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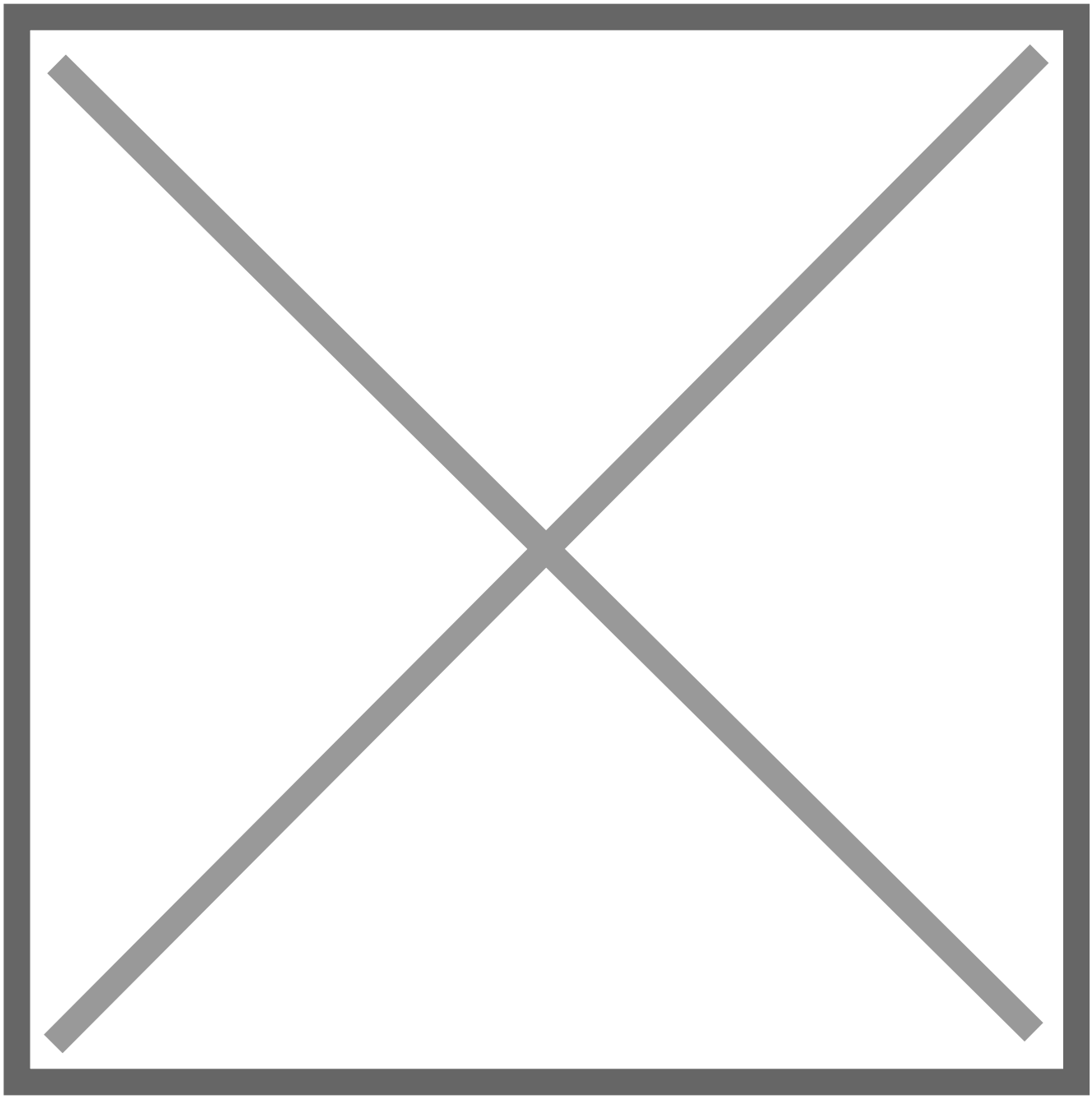

Pope Leo XIV celebrates the ordination Mass of 10 priests in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican April 26, 2026. Priests are called each day to leave the doors of the Church open to a "suffering humanity" in need and not "be an obstacle to those who wish to enter," Leo told the deacons just before ordaining them to the priesthood. (OSV News/Vatican Media/Simone Risolutii)

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Priests are called each day to leave the doors of the Church open to a "suffering humanity" in need and not "be an obstacle to those who wish to enter," Pope Leo XIV told 10 deacons just before ordaining them to the priesthood.

