



POPE

POPE LEO XIVPOPE

What exactly is the Ring of the Fisherman?

During the Mass of Inauguration of his pontificate on May 18, Pope Leo XIV will receive the Ring of the Fisherman—a symbol of the Petrine Ministry with deep roots in the New Testament.

By Kielce Gussie

The Vatican's Office for Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff released an image of the new Ring of the Fisherman, which will be given to Pope Leo XIV during his Mass of Inauguration on May 18.

Bearing an image of St. Peter, the ring has New Testament roots and significance. In the Gospel of Matthew (16:19), St. Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the Gospel of Luke 22:32, Jesus tells Peter he must strengthen his brothers in the faith and mission.

The Ring of the Fisherman thus authenticates the faith and symbolizes the duty with which the first Pope was entrusted.



St. Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven

As Peter is known as the fisherman Apostle, the ring is referred to as the Ring of the Fisherman, or the Piscatory Ring, symbolizing the continuous lineage from the first Pope to today.

A ring for the ages

This ring has been part of the symbols of the papacy since at least the 13th century. It was used as a signet ring to seal official documents signed by the Pope until 1842. Now, it is used symbolically, but every Pope still has a ring.

When the Pope dies, his Ring of the Fisherman, along with the Lead Seal, is marked with a chisel, thereby ensuring the seal cannot be forged. Therefore, every ring is unique and personal to each Pope.



Pope Benedict XVI had a gold ring engraved with a bas-relief of St. Peter fishing from a boat. (ANSA)

In 2013, Pope Francis received a gold-plated silver ring, which was previously owned by the secretary to Pope Paul VI. His predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, had a gold ring engraved with a bas-relief of St. Peter fishing from a boat.

Now, Pope Leo XIV continues the tradition of the Ring of the Fisherman, with an image of St. Peter with the keys and the net—signaling the passing of the torch, as the 266th Successor to St. Peter now officially undertakes the mission entrusted to St. Peter over 2 millennia ago.

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