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Pope Leo XIV greets a child as he arrives to celebrate Mass in Piazza Bartolo Longo in front of

Pope Leo XIV greets a child as he arrives to celebrate Mass in Piazza Bartolo Longo in front of the Pontifical Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii near Naples, Italy, May 8, 2026, on the first anniversary of his election as the first American pontiff. (OSV News/Vatican Media/Mario Tomassetti)



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Chicago — May 9, 2026

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The incoming provincial superior of the Midwest Augustinians, the order that Pope Leo XIV belongs to and the province he once led, said viral interest in the story of the pope's customer service call last year has been unexpected.

"No one's more surprised than me the way it's taken off, but I think it's just really connected with people ... how normal Pope Leo is," said Augustinian Fr. Tom McCarthy, a day after his anecdote about how the pope's call to his Chicago bank went viral.

McCarthy said he was talking about his longtime friendship with Leo April 29 to about 200 men and their sons in a "Fishers of Men" group at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Naperville, a western suburb of Chicago.

He told OSV News they laughed as he described that about two months after he was elected to the papacy, the former Cardinal Robert Prevost — now Pope Leo — called his bank to give his new phone number and information. He went through a series of security questions only to find out from the customer service agent that the bank would not make the change unless he were to come to the bank. But, McCarthy explained, he said "that's going to be difficult" because he was living "out of town"



l tell you I'm Pope Leo?' And she hung up on him. I im," McCarthy said.

The priest said, "I think that's what people are seeing. In a world that we live in where everything is negative, to have a fun comment, a fun little story like this … shows that the pope is human."

"And he goes through the same things we've all had to deal with, customer service agents, or 'hold the line,' or everything's automated. I think that's why people have connected with this. They all could relate," the priest added.

"Most relatable Pope in our lifetime," said randomgoofydarwin on the CBS News Instagram post of the story.

The same posting had multiple comments of laughing emoticons and a few who agreed with what the agent did.

Several comments on other postings of the story on social media said a personal secretary or Vatican officials would have had better luck handling the matter for Pope Leo.

And some took the opportunity to criticize the pope and voice their opposition to the pope's calls for peace and laying down arms in the Middle East.

McCarthy said the bank matter was resolved but not without a little pushback. An Augustinian contacted the bank president who again stated the bank's policy.

"And he says, 'Well the pope's going to move his account.' He said, 'We don't wanna lose the account of the pope.' He said, 'Well then change his phone number!' Which they did," said McCarthy.

He said he is "so happy" the incident is "showing ... how human (Pope Leo) is."

McCarthy said, "He's one of us. He's one of us."

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