News



Tensions escalate between the Pope and President Trump

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Tensions between Pope Leo XIV and President Trump escalated over issues on foreign policy, immigration and the role of moral authority in shaping civic discourse.

Two days after Easter Sunday, Trump threatened Iran with annihilation according to USAToday.

Leo responded by saying, "attacks on civilian infrastructure is against international law but it is also a sign of the hatred, the division, the destruction the human being is capable of."

On TruthSocial, Trump responded by calling the pope "WEAK on Crime and terrible for Foreign Policy."

In a now deleted post on TruthSocial, Trump depicted himself as Jesus Christ using an AI-generated image, which led to major backlash from many religious communities including Catholic and other Christian communities.

> **"I have no fear of neither the Trump administration nor of speaking out loudly about the message in the Gospel."**
> POPE LEO XIV

According to USA Today, almost 60% of Catholics supported Trump in the 2024 election. Founding editor of the Journal of Global Catholicism Mathew Schmalz said "up to a third of that support may have since withered as the president and the pope have clashed over U.S. deportation policies and the Iran war."

Middle school teacher and Stamford, Conn., Rep. Bobby Pavia met with the Pope on April 8 after hearing back from a letter he sent to the Vatican in January. In the letter, Pavia asked for guidance on how to promote civility within local politics.

"Our leaders are just not civil with each other...and it's bleeding down into local level politics and just how kids are treating each other because they're seeing it from our so-called leaders," Pavia said in an interview with The Daily Campus.

> **"Great things come from meeting halfway."**
> REPRESENTATIVE BOBBY PAVIA

"The talk that I gave at the prayer meeting for peace a couple of days ago was prepared two weeks ago, well before the president ever commented on myself and on the message of peace that I am promoting." said Leo on April 18 in a press conference held on an airplane.

According to a post on X by Fox News, Leo minimized reports of conflict with Trump, saying the narrative has been partly inaccurate. He emphasized that engaging in a debate with the president is not his priority and that he intends to continue focusing on promoting peace.

"I have no fear of neither the Trump administration nor of speaking out loudly about the message in the Gospel," the pope said during an 11-day trip to Africa.

Pavia mentioned that civil discourse can be a good thing. "Great things come from meeting halfway," he said.

Pavia also said that people need to be reminded that every person is an individual. As an educator, he always tries to say "hi" to everyone that he sees.

"You just never know what happened immediately before that," Pavia said.

Vice President JD Vance, who is a practicing Catholic, responded to the Fox News post on X, writing that he was grateful to the pope for trying to diffuse the conflict.

"While the media narrative constantly gins up conflict–and yes, real disagreements have happened and will happen–the reality is often much more complicated," Vance wrote. "Pope Leo preaches the gospel, as he should, and that will inevitably mean he offers his opinions on the moral issues of the day. The President–and the entire administration–work to apply those moral principles in a messy world. He will be in our prayers, and I hope that we'll be in his."

This comes after a recent Turning Point USA event in which Vance said that Leo should "be careful when he talks about matters of theology."

Pavia said that when he got involved in politics in 2021, he "drew a moral line right in the sand in front of [him]."

"If you're in leadership, it's important to stay by our values and that is what the Pope is doing right now," he said.



Pope Leo XIV praying in front of a crowd. PHOTO COURTESY OF @OKAYNEWSROOM ON PINTEREST



President Trump speaking to a crowd. PHOTO COURTESY OF @LIFEOFDONALDTRUMP ON PINTEREST



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