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For Immediate Release
May 8, 2026

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**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP NELSON J. PÉREZ ON THE FIRST
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ELECTION OF POPE LEO XIV**

Today is a moment of great joy for Catholics in the Church of Philadelphia and throughout the world as we celebrate the first anniversary of Pope Leo XIV's election as Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church.

One year ago, as he first greeted the crowds in Rome, the Holy Father proclaimed a message of unity in the Church and peace in the world. That message has become the bedrock of his pontificate and it continues to inspire as well as challenge us. His public statements and letters including the apostolic exhortation *Dilexi Te* (To All Christians on Love for the Poor) confirm his fatherly care for the Church in the model of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd.

Last fall the Holy Father expressed his paternal love for American youth when he engaged in a digital encounter with 15,000 young people gathered in Indianapolis for the National Catholic Youth Conference. That historic encounter reflected Pope Leo's desire to connect with young people in the digital landscape where faith and technology intersect.

My encounters with Pope Leo in Rome on several occasions have given me inspiration and strength in my episcopal ministry. The Holy Father has assured me of his prayers and support for the entire Church of Philadelphia.

Let us mark this day, by joining our voices in a prayer of thanksgiving to almighty God for the gift of Pope Leo and his Petrine Ministry:

“For our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, on the first anniversary of his election as the universal pastor, that he may be strengthened by the prayers of all to guide and govern the Church in the unity of faith and truth for the salvation of all.

Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, D.D.
Archbishop of Philadelphia