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U.S. Vice President JD Vance, holding their daughter, smiles with his wife, Usha, who is holdin

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, holding their daughter, smiles with his wife, Usha, who is holding their son, before the start of the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 18, 2025. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez)



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Rome — April 18, 2025
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U.S. Vice President JD Vance attended the Vatican's Good Friday liturgy on April 18, during a visit aimed at rehabilitating the prominent Catholic convert's relationship with church leaders following months of tension over the Trump administration's migration policy.

Vance attended the Passion liturgy with his wife, Usha, and their three young children. The second family entered St. Peter's Basilica with more than a dozen Secret Service members just a few moments before the start of the liturgy at 5 p.m. local time.

Vance arrived here in Rome Good Friday morning on an official visit with his family to the Italian capital. His first meeting was with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, a close ally of the U.S. President Donald Trump.

Since taking office in January, Vance — who converted to Roman Catholicism six years ago — has tangled with U.S. bishops after claiming in media interviews that their longstanding advocacy on behalf of migrants and refugees was motivated by financial interests.

A tone-deaf Good Friday tweet from US embassy at Vatican: Curb illegal immigration



U.S. Vice President JD Vance with son Vivek at a Good Friday service at St. Peter's Basilica, on April 18, 2025. (AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino)

The self-described "baby Catholic" has also cited theology to justify the Trump administration's deportation of migrants — earning him a rare rebuke from the pontiff.

The Passion liturgy was presided over by Italian Cardinal Claudio Gugerotti, prefect of the Vatican dicastery for the Eastern Churches. On Saturday (April 19), Vance is expected to hold a closed-door meeting with Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's secretary of state.

It is still unknown whether the vice president will greet Pope Francis as he continues to recover from double-pneumonia.

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On Thursday, April 17, Francis made a surprise visit to a Roman prison to visit with prisoners on Holy Thursday, but the Vatican media office has not said whether the pope will participate in any of the Holy Week and Easter celebrations.

Prior to Vance's arrival at the Vatican, the vice president posted on social media wishing Christians around the world a Good Friday.

"I'm grateful every day for this job, but particularly today where my official duties have brought me to Rome on Good Friday," he wrote. "I had a great meeting with Prime Minister Meloni and her team, and will head to church soon with my family in this beautiful city."



JD and Usha Vance at St. Peter's Basilica on Good Friday 2025 (New York Times/Kenny Holston, via AP, Pool)

"He died so that we might live," Vance wrote.

Later this evening, there will be a Way of the Cross procession at the Colosseum, presided over by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Rome.

The Vatican's liturgical celebrations will continue tomorrow, on April 19, with the Easter Vigil, followed by an outdoor Easter Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square.

The White House and Meloni's office on Friday issued a joint statement that said Trump would visit Italy “in the very near future.”

"There is also consideration to hold, on such occasion, a meeting between U.S. and Europe,” the statement said.

The previous day in the Oval Office at the White House, Trump had lavished praise on the Italian leader for her crackdown on migration but didn't yield on tariff plans

that have increased tensions with the European Union and stoked fears of recession.

The vice president's meeting with Meloni in Rome marked a second day of talks on tariffs and occurred before Good Friday services. Vance in the meeting reaffirmed the U.S.-Italy friendship and told Meloni that he would brief her on some “interesting” developments in Russia-Ukraine negotiations. “Big trade negotiations” would continue, he said.

Like Trump, Vance seemed dazzled by Meloni's Italian language even though he didn't understand what she was saying.

“Of course, she could have called me a jerk and I wouldn’t know, but it would be in the most beautiful language imaginable, so I wouldn’t even get offended,” he said at the start of their talks.

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