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Pope Leo XIV is pictured gesturing in prayer at the Vatican in a combination photo with an im

Pope Leo XIV is pictured gesturing in prayer at the Vatican in a combination photo with an image of the Divine Mercy at a Catholic Church in La Paz, Bolivia. Across the U.S., united with Pope Leo, Catholics are joining with their bishops and pastors in praying for peace on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday April 11, 2026. (OSV/Reuters/Lola Gomez, Claudia Morales)

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Parishes and dioceses throughout the nation are taking up Pope Leo XIV's call to pray for peace, holding April 11 vigils coinciding with the pope's own at St. Peter's Basilica.

The pope had announced the initiative April 5 during an Angelus address given moments after celebrating Easter Mass.

In that address, Pope Leo used the word "peace" 13 times, stressing the peace offered by the risen Christ "is not merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us."

The plea came as the U.S.-Israel war on Iran, launched Feb. 28, has spiraled into a regional conflict with thousands of casualties and extensive repercussions for global relations and markets.

Trump's April 7 threat to Iran that "a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again" was suspended at the last minute, with a fragile two-week ceasefire agreement, although conflicting reports over the terms have emerged.

Israel's attacks on Lebanon, where the militant group Hezbollah is based, have continued, resulting in more than 300 dead and over 1,000 wounded on April 8 alone. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later ordered his Cabinet to begin negotiations with Lebanon.

In the U.S., Catholic bishops have urged the faithful to join their prayers with those of Pope Leo for an end to the conflict.

"I make a special plea to my brother bishops, the priests, the laity, and all people yearning for true peace to join the Holy Father’s Vigil for Peace, whether virtually, or in parishes, chapels, or before the Lord present in the quiet of their hearts to join with our Holy Father as we pray for peace in our world," said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in an April 7 statement.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore announced that same day he would celebrate an April 11 vigil at that city's Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. He also asked archdiocesan parishes to host holy hours or other vigils for peace during the April 11-12 weekend.

"In the face of fear, division and violence, we must become witnesses to a different way – the way of prayer, solidarity and sacrificial love," Lori said in his statement, as reported by the Catholic Review, the archdiocese's official news outlet. "Let our churches become places of light in a darkened world – where the cry for peace rises to heaven, where hearts are softened and where hope is rekindled."

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy of Washington will celebrate a Mass for Peace April 11 at that city's Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, inviting diocesan pastors to do the same in their parishes that day, according to Washington's archdiocesan newspaper, the Catholic Standard.

Bishop Larry J. Kulick of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, will hold a vigil at that diocese's Blessed Sacrament Cathedral as Pope Leo leads prayer in St. Peter's Basilica. Eucharistic adoration and benediction, along with regularly scheduled opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation, will also take place.

The Catholic Accent, the diocese's newspaper, said that "those unable to attend in person are encouraged to pray at their local parish, participate virtually in the Vatican vigil, or set aside personal time for prayer or fasting."

"As one Body in Christ, let us entrust our world to the Prince of Peace, confident that the Lord hears the cry of His people and desires to heal every wound and restore unity among His children," said Kulick, according to the newspaper.

Bishop Earl A. Boyea of Lansing, Michigan, urged "fellow Catholics – and all people of goodwill – to embrace our Holy Father’s call for a prayer vigil for peace this Saturday, on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday," or the second Sunday of Easter.

"During this Eastertide, let us turn ever more earnestly to our Resurrected Lord, the Prince of Peace, in pursuit of a just settlement to all global conflicts," said Boyea in an April 7 statement.

In an April 9 message to the faithful, Bishop Oscar A. Solis of Salt Lake City encouraged "the People of God in Utah" to unite themselves with Pope Leo in his prayer "for the end of war," and "to include a special intention for migrants and refugees."

Noting the pope is "deeply aware of the suffering caused by the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine," Solis noted "these conflicts continue to inflict unbearable suffering on families, children, and entire communities.

"As disciples of the Risen Lord, we cannot remain indifferent," said Solis in his message. "Let our prayer rise for all who long for justice, peace, and the restoration of human dignity amid violence and displacement."

The St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center in Pittsburgh announced it will include in its April 11 event programming a 1 p.m. EDT livestream recitation of the joyful mysteries of the rosary in support of Pope Leo's prayer vigil.

"We offer up our prayers for those affected by war, violence, hatred and indifference," said the center in an email.

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In an April 8 Facebook post, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hanford, California, highlighted Pope Leo's call to join the initiative.

"The purpose of the vigil is simple: to pray for peace in a world facing conflict, division, and tension among nations and communities," said the parish in its post. "The Church reminds us that true peace does not begin only through political solutions but within the human heart."

"Jesus teaches us to forgive, to love, and to turn away from sin. Without this interior change, lasting peace cannot be achieved," said the parish in its post. "That is why the Church always turns first to prayer."

Such prayer enables God "to transform our hearts," said the parish, adding, "Joining the vigil does not require anything complicated. It can be as simple as pausing for a few moments to pray – even one Hail Mary – with sincere faith."

The post concluded with a question: "Do you think the world relies too much on politics and not enough on prayer?"