



Pope Leo to receive Liberty Medal for promoting religious liberty

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17 March 2026 - The US-based National Constitution Center announces it will award Pope Leo XIV with the 38th annual Liberty Medal on July 3, 2026, in an award ceremony on Independence Mall in Philadelphia.

On July 3, 2026, Pope Leo will receive the 38th annual Liberty Medal from the National Constitution Center, on the eve of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

“The award recognizes the Holy Father’s lifelong work promoting religious liberty and freedom of conscience and expression around the world, ideals enshrined by America’s founders in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution,” said the National Constitution Center in a statement.

The ceremony will take place outside the Center on Independence Mall in Philadelphia, and the Pope intends to deliver live acceptance remarks virtually from the Vatican through a livestream.

The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, said the Pope “is deeply grateful to the National Constitution Centre for this prestigious award, in such a meaningful anniversary for the American People, as they are called to reflect on the 250 years of their history, holding the Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States, and Liberty as hallmarks of their heritage for future generations.”

The event is expected to bring together civic and faith leaders and members of the public to consider how America’s founding ideals articulated 250 years ago continue to resonate in a global context today.

Pope Leo XIV’s commitment to dialogue

In the statement, the National Constitution Center highlighted that since his election in May 2025, the Pope “has made interfaith and ecumenical dialogue a defining priority of his pontificate, engaging leaders from Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and other religious communities to promote mutual respect and peaceful coexistence.”

“His outreach reflects a broader moral vision that frames religious liberty not as an abstract right, but as a lived expression of human dignity, particularly for marginalized communities, including religious minorities and those affected by conflict,” the statement continued.

National Constitution Center Interim President and CEO, Vince Stango, underlined that “the NCC is honored to award the Liberty Medal to Pope Leo XIV for his career as a consistent advocate for religious liberty, freedom of conscience, and human dignity.”

“In formal Vatican statements and public addresses,” he continued, “His Holiness has affirmed that peace cannot exist without freedom of religion, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression, principles that closely align with constitutional protections guaranteed by the First Amendment.”

Liberty Medal and the National Constitution Center

The Liberty Medal, established in 1988 and hosted by the National Constitution Center since 2006, recognizes individuals and organizations who strive to secure the blessings of liberty to people around the globe.

This year's award ceremony, held in celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary and semiquincentennial, is presented in partnership with the City of Philadelphia and Wawa Welcome America as part of the city's Independence Week events celebrating the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Villanova University, Pope Leo XIV's alma mater, also played a role in shaping this year's Liberty Medal program.

The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia brings together people of all ages and perspectives, across America and around the world, to learn about, debate, and celebrate the greatest vision of human freedom in history, the U.S. Constitution, according to the Center's website.

Source: [Vatican News](#).