News 17 November 2026 | English article

Pope Leo XIV to Elderly in Lima: 'Let Us Love as God Loves Us'

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

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Let us love others as God loves us."

(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 visited a care home for the elderly in Callao, the port city beside Lima, on Monday 16 November 2026, on the final day of his Apostolic Journey to South America. He thanked the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly for their work running the home, recalled the holy example of their foundress, Saint Teresa of Jesus Jornet e Ibars, and told the residents and staff: "Let us love others as God loves us."

The visit came first, before the crowds. Hours later, the Pope would celebrate his closing Mass before an estimated 1.5 Million people at Las Palmas Air Base in Lima and then fly back to Rome. But he gave his first hour of the day to about sixty elderly residents and nine sisters in a small home that most of the world had never heard of - a home he already knew well.

Leo called the house "an oasis of dignity" and hope for the elderly, a phrase he took from Dilexi Te, his first apostolic exhortation. He urged those present to remain undistracted by earthly concerns and to keep their eyes fixed on Heaven. It was a short visit, but it carried the whole message of his journey: the Church must start with the people the world forgets.

María Del Carmen: 39 Years Of Caring, Starting At Fourteen

The human heart of the morning was a woman named María del Carmen Chumioque Belis. She began caring for the home's women when she was fourteen years old. She has now done it for 39 years - more than half her life spent washing, feeding, listening and praying beside women the world had left behind.

On Monday, she told the Pope what the work has taught her. A couple of residents danced the marinera for him, the traditional Peruvian dance, and the small chapel filled with music and applause. For a few minutes, a care home in Callao felt like the centre of the Catholic world.

María del Carmen's story is the story of the Little Sisters themselves. The congregation was founded by Saint Teresa of Jesus Jornet e Ibars to care for elderly people with no one else to care for them. The sisters in Callao do that work quietly, day after day, without cameras and without crowds - untill the morning the Pope walked through their door.

A Home The Pope Already Knew From The Pandemic

This was not Leo's first time at the home's door. He served as apostolic administrator of Callao for 13 months during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the future Pope was known to Peruvians as Father Roberto. During those months, he drove about 12 hours from Chiclayo to bring food and supplies to this very home, then stayed outside its doors so he would not carry the virus in.

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?

READ THE FULL STORY

Continue on FaithStories -- the complete article, with sources and related stories:
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/news-902.html?utm_source=pdf_guide&utm_medium=organic_pdf

More from FaithStories

FaithStories - Home
https://faithstories.onrender.com/

(Spanish) León XIV escucha durante más de una hora a cinco sobrevivientes de abusos en Argentina
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/es/news-905.html

(Portuguese) Chris Durán critica líderes evangélicos: 'Se prostituíram com políticos'
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/pt/news-906.html

(Hindi) APCR Riporta: 2026 Ke Pahale Nau Mahiinon Men 322 Ghrinaa Aparaadha, 54 Mauten - Iisaaiyon Para Bhii Hamale
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/hi/news-907.html