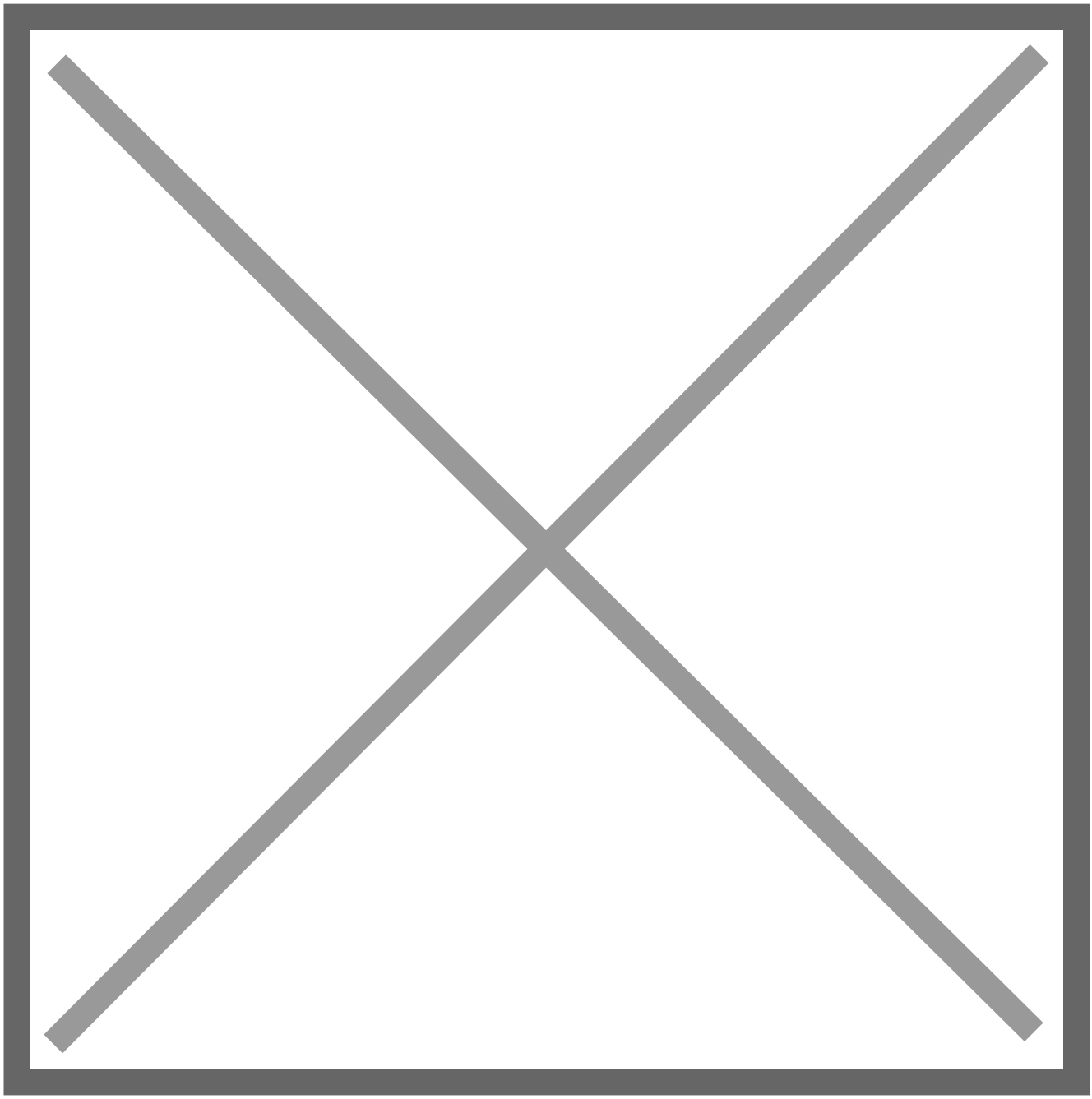
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Pope Leo XIV leads an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls Jan. 25, 2026, as he closed the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. All Christians are called to invite everyone to trust in Christ, who enlightens and consoles, Leo said. (OSV News/Vatican Media/Simone Risoluti)

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All Christians are called to invite everyone to trust in Christ, who enlightens and consoles, Pope Leo XIV said.

"Every authentic encounter with the Lord is, in fact, a transformative moment that grants a new vision and a new direction for the task of building up the Body of Christ," the pope said as he closed the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 25 during an ecumenical evening prayer service at Rome's Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

Every year, the week "invites us to renew our commitment to this great mission, bearing in mind that the divisions among us — while they do not prevent the light of Christ from shining — nonetheless make the face which must reflect it to the world less radiant," he said.

As the service began, Orthodox Metropolitan Polykarpos of Italy and Anglican Bishop Anthony Ball, the archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Holy See, joined Leo in descending the stairs under the main altar to pray before the relics of St. Paul. Several leaders and representatives of numerous churches and Christian communions worldwide attended the prayer service, including Armenian Orthodox Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the representative of the Armenian Apostolic Church

to the Holy See.

The theme for the 2026 celebration of the week was inspired by St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (4:4), "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling."

"We are one! We already are! Let us recognize it, experience it and make it visible!" Leo said in his homily.

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The synodal journey of the Catholic Church, which is and must be ecumenical, he said, "is a path for growing together in mutual knowledge of our respective synodal structures and traditions."

"As we look toward the 2,000th anniversary of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus in 2033, let us commit ourselves to further developing ecumenical synodal practices and to sharing with one another who we are, what we do and what we teach," the pope said.

The mission of all Christians today is "to proclaim Christ and to invite everyone to place their trust in him," he said. This shared task is to "say humbly and joyfully to the world: 'Look to Christ! Come closer to him! Welcome his word that enlightens and consoles!'"

Leo underlined the importance of celebrating the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in Iznik, Turkey, in November with representatives of so many Christian traditions.

"Reciting the Nicene Creed together in the very place where it was formulated was a profound and unforgettable testimony to our unity in Christ," he said. "May the Holy Spirit find in us docile minds even today, so that we may proclaim the faith with one voice to the men and women of our time!"

Concluding his homily, Leo prayed that "the seeds of the Gospel may continue to bear fruit on this continent in unity, justice and holiness, for the benefit of peace among the peoples and nations of the whole world."