News



Cardinal Pietro Parolin (left), secretary of state of the Holy See, meets with Secretary-General António Guterres in New York City May 20, 2025. (UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)

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As Pope Leo XIV begins his pontificate with an emphasis on peace, justice and bridge-building, the Vatican has reaffirmed its "unwavering support for the mission of the United Nations" amid conflict and other urgent challenges facing the global community.

The Vatican's secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, addressed U.N. representatives at the entity's New York headquarters during a May 19 reception in honor of Pope Leo's election.

The reception was organized by Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations.

The Holy See established diplomatic relations with the U.N. in 1957, representing the Vatican City State as well as the supreme authority of the Catholic Church, including the pope as bishop of Rome and the head of the college of bishops.

Attending the U.N. reception just hours after Leo's May 18 inauguration Mass at St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Parolin noted that "the election of a new pope is an occasion for renewal, not only for Catholics but for all who seek a world of greater justice, solidarity and peace."

That message echoed one by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, who said in a May 8 statement that the papal election, along with its "profound spiritual significance ... comes at a time of great global challenges."

Parolin said the pope, "in his first days as the successor of Peter, has expressed his deep commitment to building bridges, underscoring the need to meet, dialogue and negotiate."

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The cardinal described the U.N.'s mission as creating "a forum where states engage in dialogue, bringing forth the voices of their peoples, and where solutions to humanity's greatest challenges are forged."

He said that "Pope Leo calls us to embrace a diplomacy of encounter" amid "a world marked by division, conflict and pressing global issues — from climate change to migration and artificial intelligence."

Currently, more than 120 conflicts are taking place throughout the world, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Among the most prominent are Russia's war in Ukraine; the Israel-Hamas war; civil wars in Myanmar and Sudan; insurgencies in various African nations, as well as in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and armed gang violence that has destabilized Haiti.

Leo has called for "new life" to be breathed into multilateral diplomacy and the international framework for conflict resolution, telling the Vatican diplomatic corps May 16 that peace, justice and truth form "the pillars of the church's missionary activity and the aim of the Holy See's diplomacy" — something Parolin reiterated in his May 19 U.N. address.

The cardinal — who that same evening in New York received the Path to Peace award from the nonprofit Path to Peace Foundation — said such diplomacy "listens with humility, acts with compassion, and seeks the common good above all."

"It is thus that the Holy See, committed to truth and justice, will continue to offer its moral voice in defense of the poor and those in need, and in the pursuit of peace and integral human development," said Parolin. "May we, together, respond to the Holy Father's call and become those who sow peace that will endure through history, not those who reap victims."

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