



Office of the President

# Ateneo de Zamboanga University

The Jesuit University in Western Mindanao, Philippines  
Since 1912

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## A Letter from the President

May 10, 2025

Dear AdZU Community,

*Habemus Papam!* In the early morning of May 9, 2025 (Philippine time), the Catholic Church welcomed its new shepherd: **Pope Leo XIV**, formerly Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost, OSA. A Chicago native and longtime missionary bishop in Peru, Pope Leo is the first North American pope—a man of the Augustinian tradition whose ministry has long been marked by humility, dialogue, and global pastoral service.



From the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo greeted and blessed the world with the words of the Risen Christ: **"Peace be with you."** He offered a peace that is, in his words, "unarmed and disarming," a **peace rooted in God's unconditional love**. With gratitude to his predecessor, Pope Francis, he affirmed a Church that journeys together, builds bridges, and welcomes all, especially the suffering and the excluded.

In his first homily, the morning after he was elected, Pope Leo spoke candidly about a world where faith is often misunderstood or dismissed. Yet he called us to **continue the witness—not through structures or prestige, but through the quiet holiness of our daily lives**. "Not through grandeur," he said, "but through love." His message resonates with those of us striving to live the Gospel faithfully in a complex and fragmented world.

At Ateneo de Zamboanga, his words are joyfully received as we prepare to enter a new school year guided by our theme:

**"Compañerismo: United in Purpose and Action, Building Bridges towards Reconciliation."**

Pope Leo's election affirms the path we are on—a **journey of shared mission, rooted in accompaniment, dialogue, and solidarity**. As a Catholic and Jesuit university in Mindanao, our commitment to *compañerismo*, to being companions in hope and action, echoes the very spirit of this new papacy.

To our Catholic community, may this be a moment of renewed joy and mission. To our Muslim brothers and sisters and all members of our diverse university, thank you for continuing to walk with us in mutual respect and shared dreams. Pope Leo's first blessing was not just for the Church, but for the world.

**Let us pray for Pope Leo XIV.** And let us go forward, as he says: without fear, hand in hand with God and with one another.

**Peace be with you.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ernauld M. Andal, SJ', written in a cursive style.

**Fr. Ernauld M. Andal, SJ**  
President