

ROME

An Illustrated Guide to Its Monuments & Art

Vatican City

From Rome with Love

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Pope Leo XIV — General Audience in St. Peter's Square

Location: St. Peter's Square, Vatican City (17 June 2026)



St. Peter's Square on the morning of the audience — Bernini's colonnade, the Egyptian obelisk, and the crowd filling the piazza.



The facade of St. Peter's Basilica, with the white papal dais on the steps where the Pope presides; clergy are seated below and a relay screen stands at right.



Pope Leo XIV arrives, standing in the white popemobile and greeting the crowd, flanked by security and clergy.



Pope Leo XIV, close up — smiling and gesturing to the pilgrims as the popemobile passes.



Pope Leo XIV waves with a rosary in hand; the papal coat of arms is on the popemobile door.

Description

A record of Pope Leo XIV's weekly General Audience in St. Peter's Square on the morning of 17 June 2026. The General Audience (Udienza Generale) is normally held on Wednesday mornings: the Pope rides through the crowd in the open popemobile, then from a dais on the basilica steps gives a short teaching, greets pilgrim groups in many languages, and imparts his blessing, while large screens relay it to the far end of the square. These images capture the setting, the great crowd, the dais and accompanying clergy, the Pope's arrival among the people, and two close views of Pope Leo himself.

Inscription & Translation

Across the basilica facade: "IN HONOREM PRINCIPIS APOST[OLORVM] PAVLVS V BVRGHESIVS ROMANVS PONT[IFEX] MAX[IMVS] AN[NO] MDCXII PONT[IFICATVS] VII."

"In honour of the Prince of the Apostles [St. Peter], Paul V Borghese, a Roman, Supreme Pontiff, in the year 1612, the seventh of his pontificate." The inscription records the completion of the basilica facade under Pope Paul V; it has nothing to do with the present audience, but it frames the stage on which it takes place.

Date & Age

The event was on 17 June 2026. Its setting is much older: the basilica facade was completed by Carlo Maderno in 1612, and the great elliptical piazza with its colonnade was laid out by Gian Lorenzo Bernini between 1656 and 1667. At the centre stands an ancient Egyptian obelisk, brought to Rome in the 1st century AD and raised on this spot in 1586. The weekly audience, by contrast, is a living tradition that continues to this day.

Artist / Creators

The central figure is Pope Leo XIV (born Robert Francis Prevost). The stage on which he appears is the work of two great architects: Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who designed the square and its sweeping colonnade (1656–67), and Carlo Maderno, who built the basilica facade (completed 1612). The white popemobile is a recent electric model bearing the papal coat of arms.

Significance

Pope Leo XIV was elected on 8 May 2025 as the 267th pope, succeeding Pope Francis. Born in Chicago in 1955, he is the first pope born in the United States and the first from the Augustinian order; he spent some two decades as a missionary and then bishop in Peru (of which he is also a citizen) and led the Vatican's office for the world's bishops before his election. He took the name Leo in homage to Leo XIII, the pope of modern Catholic social teaching, signalling concern for workers and the poor in a new age of technological change and artificial intelligence. The weekly General Audience is his regular public meeting with pilgrims from around the world — the moment that turns this vast square into a place of teaching, greeting and blessing.