

Pope Leo XIV Comments on the Critics of Cardinal Cupich

By Cindy Wooden in Catholic News Service (CNS)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Asked about some Catholics' criticism of giving an award to Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, Pope Leo XIV said, "I would ask first and foremost that there be greater respect for one another."

[Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago is scheduled to give Durbin, a Catholic, a "Lifetime Achievement Award"](#) for his work on immigration issues in early November. According to OSVNews, at least 10 U.S. bishops have publicly criticized the idea because of the senator's support of legalized abortion.

Leaving Castel Gandolfo Sept. 30 to return to the Vatican, the pope stopped to speak with a small group of reporters.

One asked about the controversy over honoring Durbin.

"I'm not terribly familiar with the particular case," the pope said before adding, "I think that it is very important to look at the overall work that the senator has done during, if I'm not mistaken, 40 years of service in the United States Senate."

"I understand the difficulty and the tensions, but I think, as I myself have spoken in the past, it's important to look at many issues that are related to what is the teaching of the church," he said, responding in English.

"Someone who says I am against abortion but says I am in favor of the death penalty is not really pro-life," the pope said. "Someone who says I am against abortion, but I am in agreement with the inhuman treatment of immigrants in the United States, I don't know if that's pro-life."

"They are very complex issues," Pope Leo said, and "I don't know if anyone has all the truth on them."

"But I would ask first and foremost that there be greater respect for one another and that we search together both as human beings, in that case as American citizens or as citizens of the state of Illinois, as well as Catholics, to say we really need to really look closely at all of these ethical issues and to find the way forward as a church," the pope said.

Pope Leo also was asked about the meeting U.S. President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had Sept. 30 with 800 top U.S. military officials and Hegseth's comment that "the only mission of the newly restored Department of War is this: warfighting, preparing for war and preparing to win, unrelenting and uncompromising in that pursuit.

"To ensure peace, we must prepare for war," Hegseth said.

Pope Leo said, "This way of speaking is worrying because it shows an increase in tension, and also this vocabulary of changing the Minister of Defense to the Minister of War. Let's hope it's just a way of speaking."