

From Goa to the Sistine Chapel: Cardinal Ferrão on witnessing history unfold at the Papal Conclave

H: What qualities or virtues do you believe Pope Leo XIV possesses that will be most essential in his new leadership, considering the challenges the Church faces in this historical moment?

C: Pope Leo XIV is a man of deep faith, rooted in Christ and grounded in prayer. He has a clear theological vision and shows a genuine commitment to implementing the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. He is simple, humble and caring, with an exceptional ability to listen and to reach out, particularly to those on the peripheries. He spent his early years in the United States, exercised his priestly ministry for many years in Peru (Latin America), has travelled, as the Superior General of the Order of St. Augustine, to various countries of the world and, finally, he has served the Universal Church, as the Prefect of the Holy See's Dicastery for the Bishops. Thus, the new Pope has a very rich and wide experience of the ecclesial life in all the continents and is aware of the multi-faceted challenges confronting the Church in different contexts.

H: How do you interpret the working of the Holy Spirit during the conclave, particularly when Cardinals come from diverse pastoral contexts and theological perspectives?

C: It is a fact that Cardinals hail from varied pastoral contexts and have different theological perspectives. However, it is equally true that the Church is not a purely human institution; it is a community of faith, established by Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit. It may be good to recall that the Apostles did not choose Peter to be their leader; it was Jesus who appointed him to lead the incipient Church. My experience at the conclave has deepened my conviction that it is God who, in His eternal design, chooses and prepares a person to lead the Church at a particular point of history. The role of the Cardinals, therefore, is to be the human instruments of this divine election, that is, to discern, in total docility to the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord has set aside for this challenging mission. It is only such a dimension of faith that explains how swiftly the required consensus emerged during the conclave under the gentle, yet powerful, guidance of the Holy Spirit.

H: What are your personal hopes or expectations for Pope Leo XIV, particularly in terms of his theological vision, pastoral priorities, and



(Second from right) Cardinal Filipe Neri Ferrão, Archbishop of Goa and Daman, along with other cardinals who voted in the papal conclave that elected Pope Leo XIV

leadership style?

C: From the addresses and signals already given by Pope Leo XIV so far, it seems to be quite clear that our new Pontiff will preserve and promote the rich ecclesial legacy of the recent Popes, including our Pope Francis of revered memory, thereby nurturing a Church that fosters communion, promotes participation and is focussed on its

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evangelising mission at all levels, with special attention to those who live on the peripheries. He will surely exercise a truly synodal leadership, a leadership that listens, discerns and embraces inclusivity, a leadership that is humble, compassionate and witnessing to the values of the Gospel. I have no doubt that Pope Leo XIV will speak with moral authority on several global issues, with which humanity is grappling in our times, such as the dignity of the human person, religious freedom, poverty and injustice, war and peace, dialogue and reconciliation, migra-

tion, ecology and the challenges of the Artificial Intelligence (AI).

H: Goa holds a unique place in the history of the Catholic Church in India. What are your hopes for the Church in Goa in this next season of ecclesial life?

C: The Catholic Church in Goa has a strong tradition of faith and a rich history of evangelization. We have been blessed with so many dedicated missionaries, who brought the light of the Gospel and nurtured our faith, among them our beloved St. Francis Xavier. Many sons and daughters of the Church in Goa went as missionaries to all the four corners of the world, sharing the riches of our faith and spending themselves in the service of the people with great love and dedication, including St. Joseph Vaz, the Patron of our Archdiocese. The great challenge before the Church in Goa is to grow in our appreciation of this precious treasure of faith and to strive to become a truly synodal community of missionary disciples at all levels and in the different spheres of our life.

H: What role can Goan Catholics—both clergy and laity—play in shaping the future of the Church not only locally, but also within the broader Indian ecclesial context and even at a global level?

C: In the past, Goan Catholics – both clergy and laity -- reached several parts of the world, where they diligently upheld their faith traditions, remained close to the Church and took active part in the mission of their respective local churches. In recent years, with the ever-increasing migration, Goan Catho-



lics have branched out to new shores, where faith traditions seem to be on the decline. The vital challenge before them would be, therefore, to exercise their Christian responsibility of becoming the transforming leaven of the Gospel in their new environment and offering a committed witness to their faith

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in every sphere of life – social, political, economic and cultural.

