

# *Pope Leo XIV calls for ceasefire in Gaza in first Sunday message*

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Pope Leo XIV delivers his blessing from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on his first Sunday congregation after his election, St. Peter's Square, Vatican, May 11, 2025. (Photo by AP)

Vatican City, May 12 (RHC)-- The newly elected Pope Leo XIV has called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, insisting on having "no more war" in his first Sunday message. "No more war," the pontiff said in his first Sunday noon blessing, reiterating peace phrases frequently used by his late predecessor, Pope Francis.

Pope Francis had described the humanitarian situation in Gaza as "extremely grave."

The leader of the world's Catholics said he was "profoundly saddened" by the Israeli war on Gaza, calling for a ceasefire in the Palestinian land.

Pope Leo, the U.S.-born 267th Bishop of Rome, said humanitarian relief must be provided to the "exhausted civilian population," adding that all captives held by Hamas in Gaza must also be freed.

"I, too, address the world's great powers by repeating the ever-present call 'no more war,'" he said from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to an estimated 100,000 people gathered below.

Pope Leo said he was glad to hear of the ceasefire reached on Saturday between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan. He said he hoped negotiations would lead to a lasting treaty between the rivaling countries.

Leo said he hoped Russia and Ukraine also reach an "authentic, just and lasting peace." "But there are so many other conflicts in the world," he added.

[ SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS and NEWS AGENCIES ]

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