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Pope Leo XIV has lunch with vulnerable people from the Diocese of Rome at Borgo Laudato Si, in the pontifical gardens of Castel Gandolfo, Italy, July 11, 2026. (OSV News/Reuters/Matteo Minnella)



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August 4, 2026

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President Donald Trump has [attacked Pope Leo](#) for defending migrants and refugees and for opposing the war in Iran. The two do not agree on most issues of justice and peace.

The pope is clearly not MAGA, but is he a Democratic Socialist?

Modern popes tend to stay out of partisan politics, but when Leo speaks, he certainly sounds like a Democratic Socialist.

Robert Prevost took the name Leo in honor of his predecessor, Leo XIII, who was the founder of Catholic social teaching and defended workers who were being exploited during the Industrial Revolution.

Both the current Pope Leo and Democratic Socialists speak of solidarity with workers and the poor. Both support workers' rights and strong unions.

Democratic Socialists support increasing the minimum wage, while the pope goes further and supports a "living wage," enough pay to provide a decent life for a family.

Democratic Socialists and the pope are also concerned about the impact of artificial intelligence on workers. "The pursuit of greater profits cannot justify choices that systematically sacrifice jobs," writes Leo in [Magnifica Humanitas](#). Both fear that thousands of workers will be replaced by AI, dumped on the street with no training

or resources to transition to other employment.

The pope and Democratic Socialists would also support government regulations to protect workers and consumers. Leo in his encyclical calls for "a vigilant State and civil institutions that are capable of overcoming the singular mentality of efficiency, and of ensuring that resources, creative solutions and regulations favor the most vulnerable."

Democratic Socialists would agree with Leo that "it is no longer possible to rely solely on the 'invisible hand' of the market. Politics has the task of orientating economies and technologies to the common good, promoting dignified work, social inclusion and an equitable distribution of the benefits of innovation."

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Democratic Socialists would certainly agree with Leo that wealth "is increasingly concentrated in fewer hands," and that "just laws and methods of redistribution are certainly necessary for correcting imbalances, including tax systems that lighten the burden on the weakest and ask for more from those with greater resources."

Both also support universal healthcare for all citizens. The church would go even further and support healthcare for undocumented people in the country.

Both are also concerned about global warming and the environment. Here, Leo follows in the footsteps of his predecessor, Pope Francis, who with his encyclical [*Laudato Si'*](#) put the church firmly in the environmental camp. The "Green New Deal" is a practical step toward dealing with global warming.

Both Leo and the Democratic Socialists question the current foreign policy of the Trump administration, especially the war in Iran, Gaza and Lebanon. The war is devastating for everyone involved. The pope and the Democratic Socialists support diplomacy and multilateralism rather than the go-it-alone approach of the Trump administration.

There are also gray areas where the pope and Democratic Socialists may not be on the same page.

Although they both have serious questions about capitalism, Catholic social teaching also believes in subsidiarity, where all decisions are not made by a central government but as close to the people as possible. The new prime minister of Great Britain is a strong supporter of subsidiarity based on his experience as the mayor of Manchester. Whether this catches on with Democratic Socialists in America remains to be seen.

Democratic Socialists do not support the end of private property, but where they would draw the line is not clear. [They do "want"](#) to collectively own the key economic drivers that dominate our lives, such as energy production and transportation." As long as subsidiarity is respected, Catholic social teaching would leave such specifics to the prudential judgment of experts, government officials and citizens.

But there are key social issues where the pope and Democratic Socialists part ways. Democratic Socialists support abortion rights, whereas Pope Leo has been against abortion since his college years when he started a pro-life club at Villanova University. And while the pope would oppose discrimination against anyone, he would also disagree with Democratic Socialists on many gender issues.

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Pope Leo is not a card-carrying Democratic Socialist, but he certainly holds many of the same goals as they do, especially on economics and foreign policy. He would not use the same rhetoric in talking about the issues — less class warfare and more common good. He will not join their movement, nor will he condemn it.

Democratic Socialists are opposed to Christian nationalism, but unlike Communists and many socialists in the past, they are not enemies of religion. Their [website](#) has a section devoted to ["Religious Socialism,"](#) with pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. and Dorothy Day prominently displayed.

They see religious leaders as possible allies not enemies. As the webpage explains: "we have created a pluralistic, welcoming, safe, and inclusive space for people of faith in the socialist movement as we strive to organize nationally within our own faith communities and as faith-based groups within DSA."

Democratic Socialists are having mixed results winning over the Democratic Party, let alone American society. They have won some primaries and elections despite opposition from the Democratic Party establishment. The midterms will reveal how

well their candidates do with American voters.

Granted the pope's popularity, Democratic Socialists, as well as the Democratic Party as a whole, would be wise to emphasize the areas where they agree with him rather than the topics where they disagree. Leo seems to be better liked by the American public than either party.