News

Pope Leo XIV waves as he attends a Meeting for Peace at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Bamenda,

Pope Leo XIV waves as he attends a Meeting for Peace at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Bamenda, Cameroon, April 16, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Guglielmo Mangiapane)

Gina Christian

View Author Profile

OSV News

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

April 18, 2026

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Time magazine has named Pope Leo XIV to its "100 Most Influential People of 2026" list.

The accolade was announced April 15, with the first U.S.-born pope joining a diverse group of individuals — some famous, some lesser known — distinguished by their contributions as leaders, innovators, icons, artists and pioneers.

Each list member was feted on Time's website with a short reflection from a prominent figure, with filmmaker Martin Scorsese saying in his commentary on Pope Leo that he was "struck by his bravery and his common touch."

Recalling Pope Francis as "a man I came to know and love as a friend," Scorsese said Pope Leo "seems to share" the late pope's "understanding that the church needs to reform itself to retain its moral and spiritual force."

Like Francis — "the first Pope born outside of Europe since the Middle Ages and the first Jesuit" — Leo is also a pioneer, being "the first North American-born Pope (with a Chicago accent!) and the first Augustinian in 500 years," wrote Scorsese.

"For many, the church has lost a great deal of moral and spiritual credibility," he wrote. "Revelations of widespread sexual abuse and financial wrongdoing keep coming up, and many Christians have grown more secular over the years. The church is at a crossroads, and it may once again be remaking itself."

He noted that "Pope Francis always stressed that the church was not a building or a symbol but the actual teachings of Jesus," adding, "I believe that Pope Leo shares that view."

"Like Francis, he seems to be committed to giving the laity a more active role in the leadership of the faith and the practice of charity," Scorsese said.

Advertisement

The list, well into its third decade, has "no single metric that defines influence," said Time Editor-in-Chief Sam Jacobs in his overview of the list.

Rather, Jacobs and his team "poll our editors, reporters, and sources around the world, and review the recommendations that are sent to us every day," with their ultimate selections "led by the stories that are shaping the world each year and the people who write them."

Scorsese noted that Pope Leo had penned the introduction to a new edition of *The Practice of the Presence of God*, a short book of spiritual insights by a 17th-century French Carmelite friar whose religious name was Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection.

Pope Leo has called attention to the book on several occasions, writing in December 2025 that the work, along with the writings of St. Augustine and other books, "is one of the texts that have most shaped my spiritual life" and has "formed me in what the path can be for knowing and loving the Lord."

"I know the book well," Scorsese wrote. "A friend gave me a copy a few years ago, and I've since passed it along to many others. It offers a model for finding God in

daily life, and for taking the church out of buildings, no matter how majestic, and into everyday existence."

He quoted Leo's introduction to the work: "All Christian ethics can truly be summed up in this continual calling to mind the fact that God is present: He is here."

"I'm encouraged by his words," wrote Scorsese.