

Pope Leo XIV's Angelus Message
St Peter's Square: Sunday, 15 March 2026

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

For two weeks now, the peoples of the Middle East have been suffering the horrific violence of war. Thousands of innocent people have been killed, and countless others have been forced to flee their homes. I renew my prayerful closeness to all who have lost loved ones in the attacks, which have struck schools, hospitals and residential areas.

The situation in Lebanon is a cause for great concern. I hope that avenues for dialogue will emerge to support the country's Authorities in implementing lasting solutions to the serious crisis currently unfolding, for the common good of all the Lebanese people.

On behalf of the Christians of the Middle East, and of all women and men of good will, I appeal to those responsible for this conflict: cease fire! May paths of dialogue be reopened! Violence can never lead to the justice, stability and peace for which the peoples are waiting.

Holy See: <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/angelus/2026/documents/20260315-angelus.html>, accessed 17 March 2026.

Pope Leo XIV's Homily at Holy Mass during a Pastoral Visit
Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Ponte Mammolo (Rome)
4th Sunday of Lent, 15 March 2026

Dear brothers and sisters,

Our Eucharistic celebration today, more than ever, is filled with joy. Indeed, the beauty of our gathering today is set against the backdrop of the Sunday known as "*Laetare*", meaning "*rejoice*", taken from the words of Isaiah: "Rejoice with Jerusalem" (Entrance Antiphon, cf. *Is* 66:10).

This gives us cause to reflect. At present, many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world are suffering because of violent conflicts, caused by the absurd claim that problems and differences can be resolved through war, whereas we must engage in unceasing dialogue for peace. Some even go so far as to invoke God's name in these choices of death, but God cannot be enlisted by darkness. Rather, He always comes to bestow light, hope and peace upon humanity, and it is peace that those who invoke Him must seek....

Holy See: <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2026/documents/20260315-visita-pastorale-settore-nord.html>, accessed 21 March 2026.

In this homily, Pope Leo referred to "some" who "invoke God's name" in support of the war in the Middle East. A number of commentators have speculated that Pope Leo was referring to the US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth.

At a Press Briefing on 10 March 2026 – just a few days before Pope Leo's homily on 15 March 2026 – Pete Hegseth stated, "I'll close with Scripture, drawing strength from Psalm 144: 'Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield in whom I take refuge.' (Psalm 144:1-2) May the Lord grant unyielding strength and refuge to our warriors, unbreakable protection to them and our homeland, and total victory over those who seek to harm them. And amen. God bless our troops and this mission."

US Department of War: [https://www.war.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/4429953/secretary-of-war-pete-hegseth-and-chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-gen-dan/#:~:text=That%20race%20to%20a%20nuclear,executing%20them%20with%20ruthless%20precision](https://www.war.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/4429953/secretary-of-war-pete-hegseth-and-chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-of-staff-general-mike-plym-fortney-prepare-for-the-2026-annual-congressional-report), accessed 21 March 2026.