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Pope Leo XIV Meets Abuse Victims in Peru Today

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"On how to foster a change in mindset through listening to victims, seeking the truth, supporting healing processes, and committing to the creation of safe environments."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Pope Leo XIV met six survivors of clerical abuse in Peru on Thursday, 12 November 2026, sitting with each of them one by one for just over an hour at the Apostolic Nunciature in Lima. He listened to their stories of suffering and pain, thanked them for their testimony, and told the Church it must make amends. It was his second meeting with survivors on a 12-day tour of South America, and the most personal yet.

The meeting began just after 4:30 p.M. Local time. After a brief greeting in the Nunciature's chapel, the Pope met each survivor individually. There was no audience, no cameras in the room, and no speech. There was only a man who used to be their bishop, listening.

Some of the six had once belonged to groups linked to the Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, the Peru-based Catholic society dissolved in 2025 after years of allegations of sexual, physical and psychological abuse. That detail matters, because the man sitting across from them is the same man who once heard their claims as a bishop - and whom survivors credit with pushing for the society to be shut down.

Pope Leo XIV Abuse Victims Meeting Lima November 12

The Vatican said the Pope and the survivors reflected together "on how to foster a change in mindset through listening to victims, seeking the truth, supporting healing processes, and committing to the creation of safe environments." Those are careful words, but they point at something blunt: the Church has spent decades failing to listen, and Leo is saying the listening itself has to change.

At the end of the meeting, the Pope thanked them for their "valuable testimony, expressing his closeness to them and to all those victims of abuse whom he had been unable to meet." Before he left, he imparted his blessing on those present.

One of the survivors spoke afterwards. Camila Bustamante, who is also a journalist, told Reuters the meeting was "an important milestone" and that Leo appeared "very committed" to helping victims. Then she added the warning that survivors always carry with them.

"Victims are accustomed to persevering, even when things become difficult," Bustamante said. "I believe the message must be that we should not give up and that we must continue working for a world without abuse."

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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