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Pope Leo XIV Crowns Immaculate Virgin in Chiclayo and Flies by Helicopter to Santa Cruz

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

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"To your Immaculate Heart I entrust today my life and my ministry as Successor of Peter."

(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 crowned the image of the Immaculate Virgin at the Cathedral of Saint Mary in Chiclayo, Peru, on Saturday 14 November 2026, then boarded a Peruvian Air Force helicopter and flew over the first ridges of the Andes to celebrate Mass in the mountain town of Santa Cruz. The Rite of Coronation began at 7:55 a.M. Local time, after the Pope walked from the bishop's residence to his former cathedral. By the afternoon he was back in Chiclayo, closing the Jubilee Year of Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo with a prayer meeting at the saint's shrine.

Chiclayo is where Pope Leo began his episcopal ministry. He served as its bishop from 2015 until 2023, and he called this visit a return home. For a 71-year-old Pope who had part of his right lung removed in Rome only a month earlier, on 13 October, the day was a remarkible show of stamina: a coronation at dawn, a helicopter flight over the Andes, a mountain Mass, and a jubilee closing - all in a single day.

Pope Leo XIV Crowns Immaculate Virgin In Chiclayo

The crowning took place inside the Cathedral of Saint Mary, the church where Leo served as bishop for eight years. In his homily and prayer he said: "To your Immaculate Heart I entrust today my life and my ministry as Successor of Peter."

The words were personal. This was not a Pope visiting a strange city; it was a former bishop returning to the cathedral he once led, placing his papacy under the protection of the Virgin he had honoured there for years. The faithful who filled the cathedral knew him not as a distant figure from Rome but as their own bishop, come home wearing white.

The day was the latest chapter of a journey that has already drawn enormous crowds. When the Pope arrived in Lima earlier in the trip, he was welcomed by some 3 million people, as reported in Pope Leo XIV Welcomed by 3 Million in Peru Today.

The next day he returned to Chiclayo for an open-air Mass, as reported in Pope Leo XIV Returns to Chiclayo Today for Mass. Saturday's crowning was the most intimate moment of the visit so far.

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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