



News Release

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Statement of Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly Following the Election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Following the election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly issued the following statement:

"The Knights of Columbus joins Catholics everywhere in celebrating the election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, the successor of St. Peter and spiritual leader of the Catholic Church. On behalf of our 2.1 million members around the world, I pledge our loyalty to Pope Leo XIV as well as our prayers today and every day of his pontificate. The Knights of Columbus will always stand in solidarity with Pope Leo XIV as we support the Church's mission of evangelization through our works of charity and faith formation.

"Pope Leo XIV, the first American Pope, assumes the Petrine ministry with a strong familiarity with the Knights of Columbus. I was honored to meet with him in 2023, shortly after the beginning of his tenure as Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops, and I know firsthand of his sincere appreciation for the Knights of Columbus and our service to the Church around the world. Our Order began during the pontificate of Pope Leo XIII — and in the years ahead, we will proudly stand with Pope Leo XIV as we seek together to build up the Kingdom of God.

"Since our founding in 1882 by Blessed Michael McGivney, fidelity to the Holy Father has been a defining characteristic of the Knights of Columbus. As it was with his predecessors, the pastoral priorities of Pope Leo XIV will guide and inform everything we do."

Following the First World War, the Knights of Columbus answered the invitation of Pope Benedict XV to open sports fields to serve the youth of Rome. And ever since, for more than a century, the Knights has enjoyed a long and enduring relationship with each successive Pope. Since 1980, the Knights of Columbus has sponsored numerous restoration projects at the Vatican, most recently the restoration of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's iconic Baldacchino over the papal altar and tomb of St. Peter, as well as the Chair of St. Peter monument, both undertaken in anticipation of the Jubilee Year 2025.