



April 16, 2026

**The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of the Diocese of Erie,  
has issued the following statement regarding the current administration's recent remarks  
and the teaching authority of the Holy Father**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I recognize that leaders of nations have the responsibility of making difficult decisions that impact many lives. At the same time, as Catholics, we hold that Pope Leo XIV, as Vicar of Christ on Earth, has the sacred responsibility of teaching and guiding all of us according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Catholics, and all people of good will, look to him for clear guidance through complex moral situations, including those that arouse tension.

The Gospel must shape every aspect of our lives, including our civic responsibilities. As the successor of Saint Peter, the Holy Father has both the authority and the responsibility to address the moral and ethical consequences of political decisions for the good of all humanity.

The Holy Father's call to peace at this moment is not rooted in partisan politics or loyalties, but in the teaching of Christ: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). As Pope Leo has affirmed, we are called to recognize one another as brothers and sisters, sharing responsibility for our common home.

Let us pray for Pope Leo XIV, shepherd of the Universal Church, that he may continue to lead with courage and wisdom. We also pray for our nation and for all world leaders, that they exercise sound judgment in their decisions, especially involving war and peace.

Above all, we pray for peace. *In Christ, we are one.*

Sincerely yours in Christ,