

POPE LEO XIV SCORES; WELL RECEIVED WORLDWIDE

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On May 8, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected by the voting Cardinals of the College of Cardinals to be the new pontiff. The Augustinian priest chose the name Pope Leo XIV.

He is the first American pope— he was born in Chicago—though he is not well known to most American Catholics. That is partly because the 69-year old spent many years as a missionary in Peru; he is a Peruvian citizen, as well as an American.

What helped him enormously with his fellow cardinals was his previous assignment as prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. In that role he advised Pope Francis on the appointment of bishops around the world; he also dealt with the resignation of bishops.

Apparently, there was not enough support for Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Secretary of State under Pope Francis, to obtain the 89 votes that were necessary to win. He was the choice cardinal of the more progressive voting members. Cardinal Prevost cleared 100 votes.

Cardinal Wilton Gregory, former Archbishop of Washington, D.C. said of the future pope that it wasn't some "convincing speech that just wowed" the cardinals. It was in small group gatherings that he impressed many of his colleagues. Also, his international experience and pastoral approach proved attractive.

It is said that New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan

played a key role in advancing Cardinal Prevost's nomination. Some say he was the "kingmaker" who elevated his status. Dolan pitched him as a "bridge builder" and a "citizen of the world." Many look to Dolan to be the bridge between our new pope and our new president.

Pope Leo XIV will have his hands full trying to navigate Catholic waters. The Church is divided and needs someone to mend fences. Catholics are also looking for someone to bring clarity to Church teachings, especially on moral issues. The Holy Father not only commands the "bully pulpit," he has the authority to make decisive rulings.

When he was introduced to the crowd at St. Peter's Square, the new pope dressed in traditional papal garb, including a short red cape with a hood and a white cassock. In doing so, he reverted back to the stylistic choices of popes before Pope Francis broke ranks; he chose to wear simpler clothing.

Another sign of his more traditional approach came when Pope Leo XIV indicated that he would take up residence in the Apostolic Palace, left vacant by Pope Francis for more than 12 years. It will require renovations.

We are very happy and proud of Pope Leo XIV. We stand ready to defend him against those whose agenda is not Catholic friendly.