

# The New York Times: -An American Pope Emerges as a Potential Contrast to Trump- [C2]

La posizione di Papa Leone XIV sull'immigrazione e la sua formazione pluralista offrono una visione dei valori americani molto diversa dall'approccio autoritario e isolazionista di Donald Trump.

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Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost's ascension to the papacy marks an extraordinary moment for American leadership on the world stage at a time when President Donald Trump has transformed the country's reputation abroad and [fuelled distrust](#) among longtime allies. But while two Americans now sit in positions of enormous global influence, Pope Leo XIV may offer the world a different view of US values from Trump's America First approach, which he has executed through stiff tariffs, imperialist musings and vast cuts to foreign aid. When he was introduced to the world, the new pope — who speaks five languages and is a [naturalized](#) citizen of Peru — emphasized his pluralistic background, [making a point of](#) speaking in Italian (representing his new [constituency](#)) and Spanish (his old one.) He spoke no English and made no reference to the United States, even as some Catholics in St. Peter's Square excitedly waved US flags. (On Friday, he spoke briefly in English when he delivered his first homily.) There are indications that the first American pontiff disapproves of some of the Trump administration's [hard-line stances](#). A social media account under his name has reposted messages critical of the president's positions on issues including immigration, gun control and climate change. In February, the account shared a link to an article in The National Catholic Reporter titled "J. D. Vance Is Wrong: Jesus Doesn't Ask Us to [Rank](#) Our Love for Others." "We have this powerful moral voice that is going to be able to potentially confront the other most powerful American voice," said Charlie Sykes, an anti-Trump conservative who is Catholic. "Donald Trump [bestrides](#) the world as the ugly American, and now we have another prominent American who is able to confront him." Sykes said Leo's advocacy on behalf of migrants, in particular, could challenge Trump, who [has pursued](#) an aggressive campaign to deport them as quickly as possible. "Part of Donald Trump's appeal is that he is the great champion of [Christendom](#), and now he's going to have to explain that to a

[fellow American](#) who is the pope,” Sykes said. “There are very few, if any, figures that have the platform and the voice of the [Holy See](#).” John Prevost, the pope’s brother, told The New York Times in an interview that he did not think his brother would [shy away](#) from [voicing](#) his disagreements with the president. “I know he’s not happy with what’s going on with immigration,” he said. “I [know that for a fact](#). How far he’ll go with [it is only one’s guess](#), but he won’t just sit back. I don’t think he’ll be the silent one.” Still, Vatican analysts say Leo is more reserved than his predecessor, and while they expect him to continue to defend migrants and the poor, some do not expect him to do so in as [outspoken](#) a manner as Pope Francis. Trump and his supporters have also found aspects of the new pope’s background that excite them, including his ardent anti-abortion advocacy and his opposition to a government plan in Peru to add teachings on gender in schools. “He’s said and done some mixed things in the past,” said John Yep, CEO of Catholics for Catholics, a group that supports Trump. “Let’s see how he does. I don’t want [to rush](#) to judgments [right off the bat](#).” In the hours since Leo’s selection, the president has had only [praise](#) for the church’s new leader. Trump and Vice President J. D. Vance congratulated him in posts on social media and celebrated his American [heritage](#). “The president made his reaction to Pope Leo’s announcement yesterday very clear,” Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary, told reporters Friday when asked about the pope’s comments. “He’s very proud to have an American pope.” It is unclear if either Trump or Vance had been aware of Leo’s criticism of their policies, but some of the president’s most strident supporters have registered their displeasure. “He is anti-Trump, anti-MAGA, pro-open borders, and a total Marxist like Pope Francis,” Laura Loomer, the far-right activist who has persuaded Trump to fire some of his [aides](#) for not being loyal enough, wrote on the social platform X. “Catholics don’t have anything good to look forward to. Just another Marxist [puppet](#) in the Vatican.” Democrat Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, a former [House speaker](#) and a devout Catholic, [praised](#) Leo’s commitment to the poor and said she hoped he could unite American Catholics across [partisan divides](#). “His values-based vision for the church is quite different from what we’re seeing from some leaders, if you call them that, in our country, but I don’t expect him to be [engaged](#) in a political debate with the president of the United States,” she said in an interview.

Even though Leo is an American by birth, he has spent most of his adult life outside the country, and now as the head of state of another nation, it remains to be seen what relationship he will have with the United States. Francis, who [hailed from](#) Argentina, never returned to his place of birth after becoming the church's leader. American cardinals said at a news conference Friday that Leo's American identity was not a factor in his selection. When he was announced, the Vatican made no mention of his US nationality, instead introducing him as the second pope from the Americas. Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the archbishop emeritus of Washington, D.C., said the conclave was not seen as a "continuation of the American election." The cardinals' selection of an American pope defied the prevailing belief that the church would not choose a leader from the global superpower. In the days [leading up to](#) the conclave, Catholic commentators speculated that Trump's disruption of the global political and economic order made a US-born pope even more unlikely. Indeed, some spectators gathered in St. Peter's Square on Thursday were [bewildered](#) when his identity emerged. "Un Americano?" several [muttered](#) in Italian. Some analysts have posited that the cardinals selected Leo precisely because of Trump. The president agitated many Catholics, even some of his allies, when he posted an AI-generated image of himself dressed as the pope after Francis died. "The president might well be right to claim credit for the selection, at least in part, given the photo he posted on social media," said Rocco Palmo, a Catholic church analyst. "The choice of Leo is the cardinals' way of saying, 'This is our process, and we decide what is Catholic, not the White House.'" © 2025 The New York Times Company This article originally appeared in The New York Times

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# Glossary

- **it is only one's guess** = si può solo ipotizzare
- **fuelled distrust** = alimentare la sfiducia
- **making a point of** = insistere su
- **hard-line stances** = posture intransigenti
- **shy away** = evitare
- **bestrides** = sedere a cavalcioni di, stare a cavalcioni di
- **hailed from** = essere originario di
- **muttered** = borbottare
- **has pursued** = attuare, portare avanti
- **Christendom** = cristianità
- **Holy See** = Santa Sede
- **aides** = assistenti
- **House speaker** = presidente della Camera dei rappresentanti degli Stati Uniti
- **fellow American** = connazionale americano
- **outspoken** = esplicita
- **praise** = elogio
- **puppet** = marionetta
- **voicing** = esprimere
- **to rush** = affrettarsi
- **leading up to** = che precede
- **partisan divides** = schieramenti politici
- **engaged** = prendere parte
- **constituency** = diocesi
- **know that for a fact** = lo so per certo
- **right off the bat** = su due piedi
- **heritage** = discendenza
- **naturalized** = naturalizzato
- **Rank** = classificare
- **bewildered** = perplesso