



## **Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference**

### **SACBC Welcomes Pope Leo XIV with Gratitude and Prayer**

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) extends heartfelt congratulations to Pope Leo XIV on his election as the 267th Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

In a spirit of unity and faith, the bishops express profound gratitude to His Holiness for embracing the immense responsibility of shepherding the Universal Church.

Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, was elected on May 8, 2025, following Pope Francis's death on Easter Monday, April 22, 2025. His election is historic, marking the first time a pontiff hails from the United States. Born in Chicago, Pope Leo XIV has a rich background in missionary work, notably in Peru, and has served in significant roles within the Vatican, including as head of the Dicastery for Bishops.

In his inaugural address from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo XIV greeted the faithful with the words, "Peace be with you!"—echoing the Risen Christ's greeting to His apostles. This message of peace resonates deeply with the SACBC, which recognizes the Pope's call for all to be peacemakers and bridge builders in a world yearning for reconciliation and unity.

The SACBC pledges unwavering support and assures Pope Leo XIV of continuous prayers. Acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead, the bishops pray that the Holy Father places his trust in the Lord, who has chosen him and promises to be with him always. The bishops ask that God grant him wisdom, courage, and strength to sow the peace he spoke of in his first words as Pope.

The bishops express hope that Pope Leo XIV's leadership will bring about greater unity within the Church, deepen the faith of the people of God, and offer guidance to millions around the globe during these pivotal times. They commit to walking alongside the Holy Father, holding hands in solidarity, to reinforce the spirit of synodality and promote peace in the world.

Invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and Saints Peter, Paul, and Augustine, the SACBC prays for Almighty God's blessings and protection upon Pope Leo XIV.

*Ad Multos Annos, Pope Leo XIV!*

Archbishop Zolile Peter Mpambani S.C.I  
SACBC First Vice President