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Uruguay's bishops have confirmed "there is a high probability" Pope Leo XIV will visit the country in late 2026 and "progress is being made with hope toward its realization."

The Uruguayan bishops' conference said in a May 21 statement that no date had been set for a visit to South America, though sources say a papal trip would likely occur in November or December during the Southern Hemisphere spring.

"As we have stated publicly, there is a high probability that the Holy Father will visit Uruguay," the permanent council of the Uruguayan bishops' conference said in a statement signed by conference president Bishop Milton Tróccoli of Maldonado-Punta del Este-Minas, vice president Cardinal Daniel Sturla of Montevideo and secretary-general Bishop Heriberto Bodeant of Canelones.

"The possible visit by Pope Leo would be a source of profound joy for the church and for all the Uruguayan people. We remain hopeful and grateful for this possibility."

Reuters reported that Uruguay's foreign ministry confirmed a papal visit as part of a regional tour. The possible papal trip to South America would include stops in Uruguay, Argentina and Peru, according to sources and media reports.

Pablo Quirno, Argentina's minister of foreign affairs, international trade and worship, posted a photo on X with President Javier Milei on May 22, saying, "All that's left is to set the date."

Milei added in a repost, "HE'S COMING," with two lion emojis — references to Pope Leo's name in Spanish, "León."

Fr. Máximo Jurcinovic, director of communications of Argentina's bishops' conference, told OSV News May 25, "For now, there is no official confirmation or concrete information" on a papal trip to Argentina.

Another priest familiar with the papal trip planning told OSV News however that "it's pretty much confirmed," and that organizers were waiting for the political situation in Peru to quiet before making an announcement. Voters go to the polls June 7.

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The priest, who spoke anonymously to allow for candor, said Leo would likely visit Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Luján — site of the Basilica of Our Lady of Luján, shrine to the national patroness — and Santiago del Estero, which Pope Francis restored as the primatial see in 2024.

Francis never returned to Argentina after his 2013 election, though he flew over Argentina during a papal tour of Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay in 2015 and a later visit to Chile and Peru in 2018.

Analysts in Argentina posit the late pope wanted to avoid being pulled into the country's divisive politics.

No pontiff has visited Argentina and Uruguay since St. John Paul II — in 1987 and 1988 respectively.

Catholic leaders in Peru — where Leo, a naturalized Peruvian citizen, served as a missionary and bishop — have already voiced their expectations of a papal visit to South America. Bishop Carlos Enrique García Camader of Lurín and president of the Peruvian bishops' conference said in February there was an "80% chance" of Leo returning to Peru in November or December at the latest.

According to García, Leo expressed, "How I wish I were already in Peru, because I love Peru," and told the Peruvian bishops "clearly that (his visit) will very likely take place in the month of November, at the latest in the first week of December," the president of Peruvian bishops said during a press conference.

García also cited the 300th anniversary of the canonization St. Turibius of Mogrovejo — the Americas' first saint — on Dec. 10 as a possible motive for visiting Peru.

"The important thing is that he wants to come to Peru because he feels gratitude towards Peru," García said.

The U.S.-born Leo twice served as an Augustinian missionary in northern Peru during the 1980s and 1990s and returned to the country in 2015, when Francis named him bishop of Chiclayo. He became a Peruvian citizen while serving as bishop of Chiclayo.

His potential visit to Peru would likely include Chiclayo, according to Church observers. Local authorities have been preparing for a papal visit by renovating the Chiclayo cathedral and sprucing up the city.

This story appears in the **Pope Leo in Uruguay, Argentina and Peru** feature series. View the full series.