



LEO XIV, BUILDING BRIDGES AND CREATING PATHWAYS OF HOPE IN A DIVIDED WORLD

CIDSE STATEMENT

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As the world welcomes the election of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the first North American Pope in history, CIDSE and its member organisations share their prayers and hopes for the new pontificate, reaffirming their commitment to justice, peace and care for our common home.

Peace is the key word used by Leo XIV immediately after the proclamation of 'Habemus Papam'. *"Peace be with you all,"* begins the new Pope. *"Dear brothers and sisters, this is the first greeting of the Risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the flock of God. I too wish this greeting of peace to enter our hearts, to your families, to all people, wherever they may be, to all peoples, to the whole earth. Peace be with you".*

At a time of global armament, the newly elected Pope defined his idea of peace as 'unarmed': *"This is the peace of the risen Christ. An unarmed peace and a disarming peace, humble and persevering. It comes from God. A God who loves us all unconditionally".*

In his first words, he also made special mention of the dioceses of Chiclayo in Peru, the country where he served first as a missionary and then as archbishop, demonstrating his concern for marginalised communities and migrants.

As a family of Catholic social justice organisations, CIDSE finds deep meaning and encouragement in Pope Leo XIV's choice of name – following the footsteps of Leo XIII, one of the most inspiring voices in modern Catholic Social Teaching. We are reminded that the Church's mission of justice, peace and solidarity is not only ongoing but urgently needed in today's world. It fills it with hope - but also with a renewed sense of purpose. Guided by the legacy of work already underway, we are committed to walking this path with Pope Leo XIV, working for a world where the dignity of every person and care for our common home is at the heart of global transformation.

The following reactions were shared by **Josianne Gauthier** (CIDSE Secretary General), **Caoimhe de Barra** (CIDSE President) and **Bishop Tesfaselassie Medhin** (CIDSE Spiritual Advisor) immediately after the election of Pope Francis' successor.

"In a world so divided, the first words of his Holiness Pope Leo XIV fill us with hope for a shared and just peace among all people on earth. We are grateful for this call to continue the work of a synodal Church that welcomes all and includes the voices of those farthest from the centers of power. We pray that we can support Pope Leo in his work for greater social justice and peace, connecting and healing the broken relationships with each other and with our planet. We look forward to walking together as a human family, humbly, but courageously, for a better future for all, especially the most marginalised" – **Josianne Gauthier, CIDSE Secretary General.**

"On behalf of CIDSE I congratulate His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on his election and wish him strength and good health as he embarks on his Papacy. We pray that Pope Leo XIV continues the extraordinary work of Pope Francis in calling out the injustices

perpetrated against the most vulnerable and in highlighting the need for the protection of the environment for the common good of all. This work is more important now than ever with conflict affecting so many regions and climate change driving millions of people further into poverty. We pray that Pope Leo XIV has the same courage and determination to tackle injustice as Pope Francis and that he brings fresh energy and vision to achieving positive and systemic global change” – **Caoimhe de Barra, CIDSE President and CEO of Trócaire.**

“We praise God that the day is blessed with great news: "Habemus Papam", Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as Pope Leo XIV. We pray for Pope Leo XIV, that he, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, will courageously stand up for justice and peace, that he will once again set sail in the Catholic Church in the midst of today's turbulent world order of immense complexity and growing socio-pastoral challenges, as did Pope Leo XIII (known as the "Father of Social Doctrine") in his time, and Pope Francis in recent years” – **Bishop Abune Tesfaselassie Medhin, CIDSE Spiritual Advisor.**

Rooted in faith and inspired by the Pope's message of "unarmed peace", we recommit ourselves to walk this journey together - faithfully, courageously and in solidarity with those on the frontlines. May this new papacy, especially in this Jubilee Year, be a beacon of hope and guide us all to become builders of peace and stewards of creation.