For the first time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, a pope hails from the United States. On Thursday, Chicago-born Cardinal Robert Prevost was elected by the College of Cardinals as the 267th pope, succeeding Pope Francis. He will be known as Pope Leo XIV.

Prevost's election marks a historic turning point for the Vatican. Of the previous 266 popes, none had ever come from the U.S. The appointment of an American pontiff — a moment once considered unlikely due to America's global political influence — has now become a reality.

Prevost emerged as a top contender during the days-long conclave, ultimately receiving the two-thirds majority needed from the 133 voting cardinals, according to sources from Vatican City.

At 69, Prevost was already well-known within the Vatican as head of the Dicastery for Bishops — the powerful department responsible for appointing new bishops around the world. He has dual citizenship in the U.S. and Peru which some say it helps reflect a more global background. Prevost spent years serving in Peru and speaks fluent Spanish.

His positions mirror those of his predecessor, Pope Francis. Prevost is considered a centrist with progressive leanings on social issues, known for his outreach to marginalized groups including migrants and the poor. However, like Francis, he upholds traditional Church doctrine, opposing the ordination of women as deacons.