Vatican
Vatican News



A coin with Pope Leo XIV's portrait is seen in an image from the Governorate of Vatican City State. (OSV News/Courtesy of Governatorato SCV)

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Numismatists take note. The Vatican City State Mint has issued a new set of coins to mark Pope Leo XIV's pontificate and the Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi.

The inaugural euro coin set of Pope Leo's pontificate features both the face and coat of arms of the 267th successor of Peter. The set also includes a special five-euro commemorative coin depicting the moment that St. Francis renounced his worldly possessions before the bishop of Assisi to mark the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi on the opposite side of Pope Leo's visage.

It is the first time that the Vatican has issued coins featuring a pope's portrait in nearly a decade. In 2017, Pope Francis requested that his portrait no longer appear on Vatican coins, making the Vatican at the time the only euro-issuing state without a depiction of its head of state on circulating coins.

The euro became Vatican City's official currency in 2002. Vatican euro coins garner considerable collector premiums due to limited minting quotas and high demand for the smallest mintages of all euro coins, according to Coins Weekly.

The current commemorative coin set, whose nominal value is 3.88 euros, is currently on sale for 39 euros (about $45) on the official website of the Vatican's numismatic office. In 2009, the Vatican agreed to put at least 51% coins minted into circulation at face value, rather than only as collectors' items, leading the gift shops in the Vatican Museums and other businesses in the microstate to begin giving the 50-cent coins with the papal coat of arms as change.

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Sr. Raffaella Petrini, a Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist, who is president of the Governorate of Vatican City State, recently described the Vatican City State Mint as "not merely a place of production, but also a repository of historical and economic

memory because, through the processes of engraving, casting, and minting, it creates coins that imprint on metal a message of universal significance."

Distinctive elements from Pope Leo XIV's coat of arms is featured on the new two-euro Vatican coins, which depict a lily symbolizing purity and Marian devotion, and the flaming heart pierced by an arrow above an open book, emblematic of Augustinian spirituality.

The design of the new Vatican coins is by Italian artist Daniela Longo, who also designed the coins for Pope Francis, Benedict XVI and the special *sede vacante* coins issued in 2005 upon the death of John Paul II. *Sede vacante* is the period when the see of Rome is vacant before the election of a new pope.