H: As someone who has been entrusted with such a significant ecclesiastical role, what message would you like to offer to the Church in Asia, India and Goa?

The following were some of the pathways, along which the FABC committed itself to journey: (a) from foreign expressions to an inculturated proclamation of the Gospel; (b) from basic ecclesial communities to basic human communities; (c) from

dialogue to synodality; (d) from the beaten track to new pastoral priorities. I do believe that we will have to discern and adapt these pathways in the life and the mission of the Church in India and Goa.

H: Your Eminence, Pope Leo XIV had previously visited India before his election to the papacy. Given that context, did you have any prior acquaintance with him, either personally or through his pastoral work, before the conclave?

C: It is true that Fr. Robert Prevost had visited India when he was the Superior General of the Augustinian Order. Since we do not have the presence of the Augustinians, either in our Archdiocese or in our Western Region, I did not have any prior direct acquaintance with him. However, I had the opportunity to observe him closely in the last two Synodal Assemblies in Rome (October 2023 and October 2024), in which both of us had taken part, and Card. Prevost came across to me as a calm and unassuming person, with a great ability to listen, having a clear theological vision and a profound love for the Church. His occasional interventions during the Synod had impressed me as clear indicators of his commitment to the communal and missionary vision of the Church, as embodied in the Second Vatican Council.

H: As President of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) and the newly elected President of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), do you foresee extending an invitation to the Holy Father to visit Goa or India more broadly? And are there specific matters concerning the Church in Asia or India that you hope to bring to his attention in your capacity?

C: Obviously, all of us, the Bishops of India would like Pope Leo XIV to visit our country and we will surely extend our invitation to him for this purpose. However, since the Pope is also the Head of the Vatican State, he would also have to be officially invited by our Union Government. Every five years, the Bishops normally have the opportunity to go to Rome, in groups, for their ad limina visit, during which they meet the Pope and the Heads of the various Dicasteries, who are the close collaborators of the Holy Father. During such quinquennial visits, the Bishops are able to interact with the Pope and make him aware of the actual situation of the Church in each country and the challenges it

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faces in the exercise of its mission in different contexts. As far as the FABC is concerned, we are expected to have our next FABC Plenary Assembly in Malaysia in 2026. In due course of time, we will invite the Pope for our Plenary Assembly.

H: Some of your fellow Cardinals have mentioned in post-conclave interviews that there was a growing sense within the College of Cardinals about the pastoral depth and moral clarity of Pope Leo XIV, even before the final vote. While many around the world may have been surprised by his election, was there, in your view, an emerging sense among the electors of his readiness to take on the Petrine ministry?

C: For me, the entire conclave was a serious process of prayerful discernment and attentive listening to God's will, revealed to each Cardinal through the inner voice of the Spirit. As the conclave proceeded, a clear consensus began to gradually emerge among the Cardinals in favour of Card. Robert Francis Prevost, who was considered as the most suitable candidate for the Chair of Peter in the present circumstances of the Church. He was seen to be serene, gently smiling and displaying an attitude of genuine surrender to the will of God. When the needed majority was reached, there was a thunderous applause in the Sistine Chapel. As soon as Card. Robert Prevost expressed his acceptance of his choice to be the successor of Peter, there was a great sense of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God for the precious gift of the new Bishop of Rome and the new Shepherd of the Universal Church.

MMC begins Rs 1.4 cr revamp of New Market, Gandhi Market

Team Herald

MARGAO: After years of delays and growing concerns among vendors and citizens alike, the long-awaited renovation of Margao's iconic municipal markets—New Market and Gandhi Market—is finally underway.

The Margao Municipal Council (MMC), backed by local authorities and public demand, has initiated a comprehensive facelift of both markets, focusing on structural improvements and enhanced fire safety measures.

To kickstart the project, the

Rs 1 crore will go towards refurbishing New Market, while Rs 40 lakh has been allocated for Gandhi Market. In addition, the Public Works Department (Water Supply) has floated a Rs 70 lakh tender aimed at improving water supply and installing fire hydrants around the markets

Margao MLA has sanctioned Rs 1.40 crore from his MLA development fund. Of this, Rs 1 crore will be used for refurbishing the New Market, while Rs 40 lakh has been allocated to the Gandhi Market. The renovation includes replacing damaged roofing, repairing pavers, and addressing several long-pending minor issues

that have hindered the daily functioning of the markets.

