



Bishop Robert Prevost with Christian Family Movement leaders in Peru

Pope credits Cardijn movement with his priestly vocation

Pope Leo's election is a "wonderful manifestation of the Holy Spirit at work," according to Chicago priest, Fr Lou Cameli, Cardinal Blase Cupich's delegate for formation and mission.

Like the new pontiff, Fr Lou hails from the South side of Chicago.

"I don't know him directly, but I do know his context," he notes.

"The southern suburbs of Chicago are a very ordinary place, often overlooked or discounted.

"It's very multi-cultural and multi-racial. It was built up by immigrant people from Europe and Black people who migrated from the South.

"I think this background of diversity and simplicity has contributed to the outlook of Pope Leo. He will lead us through "the little way," the path of ordinary life

"Of course, he will be attuned to the needs of people on the margins. In a word, he will help us to find God in the ordinary places of life, including our families and communities and those in need," Fr Cameli believes.

Like Fr Cameli, who has been a longstanding chaplain to the Christian Family Movement to which Pope Leo's parents also belonged.

Indeed, in a 2020 interview, the then Cardinal Robert Prevost credited the CFM, to which his parents belonged, as one of the influences on the discovery of his vocation to the priesthood.

“My family was very practical; my dad was a catechist, my mom participated in various activities in the parish where we lived,” Cardinal Prevost said. “Besides, they were members of the Christian Family Movement.

“And so since I was a child, I had a very nice experience of the various dimensions of parish life. I was also an acolyte in the parish, and studied in a parish school. All of these things certainly contributed to me at some point considering the possibility of being a priest,” he noted.

In fact, Chicago during the 1960s was an influential centre of the lay apostolate, with the Young Christian Workers (YCW), Young Christian Students (YCS) and the CFM all having their national centres there.

Founded by the couple, Patricia and Pat Crowley, along with English YCW pioneer, Patrick Keegan, the CFM’s approach is also based on the Cardijn-inspired See Judge Act method endorsed by the Second Vatican Council.

“This year marks the 60th anniversary of the key conciliar documents, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World, Gaudium et Spes, and the Decree on Lay Apostolate, Apostolicam Actuositatem,” commented Australian Cardijn Institute researcher, Stefan Gigacz.

“It seems providential that we now have a new pope who intimately understands the lay apostolate from his own family experience,” he observed.



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