AUGUSTINIANS OF THE MIDWEST

Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel

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The first year of Pope Leo XIV's pontificate has been defined by a dual focus: **Peace** and **Church Unity**. Speaking from the historic city of Pompei—a site deeply connected to the Marian devotion of the Holy Rosary, an instrument of peace—the Holy Father emphasizes that these two themes are inextricably linked.

The Pope emphasizes that for the Church to be truly missionary, it must move beyond mere strategy and return to Christ's fundamental commandment: **"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."**

> The Church does not attract through proselytism, but by reflecting the "attractive power of Christ's love"
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> Unity is visible when believers live out new relationships characterized by forgiveness and a communion that "prevails over every difference and division."
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> A community becomes missionary when it offers the same "embrace of mercy" it has received through its own encounter with Christ. Seeing the face of God in one another…

Pope Leo XIV expands the scope of ecclesial unity, suggesting it has a global, secular impact. In a world currently "torn apart by wars," the internal unity of the Church serves as a **prophecy of peace** for all of humanity.

"Peace is born within the heart. We cannot resign ourselves to the images of death that the news presents to us every day."

His words, based on the Gospel message, concludes with a practical vision of peace-building that starts at the local level:

> Peace must first take root in the individual heart.
>
> It is manifested when hands clasp in friendship and neighbors treat one another with respect.

The Holy Father encourages the faithful to continue to pray for peace and continue to create a culture of Peace that transforms human hearts.

LET US PRAY….