

# *Cuba: Pope Leo XIV has visited the island twice*

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On two occasions, in 2008 and 2011, Pope Leo XIV visited humble communities in Cuba. Photo: EFE.

Robert F. Prevost Martínez, now the Roman Catholic Pontiff, toured the streets of Havana, Ciego de Ávila, Las Tunas, Holguín, and other Cuban provinces.

Havana, May 11 (RHC)-- From the Parish of San José, in Puerto Padre, Las Tunas, Cuba, residents were moved to discover the name of the man chosen by the 2025 Conclave to fulfill the immense task of

Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church. For the people of Puerto Padre, the cardinal's name was familiar and much loved.

Robert Francis Prevost Martínez was then Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine when he visited the Caribbean island for the second time in February 2011, sleeping at the home of Manuel Miguel Hallal, at 31 Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Street, in the Villazulina city of Puerto Padre.

"(...) I am a very simple person, just like the Pope, and it gave me a great feeling to know that he spent one night under the roof of my house sharing with me," said this resident in an interview with teleSUR contributor Yordanis Rodríguez Laurencio, who went to meet him after the long-awaited announcement.

The resident remembers Prevost Martínez fondly and asserts that "God puts things in their place," referring to his pontificate. "Before going to sleep, I offered him coffee, and he asked for a little." We remained talking at the two front desks. He asked me how long I had been a lay person of the Church, and I told him: "Since I was baptized," he commented emotionally.

For his part, Monsignor Emilio Aranguren, Bishop of the city of Holguín, recalls having the opportunity to share with the current Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church after meeting him on a visit to Rome in 2005. They became friends there, and he told him about the "need for priests we had in the Diocese" of Holguín.

"He is a very simple, very natural person," he states calmly. The Monsignor recounts that upon hearing the news, he was surprised, bowed his head, and prayed for him, writing him a message in which he first called him "Holy Father" and then said "dear brother." He thanked him for his "yes" to the Church, a "yes" that provides the opportunity to visit Cuban soil again, now as Pontiff.

Aranguren recounted that they recently met twice, first at a meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Council in Puerto Rico in 2024, and then in Rome in September of last year, where Prevost was already present following an invitation from Pope Francis. The Holguín native attended this last meeting accompanied by the Bishop of Pinar del Río (a province in western Cuba) and they met him at the Dicastery, where, of course, "they talked about Cuba."

For his part, the priest from Puerto Padre, Emilio Rafael Fernández, believes that for the universal Church, "the fact that the Holy Father continues to bear that Latin American imprint is a blessing," and asserts that they consider Leo XIV to be the ideal person, and that he is the one the Holy Spirit has given them.

With the footprints left by the Pope in Puerto Padre, these Cubans are more deeply connected to their faith and are grateful that the Church is now guided by a simple and humble brother.

[ SOURCE: teleSUR ]

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