



**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**MAY 18, 2025**

## Conference President, VP attend Papal Inauguration Mass

The Inauguration Mass for Pope Leo XIV reflected the Holy Father's call for unity and communion across our world, said Australian Catholic Bishops Conference President Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB.

Archbishop Costelloe and the Conference Vice President, Bishop Greg Bennet, were joined by Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP (Archbishop of Sydney), Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli (Archbishop of Melbourne), Bishop Anthony Randazzo (Bishop of Broken Bay and President of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania) and Ukrainian Catholic Church Bishop, Cardinal Mykola Bychok, at the Mass of Inauguration on Sunday, 18 May.

The Mass was attended by an estimated 250,000 people including Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Pope Leo said in his homily his first desire was for a "united Church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world".

"In this our time we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalises the poorest.

"For our part, we want to be a small leaven of unity, communion and fraternity within the world.

"We want to say to the world, with humility and joy: Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles! Listen to his offer of love and become his one family: in the one Christ, we are one.

"This is the path to follow together, among ourselves but also with our sister Christian churches, with those who follow other religious paths, with those who are searching for God, with all women and men of good will, in order to build a new world where peace reigns!"

Archbishop Costelloe said the Mass had underlined the Pope's message of peace and his role as a focal point of unity.

"There's an instinct in Catholics that we need that something that holds us together. And then for us as bishops, we have this tradition of thinking about the bishops as the successors of the apostles and the Pope as the successor of St Peter, as head of the apostles.

“That sense of unity with the Pope is important ... I think it's all about unity, communion, belonging together, supporting each other.”

Archbishop Costelloe said it also symbolised the shifts in numerical strength within the Church, from Europe to Africa and Asia.

“There's a new face of the Church emerging, and having a Pope who is from America, spent a lot of time in South America, but understands the European scene well ... he'll be well placed to face the challenges of a truly global church.

“I think it's an exciting time. We're looking forward to seeing what he's going to do next.”

Bishop Bennet said there was a great sense of joy in Australia about the new Pope.

“Pope Leo has spoken about peace. And I think the world needs that voice, the voice of hope, the voice of truth, the voice of beauty. And I think he can bring that to us.

“It's an exciting time for the world to have somebody who can speak into that ... to breathe hope and joy to others.

“And I expect Pope Leo will continue to speak into the missionary aspect of the Church, and particularly issues of poverty where people are marginalised, to be able to really encourage the world to see as themselves as brothers and sisters.”