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Pope Leo XIV greets pilgrims after leading the Angelus in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican July 27. (CNS/Vatican Media)

Carol Glatz

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The time for negotiations to start is now, and anything jeopardizing peace must be rejected, Pope Leo XIV said.

"Every human person possesses an inherent dignity, bestowed by God himself," he said after reciting the Angelus with visitors in St. Peter's Square July 27. "I urge all parties involved in conflicts to recognize this dignity and to end every action that violates it."

He called for "negotiations aimed at securing a future of peace for all peoples, and for the rejection of anything that might jeopardize it," praying to Mary, the "Queen of Peace," to protect "the innocent victims of conflicts and those leaders who have the power to resolve them."

Leo expressed his closeness to "all those who are suffering due to conflict and violence throughout the world," particularly those in southern Syria and Gaza.

"I am following with great concern the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, where the civilian population is suffering from severe hunger and remains exposed to violence and death," he said. "I renew my heartfelt appeal for a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and the full respect of humanitarian law."

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—Pope Leo XIV

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He also expressed his prayers for "those affected by the clashes along the border between Thailand and Cambodia, especially displaced children and families. May the Prince of Peace inspire everyone to seek dialogue and reconciliation."

Fighting broke out between the two Southeast Asian neighbors along a disputed border July 24, leading to the death of at least 32 people, including civilians. More

than 200,000 people in both countries were evacuated or fled from their homes in the border areas, according to news reports.

Greeting tens of thousands of visitors crowded in St. Peter's Square, Leo also welcomed young people who arrived in Rome for the Jubilee of Youth.

"I greet with particular affection the young people from various countries who have gathered in Rome for the Jubilee of Youth, which begins tomorrow," he said, offering the same greeting in Italian, English and Spanish,



Visitors hold an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe as they gather in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican for the Angelus with Pope Leo XIV July 27. (CNS/Vatican Media)

"I hope that this will be an opportunity for each of you to encounter Christ, and to be strengthened by him in your faith and in your commitment to following Christ with integrity of life," he told them, eliciting huge cheers from the young people from each language group.

The Jubilee of Youth runs July 28 to Aug. 3. While half a million people were expected to be in Rome for the start of the weeklong celebration, 1 million people were expected to attend the outdoor closing prayer vigil and Mass in Rome's Tor Vergata neighborhood.

Leo also greeted journalists from Vatican Radio, Vatican News and the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, who were working in a small, newly inaugurated news station under the colonnade in the square "to be closer to the faithful and pilgrims during the Jubilee Year."

He thanked the Vatican's news outlets for their service in more than 55 languages to bring "the pope's voice to the world."

"And thank you to all journalists who contribute to the communication of peace and truth," he said to applause.

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The pope also reminded Catholics that the day marked the fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, dedicated to the theme, "Blessed are those who have not lost hope."

"Let us not leave them alone, but instead, form a bond of love and prayer with them," he said. "Let us look to grandparents and the elderly as witnesses of hope, capable of showing the path for new generations."

Before the Angelus, the pope reflected on the Lord's Prayer, which reminds us that "the Lord always listens to us when we pray to him."

"If he sometimes responds in ways or at times that are difficult to understand, it is because he acts with wisdom and providence, which are beyond our understanding," he said. "Even in these moments, then, let us not cease to pray — and pray with confidence — for in him we will always find light and strength."

He urged the faithful, "through prayer and charity, to feel loved and to love as God loves us: with openness, discretion, mutual concern and without deceit.