Beat: Politics

LARGELY UNKNOWN TO THE WIDER PUBLIC THE AMERICAN POPE,LEON XIV WITH FRENCH ROOTS

SPREADS JOY & SPIRITUAL POWER

Paris, Washington DC, 26.09.2026, 01:03 Time

USPA NEWS - Before this visit, Pope Leo XIV was still relatively unknown beyond Catholic circles in France. By the end of his first day, he had generated a popular fervour that could make major rock stars envious, even on a night when Paris itself was filled with competing cultural spectacles. It is rare to see a Pope visibly enjoying such a large-scale religious show: festive, modern, artistically ambitious and yet deeply rooted in Catholic history. For an American Pope with French roots, the discovery was surely significant. Through the spectacle, he saw how profoundly France's history has been shaped by its saints, its cathedrals, its charitable traditions and its spiritual imagination. At the Stade de France, he did not merely receive a tribute: he watched a country rediscover, through its young people, one of the deepest layers of its own story.

During his official address in the Elysee courtyard, President Macron responded to the Pope's messages on solidarity, secularism (laïcité), and global challenges.
On the common mission of secular fraternity and faith:
"This fight for peace is inseparable from the fight for human dignity and the struggle against injustice. Everywhere, it is always the most vulnerable who pay the price of crises and conflicts... Here again, the Republic and the Church often come across the same faces: the face of those we must look straight in the eye, the face of those whose voices struggle to be heard, those who remind us of the requirement of fraternity that very same fraternity that makes another person a brother in the Republic."
• On a peaceful and inclusive secularism (laïcité):
"The Republic does not fear free consciences, because our Nation is strong from the necessary dialogue between all opinions, while remaining faithful to our humanism, our attachment to human dignity, and by basing our decisions on science while keeping a watchful eye on the most vulnerable."
• On the technological challenge of Artificial Intelligence:
"Humans must retain their rightful place as technology advances...

LIST OF POLTIICAL FIGURES PRESENT AT THE ELYSEE PALACE
The official reception at the ElysEe Palace brought together around 500 guests, including top state authorities, government members, and international diplomats:
• Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic.
• Brigitte Macron, First Lady of France.
• Sébastien Lecornu, Prime Minister of France.
• Gerard Larcher, President of the French Senate.
• Yael Braun-Pivet, President of the National Assembly.
• Rachida Dati, Minister of Culture.
• Bruno Retailleau, Minister of the Interior (in charge of religious affairs).
• Jean-Noel Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs.
• Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris.
• Nicolas Sarkozy, Former President of the French Republic.
• François Hollande, Former President of the French Republic.
• Khaled El-Enany, Director-General of UNESCO.
• The Apostolic Nuncio to France, representing the Holy See's diplomacy.
• Members of the Diplomatic Corps, including ambassadors from over 150 nations accredited to Paris.

Here are the best extracts from Pope Leo XIV's official speech delivered at the Elysée Palace on Friday, September 25, 2026, translated into English.
In this solemn address given in response to President Emmanuel Macron's welcome, the Pontiff spoke directly about global challenges, secularism, and the defense of human dignity.

• On the urgency of peace amid global conflicts:
"Faced with the sound of weapons tearing our continents apart, France has a historic role to play in raising a voice of justice and balance. Peace is not built through force, but through mutual trust and absolute respect for the dignity of every nation."

THE PAPAL OFFICE AT NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS : FROM ASHES TO HOPE
At Notre-Dame de Paris, the Pope presided over the first papal office held beneath the cathedral's restored vaults since the 2019 fire. The setting made his message unavoidable: a monument wounded by flames but restored through immense collective effort. Before priests, religious figures and seminarians, he invoked the cathedral as a sign that crises do not have the final word.

"These vaults bear the scars of fire, but tonight they bear witness to the victory of life over ashes."

"Do not be afraid of crises or of the poverty of your numbers."

The Pope Leon XIV also asked religious leaders to leave comfort behind and reach the "peripheries," where loneliness and despair remain unheard. The gathering brought together President Macron and Brigitte Macron, Former Culture Minister Rachida Dati, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium, Prince Albert II of Monaco, Italian President Sergio Mattarella, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, UNESCO Director-General Khaled El-Enany and major donors to the reconstruction. The protocol was prestigious, but the Pope's words redirected attention away from status and toward service

ON HIS FIRST DAY IN FRANCE, POPE LEO XIV MOVED FROM THE ÉLYSÉE AND UNESCO TO AN UNFORGETTABLE NIGHT AT THE STADE DE FRANCE, WHERE 80,000 YOUNG PEOPLE TURNED FAITH INTO JOY, MUSIC AND A CALL TO SERVE.

The first day of Pope Leo XIV's historic visit to France moved at breathtaking speed: from republican protocol at the ÉlysEe Palace, to multilateral diplomacy at UNESCO, then to an emotional, popular and profoundly modern night at the Stade de France. It was the opening chapter of a four-day journey that would later take him to Lourdes and Metz but its climax came in Saint-Denis. There, before 80,000 young people, the Pope was visibly moved. Some journalists around me were moved to tears too, watching him wipe away tears as an immense show unfolded before him: a religious and contemporary spectacle recounting the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the life of Christ, the spread of Christianity and the long procession of saints who shaped France. For one night, the stadium became a cathedral under open sky.

WHEN A STADIUM BECAME A CATHEDRAL: POPE LEO XIV'S MESSAGE TO FRANCE'S YOUTH
What happened at the Stade de France was more than the climax of a papal visit. It was a reminder that France's young people are not empty spectators waiting for an algorithm, a slogan or a political camp to tell them who they are. They came in their tens of thousands to pray, sing, listen, share stories and make a stadium feel like a living community.

Pope Leo XIV offered them neither fear nor nostalgia. He offered a demand: do not seek merely to possess more; become more. Do not be spectators; serve. Do not accept indifference; build a culture of sharing. Watching his tears, and the tears around me, I understood why this first night mattered. In a country so often presented as exhausted, divided and cynical, 80,000 young people showed that joy, faith and fraternity can still fill an entire stadium and perhaps, if they choose to act, transform far more than one night.
TO BE CONTINUED, END OF THE SERIES: POPE LEO XIV'S FOUR DAYS IN FRANCE.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-27199/largely-unknown-to-the-wider-public-the-american-pope-leon-xiv-with-french-roots.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Rahma Sophia RACHDI, Jedi Foster

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Rahma Sophia RACHDI, Jedi Foster

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619