

Pope Leo XIV tells Spain's parliament every human life must be protected

Pope Leo XIV made history Monday by becoming the first pope to address Spain's Congress of Deputies, delivering a forceful appeal to the country's political class to defend human dignity and protect life "from conception to its natural end."



The June 8 address, given before about 700 guests amid tight security, drew a standing ovation that lasted nearly seven minutes, with shouts of "Long live the

pope!" echoing through the chamber.

In his speech, Pope Leo warned lawmakers not to subordinate human dignity to "shifting social consensus or the whims of the majority at any given moment," insisting that "every truly just society is built upon the recognition of the inviolable dignity of the human person."

"In this sense, if life ceases to be recognized as a fundamental value, what future can our societies have?" the pope asked. "Can a community that casts into the shadows the unborn child, the elderly, the sick, those who suffer in silence, or those who depend entirely on the care of others be called fully just?"

"The defense of human life is neither a partisan issue nor a confessional interest: it is a goal of civilization," he said.

The pope's remarks came as Spain's socialist-led government has been advancing efforts to enshrine abortion protections in the country's Constitution. Such a reform would require broad parliamentary consensus, including support from the center-right People's Party.

"Every human life must be recognized and safeguarded from conception to its natural end, in every circumstance of its existence," Pope Leo said. "When this certainty is obscured, the most vulnerable are the first victims, and the law loses its deepest meaning: to serve and protect every person."

"For this reason," he added, "the moral greatness of a nation is manifested, above all, in its capacity to accompany, protect and love those lives that are most fragile."

The pope also defended the family as "the primary human reality and the natural foundation of the community," saying that "where the family is upheld, the spiritual and social stability of nations is also strengthened."

"The family will always be the first school of humanity, where one learns, before anywhere else ... To read more: [Pope Leo XIV tells Spain's parliament every human life must be protected](#)

Kingdom of Priests



The words God speaks to Israel in today's First Reading are intended for us as well.

The Church is the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Israel—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (see Deuteronomy 26:19; Isaiah 62:12).

In the Church, we have been gathered as the new "Israel of God" (see Galatians 6:16). He has made us His own people, the flock He tends, as we sing in today's Psalm.

Moses was Israel's first shepherd (see Exodus 3:1). With the Promised Land in view, he prayed that God would raise up a successor so that God's people would not be left as sheep without a shepherd (see Numbers 27:17).

These same words are used in today's Gospel to describe Jesus' pity for the crowds, who are "troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd."

Israel's shepherds—the Pharisees and scribes—had abandoned and misled the people through their hypocrisy and spiritual blindness (see Matthew 23:1–36; Jeremiah 50:6).

But God had long before promised that He Himself would come and save His sheep—searching over the whole earth where they had been scattered "for lack of a shepherd" (see Ezekiel 34:1–24).

Jesus is the new Moses and new David promised by the prophets, a divine shepherd-king sent to restore God's priestly kingdom (see John 10:11).

As Moses commissioned Joshua as his successor, so we see Jesus today giving the Twelve His powers and authority (see Matthew 9:35; 10:1). In God's plan, they are to seek out the lost sheep of Israel first and then bring all nations into the fold (see Acts 13:46; Romans 1:16).

Together we have been saved and reconciled to God, as we hear in today's Epistle. As He delivered Israel, He has also made us a kingdom of priests in the Church (see Revelation 1:6).

So we come in this Mass to serve Him with gladness, to praise His kindness, which endures forever.

Scott Hahn



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11TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

Entrance Antiphon:

O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you;
be my help. Do not abandon or forsake me,
O God, my Saviour!

First Reading: Exodus 19:2-6a

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 100

We are his people, the sheep of his flock.

Second Reading: Romans 5:6-11

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.

