News



NCR Vatican correspondent Christopher White at work during the synod on synodality in Rome in October 2023 (NCR photo)



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Pope Leo XIV's journey from Chicago to Chiclayo, Peru, and finally to the Vatican will be chronicled in a new book by National Catholic Reporter Vatican correspondent Christopher White.

Leo's election marks a historic turning point for the Catholic Church, positioning the first U.S.-born pontiff at the helm of more than 1.3 billion Catholics worldwide. The newly elected pope inherits the legacy of Pope Francis while facing the challenges of a rapidly changing church.

White's book, *Pope Leo XIV: Inside the Conclave and the Dawn of a New Papacy*, is set for release on July 15 by Loyola Press.

"Loyola Press was excited to have a book about the future pope, whoever he might be," White said. "This project has been in the works for over a year now, and so I was excited, but also overwhelmed, by the prospect of writing a book not knowing who the next pope would be."

White has worked for NCR since 2020, first as a national correspondent based in New York City and reporting from the Vatican since August 2021. He previously worked as a reporter for Crux.

He is joining Georgetown University's Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life in July as associate director for strategic engagement and a senior fellow.

White began his book research by focusing on the legacy of Pope Francis.

The unexpected election of a pope born in the Americas shifted the narrative. "The fact that it's a pope from the United States, in a sense, raises the pressure, because his story is now of even greater interest to so many American readers, Catholic and non-Catholic alike," White said. His aim is to detail "how Leo became Leo."

White's book will explore how the new pope's vision might shape the church's role amid "unprecedented uncertainty and change," highlighting his approach to governance, doctrine and global engagement.

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For Loyola Press, based in Chicago, Leo's election was particularly meaningful. "We never imagined we'd see a Pope from the United States — let alone from our own backyard here in Chicago," said Joellyn Cicciarelli, president and publisher of Loyola Press.

"The connections and touchpoints seem endless. But with the election of Pope Leo XIV, this seemingly impossible dream is now a stunning reality," she said in an email.

She said Loyola Press is releasing White's book at "lightning speed" because of the global demand for insight into the man now leading the Catholic Church.

Cicciarelli praised White's expertise and unique access and said this biography will "offer a vivid, human portrait of a new pope at the dawn of his papacy."

Cicciarelli said many are praying Leo will "lead with compassion and wisdom to help heal some of the deepest wounds in the Church – and in our world. So far, it's looking pretty good. What a blessing."