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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

In just two short weeks we have said goodbye to our beloved Pope Francis, entered a time of uncertainty and now have a remarkable event to celebrate as Catholics, Chicagoans and people of good will. The fact that more than 130 cardinal electors from more than 70 countries could come to a decision in less than 24 hours is a clear sign of the unity, so needed in a world torn by division and conflict.

Many here know Pope Leo XIV as Robert Prevost, a classmate, friend and neighbor. Our pride in him as a native son is exceeded only by our pride in his service to the People of God and to our Church.

A missionary, Pope Leo knows firsthand the needs of those at the margins and holds them close. We expect he will carry on the regard for the poor so associated with Pope Francis but will lead us and teach us in his own way. His choice of name recalls Pope Leo XIII who defended the dignity of workers at a time when concern for their rights was scarce. This earlier Pope Leo, generally considered the father of Catholic social teaching, placed our church firmly in the world, speaking against injustice and for peace. As wars and discord continue and some deny human dignity with their words and deeds, such a voice is clearly needed.

I hope you will take a minute to say a prayer of thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit who surely was with us in this time. Let us rejoice that he has once again given us a Holy Father who will represent our values boldly and lead us to greater closeness with Jesus.

Know that I am deeply grateful for the prayers you offered for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis. The outpouring of condolences, including from people of other faith traditions was remarkable. His example of a happy death was his last gift to us. It is my wish that people of the Archdiocese of Chicago and beyond now offer their prayers for Pope Leo XIV as he takes up the work of lighting the world with God's love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Chicago