new shepherd of our Church.

Pope Leo XIV began his first remarks with the simple greeting, "Peace be with you all." This message resonates deeply within our global movement, encompassing a variety of religious traditions. He continued, "This is the peace of the Risen Christ, a disarmed peace and a disarming, humble and persevering peace. It comes from God, God who loves us all unconditionally." We are especially inspired by his dedication to promoting such peace.

This profound understanding of peace as a divine gift, offered unconditionally to all of humanity, aligns beautifully with the core values of Maryknoll missionaries and their commitment to various faith traditions. Pope Leo XIV's spiritual call to "build bridges through dialogue and encounter, uniting us all as one people, always in peace," closely reflects Maryknoll's ongoing efforts to promote understanding, cooperation, and reconciliation among different religions in order to achieve a shared sense of sacred flourishing.

We, Maryknoll, offer our prayers and support as Pope Leo begins this pastoral leadership. May the Holy Spirit continue to surprise, and may the Wisdom and Grace of God guide his path and ours always.

- Fr. Alfonso Kim, MM



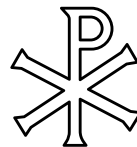
Joy & Happiness

It is, for me, a great joy and happiness to receive the good news of the election of our Holy Father Leo XIV. It is also a great honor to learn that Pope Leo XIV received his Master in Divinity degree from Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago – the theological institution where I and many other Maryknollers have been sent to complete our academic preparations before final oath and, for those of us preparing for missionary priesthood, our ordination.

I feel a special connection to the Holy Father because we both studied at CTU; we probably had some of the same professors there. What a great blessing it is to learn too that Pope XIV, besides being an Augustinian religious priest, was also a missionary in Peru. I appreciated hearing the Pope offering the same greeting of peace to everyone from the loggia at Saint Peters Basilica as did our Lord Jesus Christ after His Resurrection.

I give thanks to God for the election of our Holy Father Leo XIV. Let us pray for the new Pope, and for the Church at this time of joy and happiness!

- Fr. Roberto Rodriguez, MM



Remembering Pope Francis



"My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an 'extra' or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world."

- Pope Francis

