



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIV
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE SOCIAL WEEK IN PERU**

[Lima, 14-16 August 2025]

I cordially greet the participants in the Social Week, which is being held in Lima from 14 to 16 August. I am grateful for the invitation extended to me by my brother bishops to share some reflections with all of you.

It is clear to anyone who reviews the history of Peru that these lands have been accompanied by a particular plan of Providence, especially with regard to our Catholic faith, which has always been professed in harmony with care and service to those most in need. Only in this way can the “density of holiness” that exists in that nation, so close to my ministry and my prayer. The testimonies of mystical life in Saint Rose of Lima, of ardent charity in Saint Martin de Porres, and of love for the poor in Saint Juan Macías speak of a vigorous and fruitful presence of the Gospel, which never neglected prayer in order to serve others, nor forgot the little ones while it magnified and beautified the worship owed to the eternal God.

In this respect, Saint Paul VI’s words at the canonization of Juan Macías are enlightening: he “united everyone in charity, working for a full humanism. And all this because he loved people, because he saw God’s image in them. How we would like to remind those who work among the poor and marginalized today of this! We must not stray from the Gospel, nor break the law of charity in order to seek greater justice through violent means. The Gospel has sufficient potential to bring forth renewing forces which, transforming men from within, move them to change whatever structures are necessary to make them more just and more humane” (*Homily*, 28 September 1975).

Along with these three great testimonies of Christian life bequeathed to us by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and others that could also be mentioned, how can we fail to remember the episcopal ministry of Saint Toribio de Mogrovejo, Spanish by birth but clearly Peruvian in his

missionary activity and his extensive pastoral work? During his episcopate, he founded a hundred parishes, convened a Pan-American Council, two provincial councils and twelve diocesan synods, all while giving his best efforts day after day to the abandoned and those who lived in those geographical or cultural regions that my predecessor, Pope Francis, called “the peripheries”. We can say that Toribio was, in the sixteenth century, the episcopal symbol of authentic synodality and of the Gospel offered on the peripheries. The Peruvian lands saw him not only in the vigour of apostolic action that still amazes us today, but also in the calmness of his serene face and his collected and devout appearance, which clearly showed where his strength came from: intense prayer and union with God.

Let us now contemplate our own time, marked by multiple challenges in the economic, political and cultural spheres. The pain of injustice and exclusion suffered by so many of our brothers and sisters impels all baptized persons to respond in a way that, as a Church, must correspond to the signs of the times from the heart of the Gospel. To this end, we urgently need the witness of today’s saints, that is, people who remain united to the Lord, like branches to the vine (cf. *Jn* 15:5). For saints are not decorations from a baroque past; they arise from God’s call to build a better future. At the same time, let us understand that all social action of the Church must have as its centre and goal the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, so that, without neglecting the immediate, we always remain aware of the proper and ultimate direction of our service. For if we do not give Christ in his entirety, we will always be giving extremely little.

Dear brothers and sisters: it is not two loves, but rather one and the same, that moves us to give both material bread and the bread of the Word that, in turn, by its very dynamism, will give rise to hunger for the Bread of Heaven, which only the Church can give, by the mandate and will of Christ, and which no human institution, however well-intentioned it may be, can replace. And, for our part, let us not forget the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles: “Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up” (*Gal* 6:9).

With the hope that these days will be fruitful and contribute to giving new impetus to social ministry in the beloved Peruvian Church, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to all.

Vatican, 4 August 2025

LEO PP. XIV

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