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Pope Leo XIV speaks with the College of Cardinals in the New Synod Hall at the Vatican May 1

Pope Leo XIV speaks with the College of Cardinals in the New Synod Hall at the Vatican May 10, 2025, during his first formal address to the college since his election May 8. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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Pope Leo XIV laid out the vision of his papacy Saturday (May 10), making clear that he will follow in the modernizing reforms of Pope Francis to make the Catholic Church inclusive, attentive to the faithful and a church that looks out for the "least and rejected."

Citing Francis repeatedly, he told the cardinals who elected him that he was fully committed to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the 1960s meetings that modernized the church.

In his first formal audience, Leo said he identified with his predecessor, who addressed the great social questionsof the day in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

"In our own day, the church offers everyone the treasury of its social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and

labour,” he said.

Leo also identified artificial intelligence as one of the main issues facing humanity, saying it poses challenges to defending human dignity, justice and labor.

He referred to AI in explaining the choice of his name: His namesake, Pope Leo XIII, was pope from 1878 to 1903 and laid the foundation for modern Catholic social thought. He did so most famously with his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which addressed workers’ rights and capitalism at the dawn of the industrial age. The late pope criticized both laissez-faire capitalism and state-centric socialism, giving shape to a distinctly Catholic vein of economic teaching.

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