

CLOSING REMARKS

Mass for the Pope
Church of Saint James, The Hague
28 June 2026
Msgr. Jan T. Limchua

Dear Excellencies, dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we come to the end of this Eucharistic celebration in honor of Saints Peter and Paul, and as we mark the first anniversary of the election of Pope Leo XIV, I wish, in my capacity as Chargé d'Affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature in the Netherlands, to thank all of you for your presence and prayer this morning in this beautiful church of Saint James.

I also wish to thank all those who have made this celebration possible: His Excellency Bishop Johannes van den Hende, Bishop of Rotterdam and President of the Bishops' Conference; the bishops here present; the concelebrating priests; the Antonius Abt Gilde from Blitterswijck; the choir; the ministers and volunteers; and everyone who contributed in ways seen and unseen.

The feast we celebrate today brings before us two remarkable figures. Peter gives the Church her stability, her center, and her sense of where she stands. Paul gives her her missionary spirit, her restless desire to reach everyone, to leave no one untouched by the Gospel. Different as they are, they are united in the one Lord they serve, the one faith they proclaim, and the one mission they share. This is what Pope Leo XIV's episcopal motto speaks to: *In Illo Uno Unum*—"In the One, we are one." Unity, he reminds us, is not born of similarity. It is born of communion with Christ. It is in that spirit that he has led the Church in this first year, and it is for that gift that we give thanks today.

From the very first moments of his pontificate, the Holy Father offered the world a word that has stayed with us: peace, unarmed and disarming. Not a strategy, not a negotiating position, but a gift freely offered from the heart of the Gospel. A presence that disarms, because it has itself been disarmed—by mercy, by the cross, by a love that overcomes not by force but by giving itself away.

These words speak with particular force here in the Netherlands, a country that has made the peaceful resolution of conflict, the dignity of the person, and the primacy of law a defining feature of its public life. And yet every society carries within it a deeper question: what sustains these values from the inside? When that source grows distant, values lose their footing, and people begin quietly to ask what still holds them up. It is here that the Church has something to offer — not

as a corrective, but as a companion, rooted in the conviction that every human being is created and loved by God.

That companionship is perhaps nowhere more alive than among the young, who carry so many questions — about who they are, what is worth living for, and what can still be trusted. We live in a time when much is becoming artificial: relationships are simulated, meaning manufactured, and the human person is reduced to data or function. And yet the human person is never simply that. They are capable of remarkable goodness and of real destruction, of deep love and of profound failure—and it is this whole person, not a simplified version, that *Magnifica Humanitas*—Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical—calls us to see and to honor. The Church does not come to silence the questions of the young. She comes to walk inside them, pointing toward the One in whom every question finds, slowly and not always easily, its rest.

This is the Church's gift to the world—not a program, not a position, but a presence: communities that love when it is costly, that welcome when it is inconvenient, and that hope when every reason for hope seems to have run out.

We pray for Pope Leo XIV that he may be sustained and strengthened in his ministry. And we ask the Lord to renew in the Church in the Netherlands faith that is alive, hope that is contagious, and love that goes out to meet the world.

Thank you, and God bless you all