Vatican
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Pope Leo XIV waves from his car as he leaves with his personal secretary, Msgr. Edgard Iván Rimaycuna Inga, right, after visiting the Città Universitaria (University City) at Sapienza University of Rome May 14, 2026. (AP/Gregorio Borgia)

by Associated Press

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Pope Leo XIV is adding another trip to his already busy 2026 travel schedule, making a four-day visit to France at the end of September that also includes a visit to the U.N. culture agency.

The Vatican confirmed May 16 the Sept. 25-28 trip, which will be Leo's fourth foreign voyage of the year: Leo made a day trip to Monaco in March, visited four African nations in April and is due to visit Spain and the Canary Islands in June.

The late Pope Francis famously stayed away from the big European centers of Christianity during his 12-year pontificate, preferring instead to visit small Catholic communities far from Rome. With the trip to France confirmed, Leo now appears to be paying more attention to the experience of European faithful, amid anecdotal reports of renewed interest in the faith among young adults.

The visit to the UNESCO headquarters will also give Leo the chance to speak to a global audience in a year in which he decided against traveling to his native United States, where he could have addressed the U.N. General Assembly, as past popes have done.

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Francis did visit France on two occasions, but never on a state visit to Paris: He made a day trip to Strasbourg in 2014 to address the European Parliament and Council of Europe. He then visited the port city of Marseille for a conference on migration in 2023.

Still unconfirmed and uncertain is a possible visit to Latin America, including Leo's beloved second home of Peru, at the end of the year.

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