The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 9:36-10:8

Communion Antiphon: Ps 26:4

There is one thing I ask of the Lord, only this do I seek: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

SATURDAY 13th June ... St Anthony of Padua

9:30 am **NO MASS**

4:30 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Regina Gomes RIP (Rodrick Family)

SUNDAY 14th June

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Patrick Umekwe RIP (Joy Ekekwe)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Canon Peter (June Wells)

MONDAY 15th June ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 16th June ... St Richard of Chichester

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Valmai Atsoparthis RIP

WEDNESDAY 17th June

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Simone Stone RIP

THURSDAY 18th June

9:30am Mass St John Wallingford

FRIDAY 19th June ... St Romuald

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Deceased Members of Capp Family (Deborah Kennedy)

SATURDAY 20th June ... St Alban

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confession after Mass**

4:30 pm Adoration and Confession before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Chris Stemp's Intention (Annie Furlong)

SUNDAY 21st June

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Kealen & Vallonia Thanksgiving (Martins' Family)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

In your prayers, please remember: Margaret O'Conner, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong, Canon Peter Turbitt, Charles Hunt and all the sick and housebound.



Day For Life Second Collection 2026



On Sunday 21 June 2026, Catholics across England and Wales will mark Day for Life, the day in the Church's year dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition.

This year's theme is 'The Wonder of the Child in the Womb'. Parenthood is a vocation of joys and hopes, of grief and anxieties. On this year's Day for Life, we acknowledge the particular grief of mothers and fathers who have lost a child before birth or in infancy. Many parents find

consolation in their faith and its assurance that every child, including those who lose their life before they are born or soon after, is created, willed and deeply loved by God from all eternity. You can pay by cash to our second collection box, by our payment device, through [Pay As You Give online donation page](#) or by scanning the QR code as provided.



Diocesan Pilgrimage Tours to Lourdes, Turin and Assisi

The two diocesan pilgrimages this summer will be led by Bishop Philip. Tour to Lourdes will be from **Monday 6th July until Friday 10th July**. It will give participants the opportunity to pray for the Church, for Vocations to the priesthood, for the world, for peace, for the sick of our Diocese and all visitors and pilgrims to the Sanctuary. To book a place, please complete [the Booking Form](#). For email enquiry, please [click here](#).

The pilgrimage tour to Turin (northern Italy) and Assisi (central Italy) will be from **Monday 20th July until Sunday 26th July**. [Click here](#) for more details and a booking form or contact [Canon PJ Smith](#).

St Birinus Catholic Music Festival

The St Birinus Festival brings together outstanding musicians, scholars, and communities for a celebration of sacred music in the beautiful setting of Dorchester-on-Thames. The 2026 St Birinus Festival will take place **9th-12th July** this year in Dorchester upon Thames - at Dorchester Abbey & St Birinus Church. This is a Catholic sacred music festival with concerts & services - the only Catholic music festival run in England (maybe even in Europe). For tickets and bookings, visit the website [thedaveyconsort.co.uk](#)



WE BELIEVE | Festival of Catholic Life

Friday 24-Monday 27 July 2026 | St Mary's College, Oscott, Birmingham

We Believe Festival brings the Church together in England and Wales. It is an unmissable opportunity to discover the traditions and charisms that flow through the Church, to experience the joy of community, and to encounter personally the Lord Jesus, our salvation. Join us from 24-27 July 2026 at the historic and beautiful setting of St Mary's College, Oscott, for a feast of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. [Book your tickets here](#).



Fanning The Flame Summer Camp 2026

The summer camp by the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph will be on **17th to 21st August** this year at St Cassian's Centre, Kintbury RG17 9SR for youths aged 11-17. Through the lives of saints and sacraments, the camp is going to focus on our allegiance to Jesus Christ, develop an understanding of why it is the best way to live, and how to joyfully and charitably share this truth with those we may encounter. It doesn't matter where you are in your relationship with Christ, you are welcome to come and be drawn deeper!

For more information and application details, please refer to [Fanning The Flame Summer Camp 2025](#) and the poster on our parish notice board. For enquiry, please email contact@fanningtheflame.co.uk. There is space for 50 young people on a first-come, first-served basis.



Leaving A Gift In Your Will

Many parishioners choose to leave a gift to their parish in their will. These gifts are greatly appreciated and make a real difference to parish life. Leaving a gift in your will : is an opportunity to leave a lasting mark and express gratitude to God for all He's given you; cultivates Catholic Stewardship and demonstrates the profound impact a gift can have beyond an individual's lifetime; supports the Church and local parishes in sustaining themselves for the future; ensures that Catholic values will continue to be present in communities for generations to come. Resources about how to leave a gift in your will are available on the diocesan [website](#). For more information, please contact the Parish Office, Parish Priest, or [email](#) the diocese.

