

## Dear Family:

Read the reflection about hardships, and discuss the “Ponder and Pray” questions and prompts, thinking about how Our Lord is calling you to act. Then, consider the challenges of the “Live It” section, and have fun with the family activities.

## Live It

Trials are not detours but part of God’s path for us. This week, embrace the difficulties you face as opportunities for growth. When challenges arise, repeat this truth: “God is with me, and I am not alone.” Reflect on how today’s trials are preparing you for greater strength and faith tomorrow. Remember, nothing given to God is ever wasted. Persevere in love and trust, knowing that he is shaping you for his Kingdom.

Fifth Sunday of Easter (C)

Acts 14:21-27  
Revelation 21:1-5a  
John 13:31-33a, 34-35

“ My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. ”

—John 13:33a, 34

## Ponder and Pray

- What hardships are you currently facing, and how can you approach them with trust in God’s plan?
- St. Paul said trials are necessary to enter God’s Kingdom. How does this perspective change your view of difficulties?
- What practical steps can you take to persevere in love, even on difficult days?

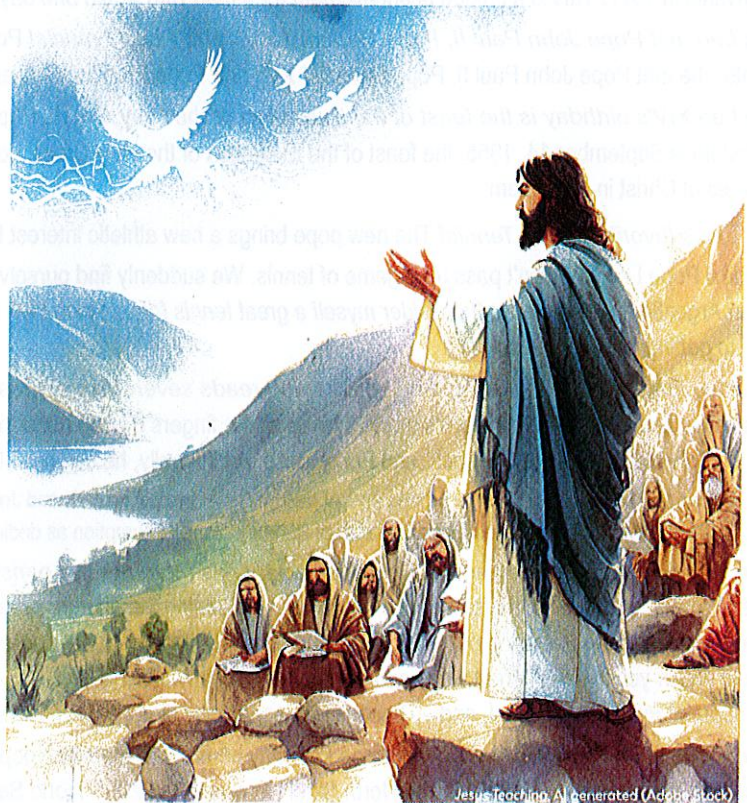
## Fun for the Family

As a family, create a “Trial Training Chart.” Write down the small challenges each person faces during the week, such as handling interruptions, practicing patience, or tackling a difficult task. Check in daily to encourage one another, and celebrate moments of perseverance. At the end of the week, discuss how these small trials helped you grow stronger in faith and character.

## Preparing for Hardship

Life is filled with both blessings and hardships. While we often celebrate the idea that our best days are ahead, we must also prepare for the reality that trials are part of the journey. Scripture reminds us that difficulties are not interruptions in God’s plan but essential elements of it. St. Paul encourages us today in the Acts of the Apostles: “It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

Problems shape us, transforming our character and preparing us for greater challenges ahead. Like marathon runners training for race day, we face today’s difficulties in building the strength and faith needed for tomorrow. Jesus himself exemplified this in his Passion, facing the worst day of his life with unwavering love and purpose.



Jesus Teaching AI generated (Adobe Stock)

The Christian life calls us not to avoid troubles but to embrace them with trust in God’s presence. In moments of difficulty, remember: You have not been abandoned. God is with you, using

even the hardest moments to transform you into the person he created you to be. With love as your guide, you can face each challenge, becoming your best self—even on the hardest days.

