

Explain 3 Major Problems Facing Pope Leo XIV's Catholic Church Today

Third Place Winner – Mariah Edwards

Three major problems facing Pope Leo XIV's Catholic Church today are things that hold most of the population back from living their fullest life and achieving their full potential with God.

One of these major problems is that people have almost trained themselves to avoid silence, not just physically, but mentally. This is a problem because God usually speaks in silence. Sometimes, the problem is not that people choose not to follow God. They're distracted. People are distracted constantly by things like notifications, noise; and the worst of them all, opinions. Things like social media have given people more accessibility to strangers' opinions. The sad part of this is that most people do not believe in God and are influencing people who haven't given themselves the chance to know God, to not believe either. Faith requires things like waiting, listening, and sometimes feeling uncomfortable with silence at times. The truth is most people today who rely on social media for entertainment panic when they face silence, because it forces them to face their fears, thoughts, their emptiness, and needs. That's why the deeper issue isn't 'not believing.' It's spiritual restlessness. When someone keeps chasing things, (success, relationships, distractions,) but nothing ever feels final or complete, because they don't have God in their life. In other words, they don't include God in their life because God always forgives and is merciful. He's always willing to give his children another chance, but some people just blatantly ignore him. The people that ignore him continuously will always experience spiritual restlessness.

Another one of these major problems is people not letting God guide their lives or not having full trust in God like God intends for us to. Some think this is because people simply disagree. However, the Church teaches strong moral truths, such as life, justice, sexuality, power, dignity, and forgiveness. However, today, we live amongst a society where authority feels suspicious, and people hate to be controlled. So even when the Church teaches something reasonable to help people grow, many people don't interpret the lesson as guidance. They think it's about control. That is wrong, because God never intends to just control. As I stated before, God only wants to guide you in the right direction, to eventually live eternal life with him in heaven. He certainly does not intend to control you. Even in the past, people who disagreed with the church still viewed the church with respect, however, people who don't believe as of today, most of them instinctively doubt the church's right to speak at all. Instead of letting God lead their life and listening to the Church's teachings, they choose to listen to people like influencers, politicians, algorithms, and themselves. They believe that 'nobody has the right to tell them what's true'; therefore, they continue to experience spiritual restlessness.

The final major problem facing Pope Leo XIV's Catholic Church today is the church's global inequality problem. A lot of people think the church is unified and rich everywhere. The truth is, it definitely isn't. Wealth, supplies, and influence are mostly in Europe and North America. However, most of the fastest-growing Catholic populations are in places like Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which are places that have significantly lower wealth, supplies, and resources. Bishops, seminaries, hospitals, and charities in these places usually struggle financially. Meanwhile, global perspectives such as media, theology, and more are still shaped by the West. Many people in these countries are living in poverty. Meaning, they lack essential resources for life, including food, water, shelter, etc. If they lack these essential factors in their lives, there are also many places in these countries (Africa, Latin America, and Asia) that don't have churches. Meaning, Catholic people can't learn more about God because they simply don't have the opportunity to. The Church teaches that every person deserves dignity, so inequality is a moral problem. Global inequality is also a problem for Pope Leo XIV's Catholic Church because again, parishes and schools can't reach everyone. Also, helping poor communities takes more effort and resources. Thinking deeper on this, if the Church seems rich while followers suffer, it can lose moral authority.

However, in conclusion, various problems face Pope Leo XIV's Catholic Church today, and the few I stated in these essays don't summarize even a quarter of the major problems. Even though as individuals, it is hard to make a huge impact, we can keep praying that these major problems will be solved and continue trusting God.

Knights of Columbus Council 1672
2026 Essay Contest
Third place Winner
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