Notes of Appreciation to English Martyrs Didcot

Our Pastoral Area Confirmation for 66 youngsters from parishes across the South Oxfordshire Pastoral Area was successfully held on the evening of last Friday 5th June. We had welcomed Bishop Philip, six parish priests in our pastoral area, the Confirmation candidates and their families to English Martyrs Didcot with lovely music from our music group. Here are two notes of appreciation from our sister parishes:



- "On Friday evening the Bishop held a confirmation service for 60 young people at English Martyrs Didcot ... everyone there Catholics and non-Catholics, were full of praise for the Service which had great singing, was very multicultural and overall, very uplifting ..."
- "Thank you for all your help with preparation for the confirmation mass last Friday. We have had lots of feedback from parents and people who attended on how lovely the service was. It was a great celebration. "

A big thank you to every one who had been involved in the Confirmation Service. It is an achievement for all of us in our parish to have worked together to help fulfill our role as the "Hub of Oxfordshire Pastoral Area" even with the limited time and resources we have. Well done and may God bless our Confirmed young people, their families, and Fr Dominic.

St Amand's Catholic Primary School

This Sunday 14th June at the 9am Mass in Didcot, Mrs Ellery, the Headteacher of St Amand's Catholic Primary School, will visit the parish to meet with parents and families. We are encouraging stronger links between our parish and our local Catholic school and would like to see many more of our children attend this flourishing Catholic primary school where the Catholic faith is taught well and there are many opportunities for prayers and worship. As a parish we are helping parents by offering transport support. Please contact us directly by [email](#) or call our school office at 01235 833342 to find out more. Come to our **Open Morning on Wednesday 17th June 9-11am** to learn more about us!

Church Door Refurbishment in Didcot

The entrance doors of English Martyrs Didcot will be under refurbishment starting on Monday 22nd June. Please enter English Martyrs through the side doors (the fire exits on the two sides) during the refurbishment. Thank you and sorry for any inconvenience. We will let you know when the work is completed.

Enquirers Informal Group, RCIA and Life in The Spirit Seminar

Some members of our parish community desire to support, to journey with or accompany those wishing to be friends of Jesus, deepen their faith, and enter a relationship with the mystery of our salvation. This was planned to give everyone a chance to participate. Watch out for a start date.

Enquirers Informal Group: An informal meeting over tea & coffee once or twice a month for people who would like to learn more and ask questions. Are you struggling with going to confession, personal issues, some aspects of the faith? This is for you. **RCIA:** An RCIA programme in the parish, an in-person option especially for those with inflexible work hours. **Life in the Spirit Seminar:** The seminars an opportunity for you to find out more about a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit and to be helped in taking the first steps of a new relationship with Jesus. This may include a series of talks and discussions held in the evenings, a half-day retreat, supported by short daily reflections.

English Martyrs Gospel Reading Group June and July Meetings

The English Martyrs Gospel Reading Group meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting will be on 23rd June and 14th July. See you at 7:30pm in the Tearoom. Contact Nick Spencer at 07870505520 if you have any questions.

Refugee Week and Sunday 21st June 6pm @ Hagbourne Church

Please join [CCOW \(Christian Concern for One World\)](#) on Refugee Sunday, 21st June, at 6pm at St Andrew's Church, Hagbourne, for a joint service of prayer & sharing, followed by a bring-and-share meal. This event will bring together people from different backgrounds and churches in the Didcot area to learn from each other and pray for refugees and migrants and their countries. We look forward to hearing from brothers and sisters from Ukraine, Venezuela and Hong Kong who are now living locally. They will share from their countries and cultures, including songs of worship and points for prayer. We will finish by enjoying food and conversation together. Parking is available at Hagbourne Village Hall.

Parish Safeguarding

Our Safety Officer for all adults and children safeguarding issues is Stefania Harford. Please contact Stefania via the parish office on 01235 812338. If there is no response and, in an emergency, dial 999.

[Careers - Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth](#): Current job openings across the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth.