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Pope Leo XIV closes the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica on the feast of the Epiphany at the Vatican Jan. 6, 2026, marking the official end of the Jubilee Year 2025. (OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, pool via Reuters)

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Pope Leo XIV called for an end to all antisemitism, prejudice, oppression and persecution worldwide.

"I renew my appeal to the community of nations always to remain vigilant so that the horror of genocide never again befall any people and that a society based on mutual respect and the common good be built," he said Jan. 28.

The pope made his remarks during his greeting to Italian-speaking visitors after leading his general audience talk in the Paul VI Audience Hall.

The pope recalled the previous day's commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is marked Jan. 27 each year, the anniversary of the day in 1945 when Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp complex. The camp was the largest of the Nazi work and death camps; an estimated 1.1 million of the more than 6 million victims of the Holocaust died there.

"On this annual occasion of painful remembrance, I ask Almighty God for the gift of a world without any more antisemitism, prejudice, oppression or persecution of any human being," Leo said.

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The pope also commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day with a post on X Jan. 27, recalling "that the Church remains faithful to the unwavering position of the Declaration #NostraAetate against every form of antisemitism. The Church rejects any discrimination or harassment based on ethnicity, language, nationality or religion."

Later the same day, the pope underlined the importance of praying for peace when speaking to reporters as he was leaving the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo outside of Rome.

When asked about the situation in the Middle East, specifically the arrival of the U.S. aircraft carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln, which is equipped with guided-missile destroyers, Leo said, "I will just say that we must pray very much for peace."

Though regular, everyday people may seem "small" or insignificant, he said, "we can raise our voices and always seek dialogue rather than violence to resolve problems, especially on this day when we commemorate the Shoah."

"Let us fight against all forms of antisemitism," he said.