News

Leo-Trump composite

In a combination photo, Pope Leo XIV smiles in Madrid June 7, 2026, during his apostolic journey to Spain, and U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, June 16. A majority of U.S. Catholics view Pope Leo favorably, and just over half say Trump has been too critical of the pontiff, according to new data from the Pew Research Center, published June 18. (OSV/CNS/Reuters/Lola Gomez/Evelyn Hockstein)

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Washington — June 19, 2026

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A majority of U.S. Catholics view Pope Leo XIV favorably, and just over half say President Donald Trump has been too critical of the pontiff, according to new data from the Pew Research Center.

In a survey published June 18, Pew noted its research was conducted from May 26 to June 1, after President Donald Trump's social media and verbal attacks on Pope Leo after the pontiff raised objections to the war in Iran.

The survey found 51% of Catholics said Trump has been too critical of Leo, far more than the share that said Trump hasn't been critical enough at just 4%, or those who

said he is striking the right balance at 14%.

Meanwhile, 19% of Catholics said Pope Leo has been too critical of the Trump administration, while 16% said he hasn't been critical enough. Another 35% said Leo is striking the right balance, while another 30% said they were not sure or did not have enough information to answer.

The survey also found that 78% of U.S. Catholics have a favorable view of Pope Leo, the first U.S.-born pope, a number fairly consistent with his three immediate predecessors.

Self-identified weekly Massgoers were most likely to say they approve of Pope Leo at 85%, followed by those who said they attend Mass monthly or yearly at 79%, and those who said they seldom or never attend Mass at 73%.

Broken down by political affiliation, 84% of Catholics who identified as Democrats reported a favorable view of Pope Leo, while 72% of those who identified as Republicans reported a positive view.

Seven out of 10 Catholic Democrats said Trump has been too critical of Pope Leo, while just 3% said the pontiff has been too critical of Trump. Among Catholic Republicans, about a third –  32% – said Trump has been too critical of Pope Leo, while 39% said Leo has been too critical of Trump.

The Pew survey also followed a May Washington Post-ABC News-Ipsos poll that found Americans broadly disapproved of Trump's comments about Pope Leo.

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