

Caritas Australia joins the global church in joyously welcoming Pope Leo XIV.

Caritas Australia lifts itself in heartfelt prayer as His Holiness Pope Leo begins his sacred ministry, pledging to follow and support him in a spirit of service and synodality.

Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert Prevost, was born in Chicago Illinois, and most recently served as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. Prior to this, he was the Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru, where he lived for more than 20 years. He was on the Caritas Peru Board of Directors between 2022-2024.

The choice of the name Leo is deeply significant as this month marks the 134th anniversary of Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, on the condition of the working classes. This suggests a clear commitment to the social apostolate of the Church and associated Catholic Social Teachings, notably human dignity and preferential options for the poor.

"This is an exciting moment for the Church and the world," said **Alistair Dutton, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis**. "Pope Leo's immediate identification with issues of peace, solidarity, dialogue, and charity, and particularly his commitment to people who suffer is an early indication to his commitment to a missionary Church for the poor and social justice. We look forward to continuing our mission and working with the Holy Father to bring hope where it is needed most."

Kirsten Sayers CEO of Caritas Australia said, "In welcoming His Holiness Pope Leo Caritas Australia recommits itself to standing in solidarity with the world's most vulnerable. The leadership of the church is vital to our mission of upholding hope, dignity, and justice for all. The legacy of Pope Francis is one of theological leadership on approaches to the challenges of debt, climate impacts, conflict, and hunger. We readily invite new leadership that further inspires us to respond to rising inequality with love, compassion, and action."

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