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## **16 Fun Facts About Pope Leo XIV**

- *Pope Leo is the first American pope.* For generations, Americans wondered if one of their own would ever be elected pope. That moment has come with Pope Leo XIV, born and raised in Chicago. His choice of name is also significant—honoring Pope Leo XIII, who helped shape the Church in the United States by encouraging two future American saints in their missionary work: St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and St. Katharine Drexel. Pope Leo XIV continues that legacy, the first American pope following in the footsteps of a pontiff who believed deeply in the Church's mission in the West.
- *Pope Leo likes to play Wordle!* In a light moment before stepping into one of the most sacred decisions in the Church, Pope Leo was playing Wordle! According to his brother, the soon-to-be pontiff squeezed in a quick puzzle session right before the Conclave—proof that even popes enjoy a little brain game before making history.
- *He is also the first Peruvian pope.* Pope Leo XIV is a naturalized citizen of Peru—although he was not born there, he legally obtained citizenship of the country. Over a decade in Peru, from 2014 to 2023, he served as Apostolic Administrator and then Bishop of the diocese of Chiclayo and as Apostolic Administrator of Callao for a few years. He is a dual-citizen of both the United States and Peru—and the first pope from both countries! He's the second pope with a Latin American connection, as Pope Francis was an Argentinian, the first Latin American pope.
- *Pope Leo watched "Conclave" right before his very own Conclave!* Just before heading into the Conclave that would change his life forever, Pope Leo had wrapped up watching "Conclave"—yes, the movie about electing a pope! His brother shared the timing with a laugh, and it's hard not to appreciate the irony.
- *He has a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics.* Our new pope graduated with his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Villanova University in Pennsylvania in 1977. This is a unique academic path for a man who would one day become pope!
- *Pope Leo met Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis!* Pope Leo's journey to the papacy included some unforgettable moments—he met Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis! Holy encounters captured in time.
- *Pope Leo XIV's birthday is the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.* Pope Leo XIV turned 69 in September, before he was elected pope. His birthdate is September 14, 1955, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, commemorating the day that St. Helen located the relics of the True Cross of Christ in Jerusalem.
- *Pope Leo's favorite sport? Tennis!* The new pope brings a new athletic interest to the Vatican. Argentinian Pope Francis fancied soccer, but it sounds like Pope Leo XIV won't pass up a game of tennis. We suddenly find ourselves fans of tennis, too! The sports news site Bolavip reports him telling an Argentinian newspaper: *"I consider myself a great tennis fan... Since I left Peru, I've had few opportunities to practice, so I'm looking forward to getting back on the courts."*
- *His native language is English, but he speaks and reads several languages.* Given his American upbringing, Pope Leo XIV is fluent in English as his first language. But there's more: it takes all the fingers on one hand to enumerate how many languages Pope Leo XIV knows how to speak: English, Spanish, Italian, French, and Portuguese. Additionally, he can read Latin and German, two important theological languages.
- *Pope Leo is the youngest of 3 boys.* Pope Leo XIV has two older brothers: Louis and John. The upbringing of the Prevost boys was solidly rooted in the Catholic Faith, and they all served their Chicago parish of St. Mary of the Assumption as dedicated altar boys, musicians, lectors, and volunteers.
- *Pope Leo's parents: his dad was a Navy Lieutenant, his mom ran the parish and worked in the library.* Pope Leo XIV's mom, Mildred Martinez Prevost, was one of the fabled "church ladies" — cleaning the church, running fundraisers, singing in the choir, and somehow leading both the altar society and the Rosary group without cloning herself. She also had a degree in library science and a master's in education, which means she could shush you in six different ways *and* explain why. Meanwhile, his dad, Louis Prevost, was a Navy vet from World War II who later became a school superintendent, a principal, and — because he apparently didn't believe in free time — a catechist too.
- *Pope Leo is a Chicago White Sox fan!* Pope Leo may be the first American pope, but let's settle one thing right now—he's a White Sox fan, not a Cubs fan. Grace builds on nature. Sorry, North Side! He was at the 2005 World Series.
- *He grew up surrounded by priests.* Pope Leo XIV's mother enjoyed hosting priests and cooking for them. They enjoyed frequenting the family's home for Mrs. Prevost's excellent cooking when the pope was a young boy. Given this regular and familiar exposure to the priestly vocation, his family and friends were not surprised when he felt drawn in the same direction!
- *Young Robert Prevost was the smartest boy in his class.* According to one of Pope Leo XIV's elementary school classmates, our new Holy Father is a bit of a genius. Through rigorous academic training in his student years and a very structured elementary school experience, he was dedicated to learning his Catechism well. In high school, he participated in speech and debate.
- *Pope Leo's seminary formation began in high school.* No one is surprised that Pope Leo is where he is today. Drawn to the priesthood from a very young age (his brother John says he knew that "from the time he could walk" that his brother was going to be a priest), Pope Leo XIV chose to attend St. Augustine Seminary High School for his secondary school education.
- *Pope Leo XIV was an editor-in-chief for his school yearbook.* Long before he was shepherding the global Church, Pope Leo was already shaping stories and spotlighting classmates like a pro. Some of his own accomplishments: 1971 Letter of Commendation for PSAT/NMSQT high performance, National Honor Society vice president, Student Council secretary, Library Club and senior class president.