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Today: Pope Leo XIV Crosses Peru From Cusco Andes to Amazon a Month After Cancer Surgery

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

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Primarily listen"

(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 crosses the length of Peru on Sunday, 15 November 2026, travelling 2,270 km in 12 hours for four events in Cusco, the old capital of the Inca Empire high in the Andes, and Pucallpa, a gateway city to the Amazon rainforest. The 71-year-old pope, who underwent lung cancer surgery about a month ago, refused to cut the punishing final day of his South America tour from his itinerary, despite Cusco sitting more than 3,400 metres above sea level. It is the most physically demanding day of a 12-day trip through Uruguay, Argentina and Peru - and the Church is watching it as a test of whether the cancer that was found fewer than 18 months into his papacy has truly been overcome.

A month ago, surgeons removed part of the pope's lung. Today he climbs to 3,700 metres, prays in front of a cathedral, and then flies down into the jungle to listen to Indigenous peoples whose forests are being stripped by illegal gold mining. The scedule alone is a statement: this pope will not let illness decide where the Church goes.

Pope Leo Cusco Pucallpa: 2,270 Km In 12 Hours Across Peru

Leo starts the day in Chiclayo, the northern city where he served as bishop from 2015 to 2023, and ends it in Lima before flying back to Rome on Monday. In Cusco he visits the esplanade of Sacsayhuaman, an ancient Inca fortress 3,700 metres above sea level whose stones were later used to build many of the city's churches. There he speaks about local religious devotion, before leading prayer in front of the Cathedral in the Plaza de Armas.

In the Plaza de Armas, Leo presents a shroud from the Holy See for the image of the Lord of the Earthquakes, a focus of devotion in a country prone to seismic activity - a gesture in the same spirit as his Angelus teaching that love of God must overflow into love for neighbours, as reported in Pope Leo XIV Angelus Today October 25 2026: Love God Must Overflow Into Love for Neighbours. He then delivers a message to the sick - a message that carries extra weight from a pope who has himself just been a patient, lying in a hospital bed in Rome while the world prayed for him.

The numbers tell the story of this homecoming. About three million people greeted Leo in Lima when he arrived, and roughly 2.5 Million attended an outdoor Mass in Buenos Aires earlier in the trip. In Chiclayo, where he was bishop for nearly a decade, half a million people braved desert heat to welcome their former bishop home, as reported in Pope Leo XIV Crowns Immaculate Virgin in Chiclayo and Flies by Helicopter to Santa Cruz.

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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