



Archbishop Paul D. Etienne baptizes a candidate during an Easter Vigil service at St. James Cathedral, Saturday, April 4, 2026, in Seattle. (AP Photo/Lindsey Wasson)

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As countries including the United States and France report a rise in the number of young Catholic converts, a new Vatican document cautions against triumphalism, arguing that new baptisms don't always lead to lasting religious commitment.

The document, titled *Venite ad Me* (Come to Me): Considerations on the Transmission of the Faith in an Epochal Change, was released Thursday (Oct. 22). It addresses the struggles, challenges and opportunities of the Catholic Church and its families in passing the faith to new generations. Issued by the Vatican Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, it reflects on how social media and secularization are coloring how young people approach their beliefs.

In a section titled "New Frontiers of Evangelization," the document remarks on "the growing number of conversions and returns to the Church, especially among youth and young adults," in secularized areas of Europe and America. Citing data from the French bishops' conference, the document reported that France saw a 26% increase in baptisms in 2026 over the previous year.

The vast majority, the document reads, are younger than 40 and seek the Catholic faith after a time of crisis, spiritual awakening or contact with other believers.

"A broader view of the situation, however, suggests adopting a cautious approach when evaluating this reality," the document reads, adding that the growth in baptisms has coincided with the parallel challenge of making sure the newly baptized maintain their faith.

"While it is appropriate to avoid triumphalistic attitudes in this regard, it cannot be denied that these phenomena constitute concrete signs of hope and evangelical vitality," it added. The document also suggested a need to promote community and

welcome new members into the church.

The Vatican document comes shortly after Pope Leo XIV convened a summit of heads of bishops' conferences and experts to the Vatican for the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love). The conference, held Oct. 7-24, discussed among other things the struggles of families in transmitting the faith and how the church can accompany parents in this effort.

A final document will be published in the coming weeks, once it has been approved by the pope.

Its reporting on the rise of adult conversions in parts of Western Europe is particularly poignant since Leo visited France Sep. 25-28. There, he was welcomed by large crowds of catechumens and newly baptized Catholics in Paris and attended a vigil with more than 80,000 young people. Recalling the event, Leo labeled the Catholic renewal in France "a great sign of hope."

The Vatican document reflects the cautions of Paris-area bishops, who called for a year-long provincial ecclesial assembly in May to address the boom in baptisms. Speaking to RNS before the papal trip, Bishop Matthieu Rougé of Nanterre, who chairs the French bishops' council for Catholic education, cautioned that the influx of converts "remains limited and fragile, and should not give rise to any pride or misplaced triumphalism."

The document also highlights the "appeal that both traditional and more recent forms of pilgrimage hold for the younger generations" as well as the importance for the church to showcase how the variety of its liturgy enables outreach to "different sensibilities." In France, the Chartres Pentecost pilgrimage, organized by Notre-Dame de Chrétienté and strongly associated with the traditional Latin Mass, drew 20,000 pilgrims this year with an average age of 22, organizers said.

The document, divided into eight chapters, also calls for greater participation of women in church leadership roles. And alongside its emphasis on belonging and personal encounters, it warns that digital evangelization can become detached from daily life or shaped by ideology and personal preferences.

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