Vatican
Vatican News



A member of the faithful holds their phone after Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City, where an image of the pope was shown on screen at Zocalo Square May 8, 2025, after Cardinal Robert Prevost was announced as Pope Leo XIV. (OSV/Reuters/Henry Romero)



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Pope Leo XIV has confirmed his presence on social media through the official papal accounts on X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram, the Vatican Dicastery for Communication announced today.

Leo XIV inherited the @Pontifex account on X, which had been previously managed by Pope Francis and, before him, Pope Benedict XVI. The account, which communicates in nine languages — English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, German, Polish, Arabic and Latin — has amassed a following of 52 million users. Messages shared by Francis during his pontificate will be preserved in a dedicated archive section on the Vatican's official website.

On Instagram, Pope Leo XIV will be present under the account name @Pontifex — Pope Leo XIV. This platform continues the legacy of Francis' @Franciscus account. In a gesture of remembrance, content from @Franciscus will remain accessible as an "Ad Memoriam" commemorative archive.

Though it has been less than a week since his election, unsubstantiated rumors had begun to spread that Leo would be retreating from social media. Some self proclaimed "traditional Catholics," who have been particularly active on X in the wake of the conclave, were quick to pounce on the rumor.

Others used their own social media accounts to express their skepticism about the papal Twitter presence, calling the @Pontifex account "banal" or a "useless novelty."

The Vatican has since poured cold water on those rumors, saying that Leo will maintain an "active social media presence." In fact, at 4:30 p.m. local time, Leo published his first Instagram post in his new account, greeting all the faithful in the world in a short message inspired by his first public appearance on May 8, that starts with "Peace be with you all!"

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The Vatican's engagement with social media began under Benedict XVI on Dec. 12, 2012, when the @Pontifex account was launched. It marked a historic step for the church's communication strategy, bringing the papal voice to a global digital audience. Four years later, on March 19, 2016, the Vatican expanded its outreach with the creation of the @Franciscus Instagram account, offering followers visual insights into the pope's activities and messages.

Francis used these platforms extensively, publishing around 50,000 posts across both accounts. His messages, often focused on themes of peace, social justice and environmental stewardship, resonated widely. During the height of the global pandemic in 2020, papal messages generated exceptional engagement, with 27 billion views recorded that year alone.

Leo himself is not unfamiliar with social media. He maintained an account on X (formerly Twitter) beginning in 2011, using it to retweet articles critical of the death penalty in the United States, a pro-gun control message in the face of mass shootings, and most recently, to magnify a National Catholic Reporter guest commentary critical of Vice President JD Vance's widely panned and incorrect interpretation of the Catholic teaching ordo amoris.

Leo's decision to continue this digital presence suggests a commitment to maintaining direct communication with the faithful and broader global audiences, as well as continuity with the digital evangelization efforts of Francis. As the church navigates the complexities of modern communication, the Vatican's investment in social media remains a pivotal element in its outreach strategy.

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This story appears in the **Pope Leo XIV** feature series. View the full series.