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Pope Leo XIV arrives for an audience on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Choirs in St. Peter's Square, at the Vatican, Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025. (AP/Alessandra Tarantino)

by Associated Press

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Pope Leo XIV said Tuesday that Thanksgiving was a "beautiful feast" that unites believers and non-believers alike, as he issued a message of thanks ahead of the U.S. holiday.

Leo said he was thankful for many things and urged everyone to recognize the gifts they have been given. "First and foremost, the gift of life. The gift of the faith. The gift of unity," he said.

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He was responding to reporters' questions Tuesday night as he left Castel Gandolfo, where he goes on Mondays and Tuesdays for a rest and to play tennis.

He described Thanksgiving as "this beautiful feast that we have in the United States, which unites all people — people of different faiths, people who perhaps do not have the gift of faith" to say thank you to someone.

Leo will spend his first Thanksgiving as pope in Turkey on his first foreign trip.