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Anglican Archbishop Sarah Mullally of Canterbury speaks during her installation at England's Canterbury Cathedral March 25, 2026, as the 106th archbishop of Canterbury and the first woman to lead the Church of England in its 1,400-year history. Pope Leo XIV issued a message to Archbishop Mullally March 26, offering his prayers, adding, "I firmly believe that we need to continue to dialogue in truth and love." (OSV News photo/Jordan Pettitt, Pool via Reuters)



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Canterbury, England — March 27, 2026

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Pope Leo XIV offered prayers and encouragement as Archbishop Sarah Mullally began her ministry as the 106th archbishop of Canterbury – and the first woman to lead the Anglican Communion.

In a message delivered March 26, a day after her installation, the pope acknowledged both progress and ongoing tensions in Catholic-Anglican relations, calling this a "challenging moment" for Anglicans worldwide. Still, he emphasized a shared commitment to dialogue rooted in "truth and love."

Encouraging unity "which Christians seek" is "never an end in itself," he stressed, "but is directed toward the proclamation of Christ, in order that, as the Lord Jesus himself prayed, 'the world may believe.' "

Archbishop Mullally, speaking at her installation in a packed Canterbury Cathedral March 25, reflected on her unexpected journey of faith and leadership, while also urging Christians not to ignore victims harmed within church communities. The moment carried deep historical resonance, recalling decades of ecumenical efforts and milestones in unity, even amid disagreements.

Pope Leo pointed to continued cooperation through theological dialogue and reaffirmed that common baptism unites Catholics and Anglicans as brothers and sisters in Christ – a foundation he says must guide the path forward.

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