

MU and Pope Leo XIV

It is welcome news that our WWP will be attending Pope Leo's inauguration, as part of the Anglican delegation. It speaks of churches being together in Christ despite our ecclesial differences.

The Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion (in which MU is integral) are both world-wide episcopal churches.

A new Archbishop of Canterbury is also being elected, though the process is very different. This year the appointment will be made not just by Church of England representatives but also, for the first time in history, with 5 delegates from all regions of the Anglican Communion.

Pope Leo XIV is an Augustinian. As he stood on the balcony looking overwhelmed by the magnitude of the occasion and the task ahead, he spoke words from one of St Augustine's sermons: "With you I am a Christian; for you I am a bishop." The full quote reads: *"What I am for you terrifies me; what I am with you consoles me. For you I am a bishop, but with you I am a Christian. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. the former is a danger; the latter salvation."* (Church Times Ed. 16 May)

The task with which those who lead our churches are entrusted is formidable – one they cannot carry out in their own strength. Pope Leo's words remind us that our leaders are also simply fellow Christians: prone to error, saved by forgiveness in Christ. At the funeral of a bishop, priest or deacon, the body is traditionally laid facing the congregation, not the altar – a reminder that they are judged not only by God but by those they served.

Our leaders, both lay and ordained, need our prayers and ultimately our forgiveness, not to be excused for their misjudgements and errors but as a saving grace from Christ *'in whom we all live and move and have our being'*. (Acts 17.28)

