

BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

Rt. Rev. Philip A. Egan BA, STL, PhD



A PASTORAL MESSAGE FROM BISHOP PHILIP
to the People and Clergy of the Diocese
on the Fourth Sunday of Easter, 11th May 2025

HABEMUS PAPAM!

My dear People,

Habemus papam! We have a pope! On behalf of the whole Diocese of Portsmouth, I am delighted to welcome our new holy father: Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost. He has been elected as 276th Successor of St. Peter and has taken the name, Pope Leo XIV. He is first for many things: the first North American and Peruvian, the first Augustinian, and the first pope from an English-speaking country since Pope Adrian IV. Born in Chicago in 1955, he joined the Order of St. Augustine and was ordained to the priesthood in 1982. He served as seminary professor, provincial, and eventually Prior General. For most of his life, he served as a missionary in Peru. Pope Francis appointed him as Bishop of Chiclayo in 2015. In 2023 he was made a cardinal and served as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

In his first address, Pope Leo XIV stressed the importance of Christ being a bridge: "Humanity needs him as the bridge to be reached by God and his love. Help us too, and then each other to build bridges, with dialogue, with encounter, uniting us all to be one people always in peace." In this time of challenge and difficulty in many parts of the world, he is reminding us to turn to Christ, the ultimate bridge-builder. One of the roles of a Pope is to be a *pontifex* or bridge between bishops, Christians, and all of humanity. The Church has a crucial role in bridge building: "We must seek together how to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges and dialogue, always open to receive - like this square with its open arms - all those who need our charity, our presence and our love."

Let us pray for Pope Leo XIV, the visible source and foundation of our unity in faith, that through his words and example he may be of service to the flock entrusted to his care. God bless our Pope! May Mary Immaculate pray for him. May St. Peter pray for him. May St. Edmund of Abingdon pray for him.

In Corde Iesu,

+Philip

Bishop of Portsmouth