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Pope Leo XIV greets faithful in St. Peter's Square at the end of a welcome mass for the Youth Jubilee at the Vatican July 29, 2025. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia)

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A plan for Pope Leo XIV to visit Lebanon as well as Turkey in late November and early December is being studied, a Vatican official said.

Lebanon's Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of the Maronite Catholic Church, told Al Arabiya television Aug. 19 that the pope could visit Lebanon "by the end of the year."

The cardinal said that preparations had already begun but that the dates for the visit had not been confirmed.

The Vatican press office did not respond to a request to comment on Rai's announcement.

The visit to Lebanon could be part of a trip Leo said he hopes to make to Turkey in late November.

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In July, Leo had told a Catholic-Orthodox pilgrimage from the United States that he had hoped to travel to Turkey to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, which first developed the common Christian creed.

Pope Francis had been planning to travel in May to Iznik, the modern site of the ancient city of Nicaea, to mark the anniversary with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

Because it would be his first trip to Turkey as pope, Leo's November trip is likely to include a stop in the capital, Ankara, for meetings with government officials and a visit to the Phanar, the patriarchate's headquarters in Istanbul.

St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Francis all made visits to the patriarchate to join in the Nov. 30 celebrations of the feast of St. Andrew, the patron saint of the patriarchate.