In addition to structural upgrades, fire safety has become a central concern in the new plans. In light of previous fire incidents in these densely populated commercial zones, the Public Works Department (Water Supply) has floated a ₹70 lakh tender aimed at improving

water supply and installing fire hydrants around the markets. This initiative is expected to significantly strengthen firefighting infrastructure and reduce response times during emergencies. Speaking to **O Herald**, Gopal Naik, a vendor at the New Market, expressed satisfaction over the developments. “We are happy that the renovation work has finally started.

At a recent meeting, we raised urgent concerns, particularly regarding fire safety and the leaking roof. Authorities have assured us that the roof repairs will be prioritised before the monsoon to prevent water seepage,” he said.

Naik also mentioned that vendors have requested the police

to maintain regular checks in the market areas to address persistent issues such as illegal encroachments and traffic congestion caused by improper parking.

“These markets have repeatedly been in the news for fire incidents and parking problems. It's time these issues are permanently resolved,” he added.

The MMC has confirmed that two separate tenders will be floated to manage the renovation work at the two markets. These efforts are being seen as a much-needed step towards restoring Margao's historic markets to their former glory, ensuring not only improved infrastructure but also greater safety and convenience for both vendors and shoppers.

Gogol, Borda residents fume as digging continues



Workers dig up a road in Borda on Saturday

Team Herald

MARGAO: Despite the South Goa Collector's ban on road digging after May 15, excavation work continued in the Gogol Housing Board on Friday and Saturday, disrupting water supply in the area. On Saturday, digging was also underway in the heart of Borda, where labourers were seen removing mud and piling it onto the road.

Residents in Gogol were left without water for over six hours on Friday, with the supply cut off during peak morning hours without any prior notice. Many were unable to bathe or cook, with supply restored only around 5pm.

“This is not the first time they've cut off the water without informing us,” said housewife Pramila. “It always happens in the morning when we need it most, and no alternative like a

tanker is provided. Road digging has been going on for over six months now, causing frequent water and power cuts, and terrible traffic congestion.”

Residents said previous digging was carried out for sewerage lines and underground gas pipelines, but many roads remain unrepaired. Anil Naik, another resident, expressed frustration over the slow pace of work. “There's dust everywhere, traffic is a mess, and supply disruptions are frequent. Sewage work started last year but is still incomplete.”

He added that in some parts of Gogol and the Housing Board, workers continue to dig while earlier trenches remain open, making roads narrow and hazardous. “Some roads were recently covered with cement, but much is left to be done,” he said. “We pay road tax, yet many roads remain in poor condition.”

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Chinchinim gets Goa's first AC PHC

Team Herald

MARGAO: The Chinchinim Primary Health Centre (PHC) was inaugurated on Saturday as the State's first fully air-conditioned primary health facility. The upgrade is expected to improve patient comfort and create a better work environment for staff. The PHC currently offers general OPD, emergency services, lab and pharmacy facilities, dental and eye care, as well as Ayurvedic and Homeopathic services. MLA Cruz Silva assured that a 24x7 Emergency Care Centre is also in the pipeline. Locals welcomed the move and hoped other rural health centres would receive similar upgrades.

Raia Sarpanch resigns after 7 months, cites roadblocks, lack of support

Team Herald

MARGAO: Days after a no-confidence motion was moved against Deputy Sarpanch Godfray Oswald Souza, the political unrest in the village panchayat Raia took another turn as Sarpanch Mario D'Souza submitted his resignation.

The Sarpanch cited 'hurdles' and the 'withholding of files' as the primary reasons for his inability to carry out developmental work in the village.

Speaking to **O Herald**, D'Souza said he had taken up the role with the intent to bring about significant changes in

the village but was left frustrated due to constant roadblocks.

“Since I took charge, I have always aimed at implementing as many development works as possible. I had several proposals in the pipeline, including setting up a library for the village. But I could not move forward due to lack of support,” he stated.

The resignation follows closely on the heels of a no-confidence motion brought against the deputy sarpanch by a group of six panchayat members. While the motion was successful, it revealed deeper divisions within the panchayat body, which sources say had