Vatican
Vatican News
Usha Vance smiles as her husband, U.S. Vice President JD Vance, presents a gift to Pope Leo X

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, with wife Usha Vance, present a gift to Pope Leo XIV in the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican May 19, 2025. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)presents a gift to Pope Leo XIV in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican May 19, 2025. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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Rome — May 19, 2025
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Pope Leo XIV met with U.S. Vice President JD Vance on May 19, the first official sit down encounter between the first ever American-born pope who has sharply criticized Vance's views on migration.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio also joined the meeting at the Vatican's Apostolic Palace, which lasted 45 minutes.

Both men are Roman Catholic and led the U.S. delegation to Pope Leo's inauguration Mass on May 18 at the Vatican.

Pope Leo, when he was Cardinal Robert Prevost, had previously shared multiple articles on his personal social media account that denounced the Trump administration's mass deportation plans. In one article, shared on Feb. 3, the future

pope posted a National Catholic Reporter article that took direct aim at Vance, headlined: "JD Vance is wrong: Jesus doesn't ask us to rank our love for others."

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The Vatican readout of today's meeting between the two men did not divulge the contents of their discussions. After meeting the pope, Vance and Rubio also met with the Vatican's foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Gallagher.

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Pope Leo XIV meets with U.S. Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican May 19, 2025. (CNS/Vatican Media)

"The collaboration between Church and State was discussed, as well as some matters of special relevance to ecclesial life and religious freedom," said the Vatican statement. "Finally, there was an exchange of views on some current international issues, calling for respect for humanitarian law and international law in areas of conflict and for a negotiated solution between the parties involved."

The meeting comes at a time when both the U.S. and the Holy See are aggressively pushing for an end to Russia's war against Ukraine. In the less than two weeks that have followed since his election, Leo has made multiple appeals for a "just and lasting" peace in Ukraine and has offered the Vatican as a location for potential peace talks.

On Sunday (May 18), both Leo and Vance held separate private meetings with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was also in Rome to attend the pontiff's inauguration.

Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, greets U.S. Vice President JD Vance a

Pope Leo XIV greets U.S. Vice President JD Vance and his wife, Usha Vance, far left, after the pontiff celebrated his inauguration Mass at the Vatican May 18, 2025. (OSV News/Claudia Greco, pool via Reuters)

In official photos released from Vance's meeting with the pope, he is seen presenting the Chicago-born pontiff with a football jersey from the Chicago Bears. The jersey bears the inscription "Pope Leo" with the number 14 in Roman numerals.

Today's papal encounter between Leo and Vance marked the vice president's second trip to the Vatican in less than a month.

On Easter Sunday he had a brief private encounter with Pope Francis — the late pontiff's last official meeting before his death on Easter Monday.

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