

JUNE 17 2025, DEACON MIKE WALSH

I'd like to ask for your indulgence for a moment as I give a brief update about the Daily TV Mass and reflect on this historic time in the Church.

First, thank you to everyone in the Daily TV Mass community for your understanding as we transition from one Pope to the next. As many of you know, the Daily TV Mass is taped in advance—usually just a couple of weeks ahead—to prepare for television, internet, and other platforms. However, due to ongoing construction at the school, we've been taping further in advance than usual while alternating between Loretto Abbey Chapel and the kind hosts at Manresa.

It just so happened that during this period of early taping, Pope Francis passed away, and we were in that phase. Some viewers noticed that the new Pope's name wasn't being mentioned in the Eucharistic Prayer. I've received a number of emails about this. Most were kind and understanding. One email, in particular, stayed with me. It read:

~ I love the Daily TV Mass, but I am heartbroken to see that any mention of Pope Leo XIV seems to be missing from the Mass. Why is this? So far I've noticed four of our priests pass up the Pope only to mention the Bishop clergy. Unconscionable.”

But what really struck me was this line:

~ It feels like it's because he is from the US and not very Christian.”*

Now, I'm not here to comment on the individual who sent that, but it does reflect the tendency in our time to assume the worst intentions. We are in a period where divisions often color our interpretations. My hope is that with Pope Leo XIV, we can move into a new chapter of healing and unity.

Yesterday, we celebrated the first Mass we've taped since the election of Pope Leo XIV, and it feels like a very appropriate moment for renewal.

Let me tell you a short true story. When Pope Francis was first seriously ill, the Archdiocese prepared a list of 30 or so people who could speak to the media if the Pope passed. For some reason, I was asked to be on that list. I agreed.

Eventually, Pope Francis recovered. But when he later died quite suddenly, I was at my desk working on a prayer for the Mass when I got a call—from CTV News, one of Canada's largest networks. I thought, surely they meant to call the Cardinal, not me. But it turned out they really did want me.

Out of curiosity, I asked the producer why I was chosen. Was it my resume, experience, theological training?

She said:

~ "Honestly, you were the only one who answered the phone."

God always finds a way to keep us humble, doesn't He?

During the interview, the reporter asked me an important question:

What do you think the Church needs in the next Pope?"

It's a question that could have easily sparked controversy. In the media, there's often a desire to highlight divisions—traditionalists vs. progressives, as they say.

But my response was simple:

“I believe, with all my heart, that the Holy Spirit, working through the Cardinals, will bring us the Pope we need for this time.”

In our first reading today, St. Paul is shown as a bridge builder, uniting the Gentile Church with the Church in Jerusalem. Even amidst hardship, he encouraged mutual support—bringing people together in love.

And that got me thinking about the Popes of my lifetime. I was born in the mid-1950s, during the papacy of Pius XII, the so-called “Wartime Pope”—a cautious and prayerful figure during one of the most difficult periods in modern history.

Then came John XXIII, whom many saw as a temporary “caretaker.” But guided by the Holy Spirit, he launched Vatican II, opening the Church to the modern world.

Paul VI followed, a wise and courageous leader who helped implement the Council’s changes and whose writings now seem strikingly prophetic.

Then came John Paul I, the “Smiling Pope,” whose brief but joyful presence paved the way for John Paul II, whom I’d call “The Great Pope.” His global impact, especially on young people and political history, cannot be overstated.

Next was Pope Benedict XVI, the “Theologian Pope,” who taught truth with humility.

And then, Pope Francis, the pastor who lived the Gospel of mercy, inclusion, and care for the poor.

Each Pope brought something essential to the Church.

And now, we welcome Pope Leo XIV, the first American Pope. When the Cardinal announced his name, many of us were bewildered—just like the crowd at Pentecost, when they heard the apostles speaking in many tongues. But joy quickly followed.

The name “Leo” evokes the great Leo XIII, father of Catholic social teaching. Pope Leo XIV is known as a missionary and pastor at heart. His love for his people in Peru and his global perspective as a North American give us hope. More importantly, his deep pastoral care and missionary spirit suggest he will be a bridge builder—just like St. Paul.

My prayer for Pope Leo XIV is that he will teach us what it truly means to be disciples of Christ—to go forth in peace from each Mass, bearing witness through our lives like the early Christians.

Let us be led by the Holy Spirit, even when the path is not easy. Let us choose each day to live in a way that glorifies God, trusts in His will, and builds unity in a divided world.

God bless you all.