

SERMON TAKE-HOME NOTES — May 11, 2025

Highlights from the English translation of Pope Leo XIV's first speech:

"Peace be with you all." Dearest brothers and sisters, this is the first greeting of the Risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the flock of God. I too would like this greeting of peace to enter our hearts, to reach your families: to all people wherever they may be, to all nations, to the whole earth: peace be with you.



This is the peace of the Risen Christ: a disarmed peace, a disarming peace, humble and persevering, it comes from God, God who loves us all unconditionally.

Therefore, without fear, united, hand in hand with God and with one another, let us move forward. We are disciples of Christ, Christ goes before us; the world needs His light, humanity needs Him as a bridge to be reached by God and His love. Help us as well — help one another — to build bridges through dialogue, through encounter, uniting everyone to be one single people always in peace.

To the Church of Rome, a special greeting: we must seek together how to be a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges, dialogue, always open to welcome — like this square with open arms — all those who need our presence.

To all of you, brothers and sisters of Rome, of Italy, and of the whole world, we want to be a synodal Church, a Church that walks, a Church that always seeks peace, always seeks charity, always strives to be close especially to those who suffer.

So I would like to pray together with you: let us pray together for this new mission, but also for the whole Church and for peace in the world.

Was Pope Leo XIV making a statement with his choice of names? Instead of choosing Francis, or one of the names from other recent popes, he went back more than a hundred years to Pope Leo XIII (pope from 1878 to 1903). Here's what the Wikipedia article says about him:

Pope Leo XIII outlined the rights of workers to a fair wage, safe working conditions, and the formation of trade unions, while affirming the rights to property and free enterprise, opposing both socialism and laissez-faire capitalism. With that encyclical, he became popularly called the "Social Pope" and the "Pope of the Workers," also having created the foundations for modern thinking in the social doctrines of the Catholic Church, influencing his successors. (Wikipedia)



Pope Leo XIV, if he follows Leo XIII and Francis I, will face considerable opposition within his own church, which, like much of the rest of world, is split between the authoritarianism of the past and the democracies of the future.

One of the architects of the current "Christian Nationalism" is a Catholic man — from Racine! His name is **Paul Weyrich**.

- Born and raised in Racine (1942-2008)
- Graduated St. Catherine's High School and UW-Parkside (Journalism?)
- Left Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II to join the Melkite Greek Catholic Church — ordained as a deacon
- First job: reporter for the Milwaukee *Sentinel*
- Moved to Washington D.C. / Fairfax, VA (late 60's?), adjacent to Washington D.C., where he lived most of his life
- Weyrich co-founded four major conservative organizations:
 - 1971: the Heritage Foundation (funded by Joseph Coors)
 - 1976: Survival of a Free Congress (CSFC; aka Free Congress Foundation)
 - 1979: Moral Majority (with Jerry Falwell)
 - 1981: Council for National Policy (funded by folks like the Koch brothers)
- In 2001, Weyrich wrote with Eric Heubeck *The Integration of Theory and Practice*, the Free Congress Foundation's strategic plan — basically, a manifesto — predecessor to the Heritage Foundation's *Project 2025* — people are finally paying attention to Weyrich's role!

