

Beat: News

King Felipe VI Welcomes Pope Leo XIV to Spain in a Call for Unity and Human Dignity

Felipe VI Welcomes Pope Leo XIV

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King Felipe VI formally welcomed Pope Leo XIV to Spain during a solemn ceremony at the Royal Palace in Madrid, emphasizing the historic, cultural and social significance of the Pontiff's visit. Speaking on behalf of the Royal Family, the Government and the nation's institutions, the King expressed the "humility and joy" with which Spain receives the Holy Father at the start of a journey that will take him to Madrid, Barcelona and, for the first time in history, the Canary Islands. Felipe VI highlighted the Pope's deep connection to the Spanish-speaking world, shaped by his years of missionary work in Peru, noting that this shared linguistic and cultural heritage strengthens the bond between the Pontiff and the broader Ibero-American community.

The King underscored that Spain forms part of the Pope's own roots and that he arrives in a country he knows well—one he described as vibrant, supportive, tolerant and creative. He emphasized the enthusiasm with which Spaniards have greeted the Pontiff in streets, churches and institutions, and thanked him for the generosity of undertaking a visit filled with encounters, prayer and reflection.

Felipe VI devoted a significant portion of his remarks to acknowledging the enduring role of the Catholic faith in Spain's history and cultural identity. He praised the work of religious orders, priests, deacons, young parish members and volunteers who serve in shelters, community centers, residences and parishes across the country. He also expressed particular admiration for the thousands of Spanish missionaries who carry out educational, social and pastoral work in remote and vulnerable regions around the world, stating that his gratitude toward them is also reflected in his respect for the Pope.

Addressing the painful issue of abuse within the Church, the King stated that such cases "cannot and must not" be seen as representative of the broader ecclesial community. He commended Pope Leo XIV for his clarity and determination in advancing processes of healing and reparation, which he described as essential for victims, for the faithful and for society at large.

Felipe VI highlighted the Pope's strong scientific background, recalling his academic work in mathematics and his ability to unite spiritual insight with intellectual rigor in an era defined by rapid transformation. In this context, he referenced the Pope's first encyclical, Magnifica Humanitas, which examines the ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence. The King noted that the document rejects alarmist perspectives and instead offers a hopeful, human-centered vision that encourages replacing fear with shared understanding. He stressed that emerging technologies must not become the privilege of a select few but should serve all societies, always preserving the centrality of the human person.

The King warned of the danger of relativizing fundamental principles in a world saturated with information and immediacy. He affirmed that human dignity, fundamental rights, democratic values and international law must remain "our prime numbers"—the essential elements of a social arithmetic that adds and multiplies rather than subtracts or divides. He also lamented the erosion of listening in an age of constant connectivity, arguing that genuine attention to others is indispensable for mutual understanding and collective progress.

Felipe VI recalled the Pope's first words from the Loggia of Blessings after his election, when he urged the world to "help build bridges through dialogue and encounter." The King stated that unity arises from an awareness of human fragility but also from the capacity for goodness and beauty that emerges when individuals open themselves to others and act with generosity. He concluded that, in uncertain times, unity must serve as a guiding principle and a pathway to peace. The ceremony closed with a renewed expression of welcome to the Holy Father, in a speech that blended institutional solemnity, ethical reflection and a firm commitment to universal values.

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