



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIocese of
SPRINGFIELD—CAPE GIRARDEAU

Office of the Bishop

Pope Leo XIV - Our new Holy Father
by **The Most Rev. Edward M Rice**

Since the funeral of Pope Francis, on April 26, I have been alternating between the Mass prayers of the Holy Spirit and the Mass for the election of a Pope. And I'm struck by the thoughts expressed in the Mass prayers.

In the opening prayer for the election of the Pope, we ask almighty God to send us a pastor for your Church, a shepherd, who will fulfill his role through his personal holiness. And that in and of itself is a reminder for the entire Church of the importance of the pursuit of holiness. I believe this pope will serve by his example and his witness to the faith just as much as any words that he might preach in a homily.

Also in those prayers, we pray that as Pope Leo XIV begins his Petrine ministry, his ministry will be pleasing to Almighty God. That should be his first priority: to be faithful to and please Almighty God. The prayers then continue—that he will instruct us by his own virtues and then preach the truth of the Gospel.

And so, along with the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, we must trust and rejoice that the Holy Spirit has guided the College of Cardinals in this decision. We can assume that the selection of Pope Leo XIV is the work of God.

Those who were able to follow the beginnings of the Conclave saw how everything was enveloped in prayer. The prayers to the Holy Spirit, the litany of the Saints, their own personal prayer, all with the goal of being open to select the Pope needed for our age.

As we learn more about Pope Leo XIV, we discover his love for the missions which fits in perfectly with the writings of Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XIV, and Francis, calling the Church to be on the move, a Missionary Church, challenging each member of the Church to be an intentional disciple.

Since he served under Pope Francis as prefect for the Dicastery for Bishops, he worked closely with Pope Francis in the selection of bishops throughout the world. Pope Francis specifically chose him saying that he wanted a missionary, somebody from outside, he wanted someone who would come in with a different perspective.

As a final thought, Pope Leo XIV belongs to the Augustinian order. You may recall a famous quote of St. Augustine, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee.” In the present world, people are searching for meaning in life, they wonder the purpose of their existence. St. Augustine would say, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.” When our hearts rest in God, life makes sense, we discover our purpose.