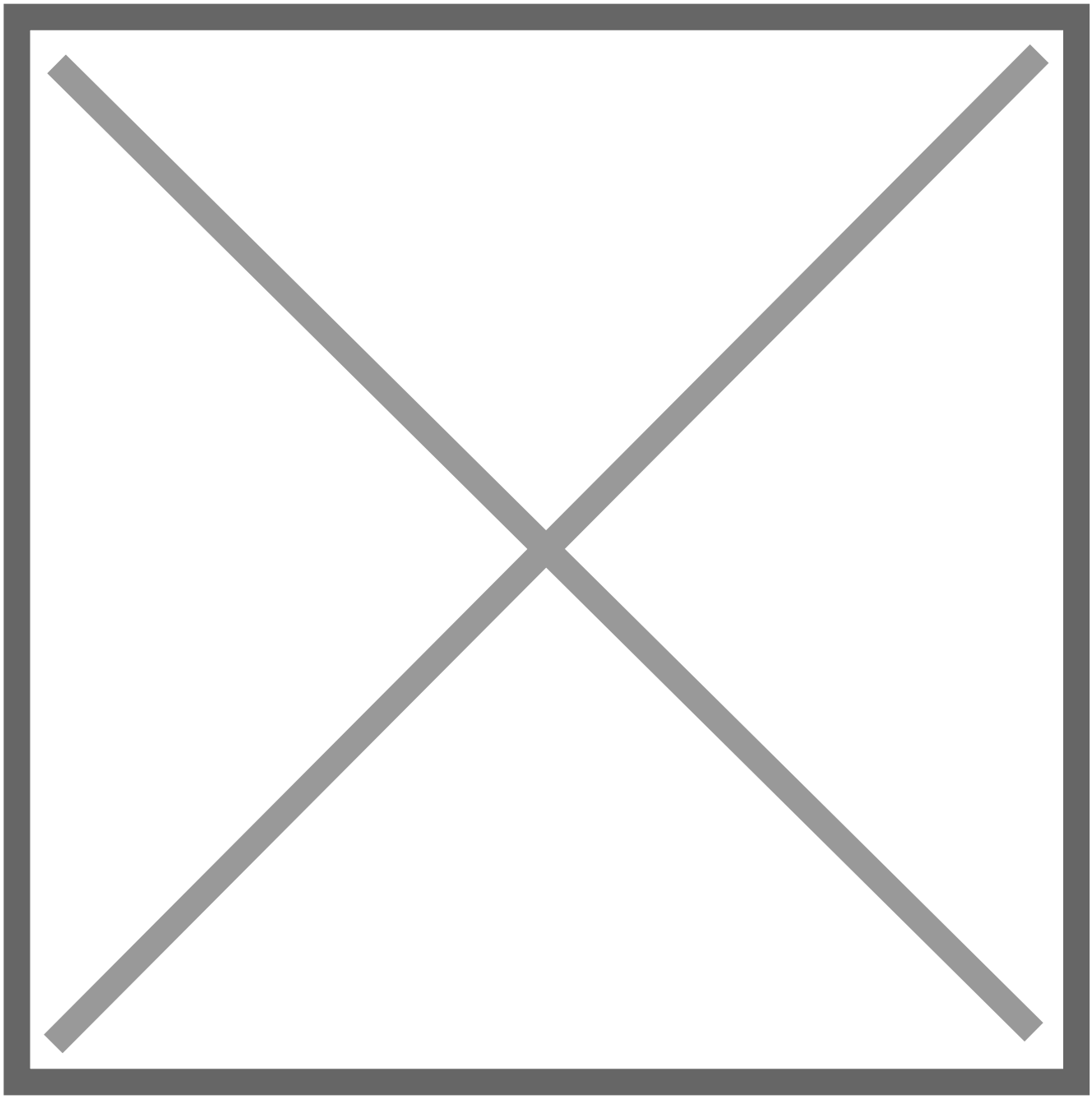
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Pope Leo XIV greets a child from the popemobile as he rides around St. Peter's Square at the Vatican before his weekly general audience Dec. 31, 2025. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

by Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

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Before the final countdown to the New Year, Christians should take a moment to remember all God's blessings of the past year and to reflect honestly on how they responded to those graces, Pope Leo XIV said.

New Year's Eve is a time to remember God's great love and "to ask forgiveness for all the times we have failed to treasure his inspirations and invest the talents he has entrusted to us in the best possible way," the pope said Dec. 31 at his weekly general audience.

Thousands of visitors and pilgrims, bundled up on the frigid winter morning, gathered in St. Peter's Square for the final audience of 2025.

Leo highlighted three "important events" of the past year: "some of them joyful, such as the pilgrimage of so many of the faithful on the occasion of the Holy Year; others painful, such as the passing of the late Pope Francis, and the scenarios of war that continue to convulse the planet."

Before ringing in the New Year, he said, "the church invites us to place everything before the Lord, entrusting ourselves to his providence, and asking him to renew, in us and around us, in the coming days, the wonders of his grace and mercy."

The Jubilee pilgrimage of millions of Catholics around the world in 2025 is a reminder that "our whole life is a journey, whose final destination transcends space and time, to be fulfilled in the encounter with God and in full and eternal communion with him," the pope said.

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And passing through one of the Holy Doors during a Jubilee, praying for pardon, he said, "expresses our 'yes' to God, who with his forgiveness invites us to cross the threshold of a new life, animated by grace, modeled on the Gospel, inflamed by love" for one's neighbor.

Stepping through a Holy Door, he said, "is our 'yes' to a life lived with commitment in the present and oriented toward eternity."

Leo ended his talk by quoting St. Paul VI's talk at a general audience at the end of the Holy Year 1975: "God is Love! This is the ineffable revelation with which the Jubilee, through its teaching, its indulgence, its forgiveness and finally its peace, full of tears and joy, has sought to fill our spirit today and our lives tomorrow. God is Love! God loves me! God awaited me, and I have found him! God is mercy! God is forgiveness! God is salvation! God, yes, God is life!"

Leo prayed that certainty of God's everlasting love and mercy would "accompany us in the passage from the old to the new year, and then always, in our lives."