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NEW POPE'S LIFETIME MINISTRY CONSISTENT WITH 2022 CATHOLIC INVESTING PRINCIPLES

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Key Takeaways

- The social doctrine of the Catholic Church guides its investment policy.
- Does the election of Pope Leo XIV portend a shift in that investment approach?
- Looking at the Pope's lifetime ministry may provide insight.
- Our view is that the value the new Pope always places on the importance of the Church's social doctrine indicates to us little if any change for the Vatican's investment policy or for the assets Breckinridge manages for clients in our Catholic Values customization.



In July 2022, the Vatican released a policy consolidating investment portfolios of all offices and keeping all current and future investments in line with the social doctrine of the Catholic Church.¹ In a statement, the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy explained that the rules are intended to ensure that investments will contribute “to a more just and sustainable world” and protect “the real value of the Holy See’s net worth and generate a sufficient return to sustainably contribute to the financing of its activities.”

With the May 8, 2025, selection of Pope Leo XIV, interest in his views of Church investment practices followed. Because Pope Francis elevated the Chicago-born Robert Francis Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV, to Cardinal only in 2023, little was known about his views on investments.²

POPE LEO XIV’S MINISTRY DEMONSTRATES A SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITMENT

For insight, we might consider Pope Leo XIV’s lifetime ministry, which demonstrates a commitment to social justice. During his time as a missionary in Peru from 1985 to 1999, he worked closely with marginalized communities, advocating for the poor and migrants. His leadership in the Augustinian order and later as Bishop of Chiclayo (Peru) further reinforced his dedication to serving those in need.³

During his ministry, Pope Leo XIV has been vocal about environmental responsibility, emphasizing the need for action on climate issues based on Catholic social teaching. His leadership combined spirituality with a focus on justice, making him a bridge between different communities and perspectives.⁴

The Pope reiterated these beliefs in a May address to the Centesimus Annus Foundation,⁵ calling for the Church’s social teaching to:

- Overcome polarization and rebuild ethical global governance;
- Address issues like climate change, job insecurity, migration and challenges posed by artificial intelligence; and,
- Advocate for the poor.

THE NEW POPE’S VIEWS ALIGN WITH CORE CATHOLIC INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

These essential ideas appear to align well with the investment approach announced in 2022. The *Catholic Review* reported in July 2022, “The investment policy stated that the Holy See, including the Roman Curia and related entities, have a responsibility to support the church’s mission ‘by investing in line with the principles of Catholic teaching and upholding the common good, while recognizing their fiduciary responsibilities as investors.’”⁶

In addition, *Mensuram Bonam (Good Measure)*,⁷ which is a 46-page guide issued by the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences exploring investment decision making, urges investors to consider the values delineated in the Gospel and Catholic social teaching when choosing an investment.

1. “[Vatican investments must follow Catholic social teaching, new policy says](#),” *National Catholic Reporter*, Junno Arocho Esteves, July 19, 2022.

2. “[Pope Leo XIV’s election: Pope Francis, like Warren Buffett, mastered the art of succession](#),” *MarketWatch*, Quentin Fottrell, May 10, 2025.

3. “[Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV, known as the ‘saint of the north’ in Peru for his closeness to poor](#),” *Associated Press*, By Franklin Briceno and Nicole Winfield, May 8, 2025.

4. “[Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV, known as the ‘saint of the north’ in Peru for his closeness to poor](#),” *Associated Press*, By Franklin Briceno and Nicole Winfield, May 8, 2025.

5. The Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation, often abbreviated as CAPP, is a pontifical foundation established by Pope John Paul II in 1993. Its purpose is to promote Catholic social doctrine, especially as outlined in the encyclical Centesimus Annus. The foundation is a lay-led, non-profit organization headquartered in Vatican City.

6. “[Vatican investments must follow Catholic social teaching, new policy says](#),” *Catholic Review*, Junno Arocho Esteves, July 19, 2022.

7. “[Mensuram Bonam \(Good Measure\): Faith-Based Measures for Catholic Investors](#),” The Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, October 11, 2022.



Based on historical and current context, we believe the connection appears well established between the positions held in the Vatican's current investment policy, the views stated in *Mensuram Bonam*, and the life and perspectives of Pope Leo XIV.

BRECKINRIDGE ALIGNS VALUES & INVESTMENTS

Breckinridge has managed faith-based, mission-aligned customizations in accordance with Catholic values for more than a decade. Our current customization combines investment grade (IG) fixed income allocations with United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) guidelines,⁸ and these guidelines can be applied to many of our strategies.

The USCCB updated its Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines November 2021.⁹ The update emphasizes a holistic approach to ethical investing, incorporating teachings from Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

Specifically, the USCCB seeks investments in accordance with a strategy “developed to identify investment opportunities that can meet the Conference’s financial needs while also acting ethically, following the moral criteria of the Church’s social doctrine.”¹⁰ The USCCB identifies three key principles 1) avoid participation in harmful activities or “do no harm” 2) use the Conference’s role as stockholder for social stewardship, and 3) “promote the common good.” The Breckinridge Catholic Values customization seeks to invest in IG fixed income issuers that align with these principles.

Breckinridge works with Catholic institutions and their consultants to help align their investments with their mission, while also aiming to meet their performance objectives. Please contact our Consultant Relations team (cr@breckinridge.com) for additional information on Breckinridge and our investment strategies.

8. The USCCB published its Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines on November 12, 2003, to help guide Catholic investors as they attempt to fulfill their “religious mandate and fiscal responsibilities.”

9. [Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#). Approved by the full body of the USCCB at its November 2021 General Meeting.

10. Ibid.

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