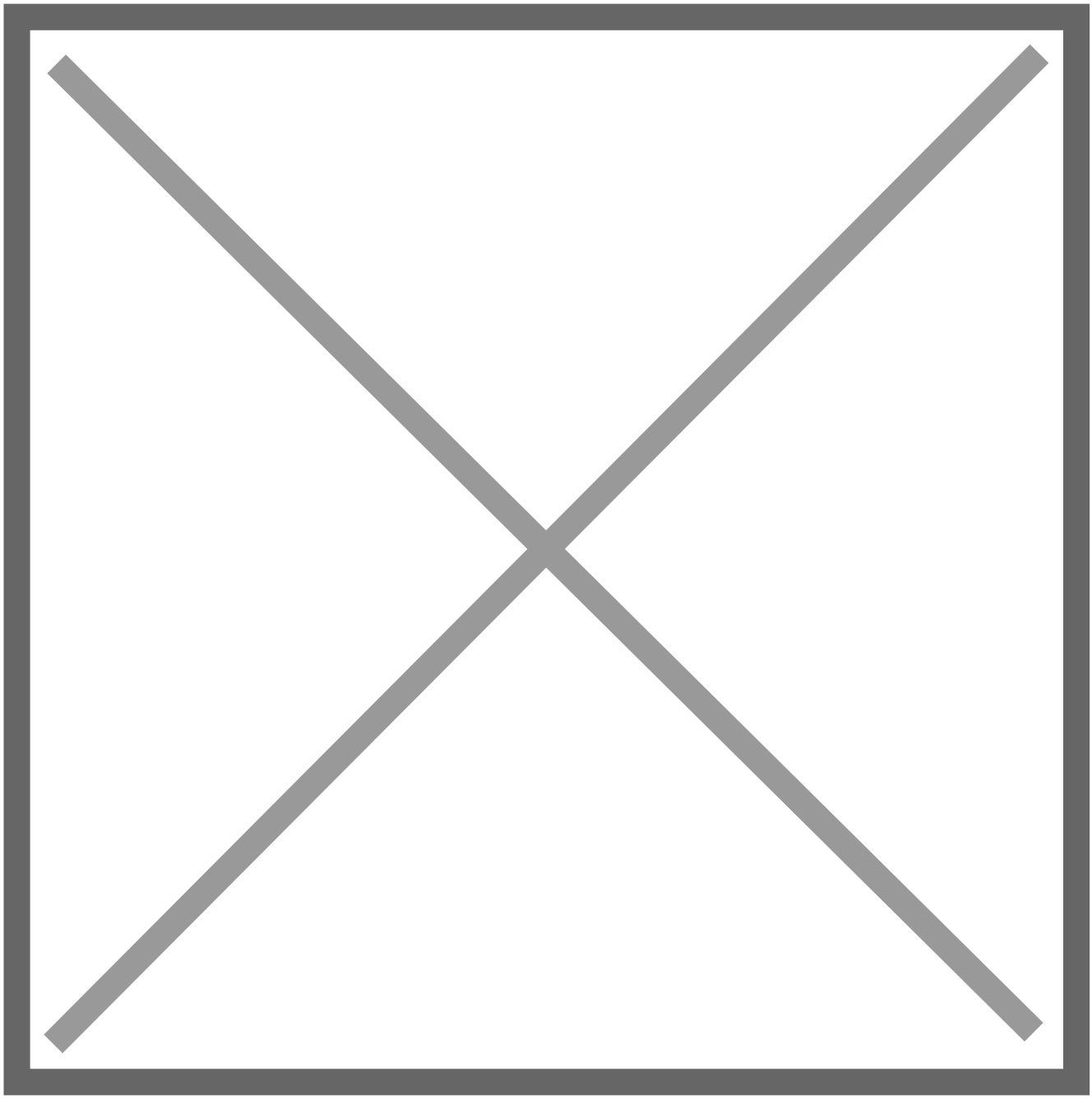
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Pope Leo XIV spends the evening of July 4, 2026, with U.S. Ambassador Brian Burch and his family, where they discussed peace and freedom, and the Burch family presented the pope with a U.S.A. World Cup jersey, a baseball and an apple pie. (OSV News/Courtesy of the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See)



by OSV News

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Rome — July 5, 2026

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After spending the morning praying for migrants on the island of Lampedusa, Italy, Pope Leo XIV celebrated the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence with the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See and his family.

"I am deeply honored to celebrate this special day with a fellow American and the Bishop of Rome," Ambassador Brian Burch said, in a post on X.

Further posts on X said that the ambassador and Leo "discussed President Trump's bold leadership and American efforts to pursue peace, religious freedom, and the need for moral clarity and courage around the world."

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They also indicated that Leo had received "a USA World Cup jersey, a commemorative Freedom 250 baseball, and a homemade apple pie" from the Burch family, the post said.

In a message to journalists, the Holy See Press Office July 4 confirmed the visit, saying, "welcoming an invitation from the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, the Holy Father visited the ambassador's residence on the evening of Saturday, July 4, on the occasion of the national holiday."

The post thread added that Leo had confirmed during the visit that he is rooting for Team USA in the World Cup.

This story appears in the **USA 250** feature series. View the full series.