The vocation to priestly ministry is a call to reflect Christ's "patience and tenderness" and "to keep the threshold open and direct others to it, without using too many words, the pope said April 26 during his homily at the ordination Mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

"Today more than ever, especially when statistics seem to indicate a divide between people and the Church, keep the door open! Let people in, and be prepared to go out. This is another secret for your life: You are a channel, not a filter," he said.

Of the 10 priests ordained by Leo, eight were ordained for the Diocese of Rome, including six Italians, a Cameroonian and a Colombian. Four studied at Rome's major seminary and four were prepared for the priesthood at the Neocatechumenal Way's Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Rome.

Two priests were ordained for other dioceses or congregations. Mexican Fr. Armando Roa Nuñez was ordained for the Diocese of Miao, India, while Fr. Selwyn Pinto Loyce was ordained as a member of the Idente Missionaries.

According to Vatican News, an estimated 5,000 people, comprised of family and friends of the ordinands, were present at the ordination Mass which coincided with the celebration of the World Day of Vocations.

After greeting those present at the Mass, Leo began his homily by exclaiming, "This Sunday is full of life." He said that "although death surrounds us," Jesus' promise in the Gospel reading — that he came "so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" — was fulfilled.

"We see great generosity and enthusiasm in the willingness of these young men whom the Church calls today to be ordained as priests," the pope said. "As a numerous and diverse community gathered around the one Master, we feel a presence that renews us. It is the Holy Spirit who unites people and vocations in freedom, so that no one lives for themselves any longer."

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Reflecting on the priestly vocation, the pope reminded the candidates that the deeper their bond with Christ, "the more radical your belonging to all of humanity," thus binding their hearts to "an indissoluble love."

Like the love of spouses, he explains, "the love that inspires celibacy for the Kingdom of God must also be guarded and constantly renewed, for every true affection matures and becomes fruitful over time."

"You are called to a specific, delicate and difficult way of loving and, even more so, of allowing yourselves to be loved in freedom," the pope said. "This will make you not only good priests, but also honest, helpful citizens, builders of peace and social friendship."

Recalling the Gospel reading, the pope noted that Jesus' reference to "aggressive figures and actions," such as thieves, robbers and strangers who "disregard boundaries," shows that Christ knows "the cruelty of the world, where he walks with us."

This, however, does not "deter him from giving up his life," the pope said.

"Denunciation does not become renunciation; danger does not lead to flight. This is another secret for the life of the priest: We must not be frightened by reality. It is the Lord of life who calls us. May the ministry entrusted to you, dear brothers, convey the peace of those who know that they are safe, even amid dangers," he said.

Leo noted that the need for security in today's world "makes people aggressive, causes communities to close in on themselves and leads people to seek out enemies and scapegoats."

Nevertheless, despite the presence of fear, the pope encouraged the new priests to find their security not in "the role you hold but in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as well as in your participation, along with your people, in the story of salvation."

"This salvation is already at work in the many good deeds that are quietly carried out by people of goodwill in the parishes and settings where you will join them as fellow travelers. What you proclaim and celebrate will protect you, even in difficult times," he said.

Leo said that Jesus' reminder that he is the gate means that "he does not stifle our freedom," while noting the existence of "communities that suffocate; some groups are easy to enter but are impossible to leave."

"This is not the case of the Lord's Church, nor of the community of his disciples," he said.

"We all seek shelter, rest and care," the pope explained. "The Church's doors are open, but not to cut us off from life: life does not end in a parish, in an association, in a movement, in a group. Whoever is saved can 'go out and find pasture,'" he said.

The pope invited the new priests to "go out and discover culture, people and life" and to marvel "at the things that God makes grow without our having sown them."

"The people you will serve as priests — lay faithful and families, young and old, children and the sick — inhabit pastures that you must come to know," he said. "At times it will seem to you that you lack the necessary maps. But the Good Shepherd has them; listen to his very familiar voice."