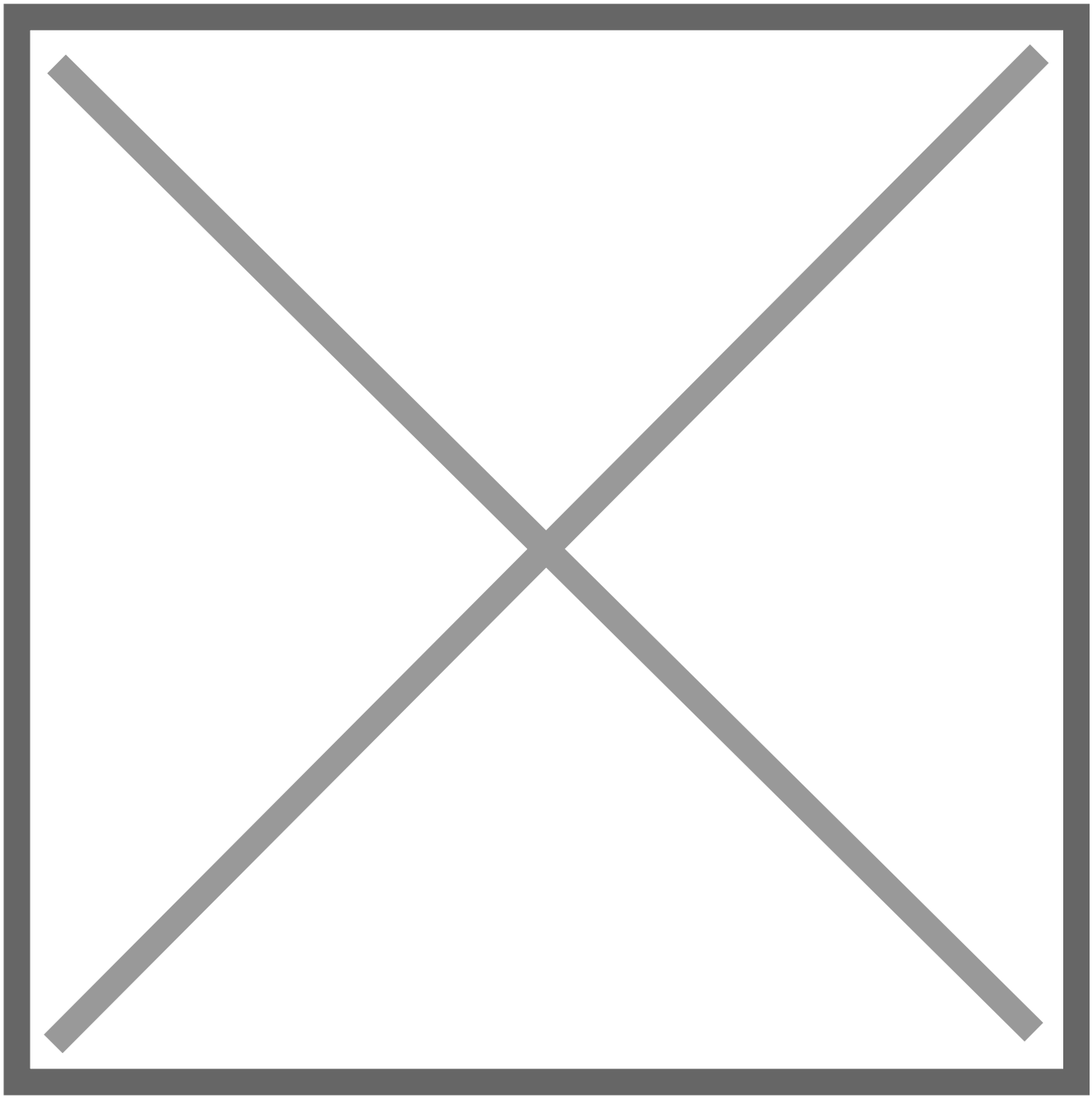
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Vatican City — April 12, 2026

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Pope Leo XIV is renewing urgent calls for peace, following a powerful April 11 prayer vigil where he warned that "war divides," "arrogance tramples," and only God's truth can enlighten hearts. Speaking at the Regina Caeli on April 12, he expressed deep solidarity with people suffering in conflict zones, especially Lebanon and Sudan.

He said he's "closer than ever" to the "beloved Lebanese people in these days of pain, fear, and invincible hope in God."

The death toll after Israeli strikes on April 8 rose to 357, the Lebanese army said April 10, with the total death toll since March 2 reaching over 2,000 people in Lebanon, the country's army said.

"It took Israel only 10 minutes to carry out one of the worst mass-killings in Lebanon since the end of the country's civil war in 1990," The Guardian said in their coverage.

"The principle of humanity, inscribed in the conscience of every person and recognized in international law, entails the moral obligation to protect the civilian population from the atrocious effects of war," the pope said during his Angelus address.

"I appeal to the parties in conflict to cease fire and urgently seek a peaceful solution," Leo said.

Expressing his closeness to those caught up in other conflicts in the world, he said April 15 marks "three years since the beginning of the bloody conflict in Sudan."

"How much the Sudanese people suffer, innocent victims of this inhuman tragedy!" the pope lamented.

"I renew my heartfelt appeal to the warring parties to silence their weapons and begin, without preconditions, a sincere dialogue aimed at ending this fratricidal war as soon as possible."

Leo reminded a large crowd of faithful gathered at St. Peter's Square on Divine Mercy Sunday that on April 13 he leaves on his longest apostolic trip to date — an 11-day journey to the African continent.

After reflecting on the meaning of Sunday Eucharist — "indispensable to Christian life" — he said "some of the early African Church's martyrs, the Martyrs of Abitene, have left us a beautiful testimony on this subject."

"When offered the chance to save their lives if they renounced celebrating the Eucharist, they responded that they could not live without celebrating the Lord's Day," the pope said April 12.

"It is there that our faith is nourished and grows. It is there that our efforts, however limited, by God's grace merge as the actions of the members of a single body — the Body of Christ — in the realization of a single great plan of salvation that embraces all of humanity."

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It is through the Eucharist, Leo said, "that our hands also become 'hands of the Risen One,' witnesses to his presence, his mercy, his peace, in the signs of work, sacrifice, illness, and the passing of the years, which are often engraved there, as in the tenderness of a caress, a hug, or a gesture of charity."

Leo will travel more than 11,000 miles over 11 days across Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea during his apostolic trip to the continent he visited multiple times as prior general of the Augustinian order.

The 70-year-old pope will travel on a total of 18 flights, visiting 11 African towns and cities in the four countries April 13–23.

During his Angelus address Leo also extended greetings to Eastern Churches Christians that "celebrate Easter according to the Julian calendar."

"To all those communities, I extend my most cordial wishes for peace, in communion of faith in the Risen Lord," he said, adding: "I accompany them with more intense prayers for those suffering because of the war, especially the beloved Ukrainian people."

"May the light of Christ bring comfort to afflicted hearts and strengthen the hope for peace. May the international community never lose sight of the tragedy of this war!"

This story appears in the **War in Iran** feature series. View the full series.