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Pope Leo XIV arrives in St. Peter's Square to hold his weekly general audience, at the Vatican, Wednesday, June 25, 2025. (AP/Andrew Medichini)

by Associated Press

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Vatican City — June 25, 2025

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Pope Leo XIV urged the warring sides in the [Israel-Iran war](#) to "reject the logic of bullying and revenge" and choose a path of dialogue and diplomacy to reach peace as he expressed solidarity with all Christians in the Middle East.

Speaking at his weekly Wednesday general audience, the American pope said he was following "with attention and hope" recent developments in the war. He cited the biblical exhortation: "A national shall not raise the sword against another nation."

A ceasefire is holding in the 12-day Iran-Israel conflict, which involved [Israel targeting Iranian nuclear and military sites](#) and [the U.S. intervening by dropping bunker-buster bombs](#) on Iranian nuclear sites. Iran has long maintained that [its nuclear program](#) is peaceful.

"Let us listen to this voice that comes from on High:" Leo said. "Heal the lacerations caused by the bloody actions of recent days, reject all logic of bullying and revenge, and resolutely take the path of dialogue, diplomacy and peace."

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The Chicago-born Leo also expressed solidarity with the victims of [Sunday's attack on a Greek Orthodox church](#) in Damascus, Syria and urged the international community to keep supporting Syrian reconciliation. Syria's Interior Ministry has said a sleeper cell belonging to the Islamic State group was behind the attack at the Church of the Holy Cross in Damascus, which [killed at least 25 people](#).

"To the Christians in the Middle East, I am near you. All the church is close to you," he said. "This tragic event is a reminder of the profound fragility that still marks Syria after years of conflict and instability, and therefore it is crucial that the international community doesn't look away from this country, but continues to offer it support through gestures of solidarity and with a renewed commitment to peace and reconciliation."

This story appears in the **Pope Leo XIV** feature series. [View the full series](#).