Vatican
Vatican News



One of the gardens of the papal villa at Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, is seen May 29, 2025, the day Pope Leo XIV made a visit to the villa and the "Borgo Laudato Si'" project, which Pope Francis set up to promote ecology education. (CNS/Pablo Esparza)

Carol Glatz

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Vatican City — June 17, 2025
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Pope Leo XIV will spend two weeks of July at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, bringing back a centuries-old tradition that had been suspended by Pope Francis.

Leo also will celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Mary for the whole town and visitors Aug. 15 as per tradition, according to the Prefecture of the Papal Household.

Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, confirmed Leo would be staying in the Villa Barberini, the former summer residence of the Vatican secretaries of state; Francis turned the former papal palace on the town's main square into a museum, which opened in 2016.

All private audiences with the pope will be suspended during July, including the Wednesday general audiences, which will resume July 30, the prefecture said in a communique June 17.

"On the afternoon of Sunday, July 6, the Holy Father Leo XIV will move to the pontifical villas of Castel Gandolfo for a period of rest" until the afternoon of July 20, it said.

While he is at the hilltop town south of Rome, Leo will celebrate Sunday morning Mass July 13 in the parish Church of St. Thomas of Villanova in Castel Gandolfo's main square, followed by the recitation of the Angelus prayer at noon in the square in front of the apostolic palace.

He will celebrate Sunday morning Mass July 20 in the cathedral of the nearby city of Albano Laziale. He will return to Castel Gandolfo to recite the Angelus at noon in the square and then return to the Vatican in the afternoon, the prefecture said.

Advertisement

Leo will return to the papal summer villa for the three-day holiday weekend of Aug. 15-17. He will celebrate Mass Aug. 15 at the parish of St. Thomas, followed by the Angelus prayer in the square in front of the apostolic palace.

He will also recite the Sunday Angelus at noon Aug. 17 in the square before returning to the Vatican that afternoon, it added.

Castel Gandolfo was the summer residence of popes from 1626 until the election of Francis, who chose to stay at the Vatican and not escape Rome's summer heat at the cooler hilltop papal villa.

The town of close to 9,000 people about 15 miles southeast of Rome had relied on the massive influx of tourists and visitors during the period when popes would vacation there and greet the public at the Sunday Angelus. The highlight was always the feast of the Assumption of Mary Aug. 15 when the pope would celebrate Mass for the whole town and thousands of visitors.

To attract visitors back to the town year-round and not just in the summer, Francis turned the palace into a museum and opened the villa's gardens to tours.

Leo spent several hours May 29 visiting the Borgo Laudato Si' ecology project set up by Francis in 2023 at the papal villa and farm in Castel Gandolfo, as well as the former papal summer residence there.

The papal property at Castel Gandolfo extends over 135 acres — surpassing the 108.7 acres of Vatican City. It includes 74 acres of gardens — 17 of which are formal gardens — 62 acres of farmland, three residences and a farm with chickens, hens, rabbits, assorted fowl, cows and a small dairy operation. There are also fruit and olive orchards, vineyards, hayfields, vegetable patches, aromatic herbs, flowerbeds and plants that often are used to decorate the papal apartments and meeting rooms at the Vatican.

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