



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR CONTACT:

Claire Vail: claire.vail@americanancestors.org, 857.225.8738

Michelle McGrath: michelle@mcgrathpr.com, 339-832-0820

FROM CHICAGO TO THE VATICAN:

Pope Leo XIV's Roots Revealed in Boston Exhibition

Family Heritage Experience exhibit explores 15 generations of migration, memory, and identity in the pontiff's family tree

BOSTON, MA, Issued September 24, 2025 ... American Ancestors announces the debut of its new temporary exhibition “The Ancestry of Pope Leo XIV: An American Story,” on view at the Family Heritage Experience on Newbury Street from October 4 through December 31, 2025. This exhibition invites visitors to read stories and explore vital records containing information about the Pope’s ancestors, illuminating the Pope’s diverse lineage as researched and compiled by American Ancestors’ expert genealogists Jari H. Honora, and Lourdes Del Pino of the Cuban Genealogy Club of Miami, Judge Raymond Moore, Archivist Sarah Waits of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and others.

The exhibit features a chart of the Pope’s lineage that spans 15 generations, tracing the pontiff’s connections to Spanish nobility, freedom fighters, enslaved individuals, and modern-day cultural icons, including Justin Bieber and Angelina Jolie. Visitors are welcome to explore the Family Heritage Experience’s many exhibits weekly, from Tuesday through Saturday, open from 10 am to 6 pm, at 97 Newbury Street, Boston. Learn more at the.americanancestors.org.

When Pope Leo XIV’s was revealed earlier on June 11 in *The New York Times Magazine*, the world marveled at the sweeping, complex ancestry of the first American-born pontiff. Now, for the first time, the public can explore this extraordinary story in depth. “The Ancestry of Pope Leo XIV: An American Story” exhibit sheds light on the Pope’s Creole and Latin American heritage, the first to be publicly acknowledged by a pontiff, as well as his ancestral ties to New Orleans, Cuba, Haiti, Italy, and beyond. His story is not only personal—it’s emblematic of the broader histories of migration, memory, and identity that continue to shape global conversations today.

“Pope Leo’s family history tells a quintessentially American story. It’s a complex and fascinating mosaic of people who had very different life experiences,” said Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard scholar and host of the PBS show *Finding Your Roots*.

“Our exhibition brings the research, the discoveries, and the human stories behind the Pope’s genealogy to life,” said American Ancestors’ President and CEO Ryan J. Woods. “We hope that people who visit the Family Heritage Experience to explore the Pope’s ancestry will become inspired to explore their own family history.”

Exhibit Highlights:

- A comprehensive installation of his extensive family tree, on view through December 31
 - Newly uncovered ancestors and migration stories not previously revealed
 - Records documenting information about the Pope’s ancestors
 - Contextual explorations of immigration, race, slavery, and freedom woven through his lineage
 - The exhibit is influenced by insights from renowned experts, including Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., the Family Heritage Experience building’s namesake, Lourdes Del Pino, and Jari H. Honora, CG, Judge Raymond Moore, Archivist Sarah Waits of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and others who collaborated on uncovering and interpreting the Pope’s ancestry.
-

“The Ancestry of Pope Leo XIV: An American Story” is more than a family history—it’s a living dialogue between faith, culture, history, and genealogy.

Exhibition Details:

Opening Day: Saturday, October 4, 2025

On View: October 4 – December 31, 2025

Location: Family Heritage Experience, American Ancestors | 97 Newbury Street, Boston, MA

Admission: \$10 for adults. Free admission for children under 12. American Ancestors members receive free admission. On Wednesday, November 26, the FHE will close at 1 pm. On Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28, the FHE will be closed for Thanksgiving. For tickets, visiting information, and details about the exhibition, please visit fhe.americanancestors.org.

October is Family History Month: In celebration of Family History Month, admission to the Family Heritage Experience is FREE on Fridays in October.

Planning Your Visit: The Family Heritage Experience and the gift shop on the first floor of American Ancestors at 97 Newbury Street, Boston, MA, is open weekly Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 am to 6 pm. The facility is located near Copley Square and the Arlington and Copley Green line T stations. For more information, including accessibility and amenities, visit fhe.americanancestors.org.

About the Family Heritage Experience

The Family Heritage Experience—an interactive, state-of-the-art exhibition that introduces visitors to the joy of family history research—was launched in 2025 by [American Ancestors®](https://americanancestors.org), a national center for family history, heritage & culture. The Family Heritage Experience is located on the first floor of American Ancestors’ headquarters at 97 Newbury Street, in Boston, Massachusetts. For more information, visit fhe.americanancestors.org.

About American Ancestors

American Ancestors® is a national nonprofit center for family history, heritage & culture based in Boston, Massachusetts, that has been setting the gold standard for genealogical research since its founding in 1845. Today, American Ancestors serves 400K+ members and subscribers through

AmericanAncestors.org, one of the world's largest online collections of family history resources. In 2025, American Ancestors launched the Family Heritage Experience, an interactive, state-of-the-art exhibition that introduces visitors to the joy of family history research, located at 97 Newbury Street at our headquarters in Boston. American Ancestors is also home to the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center, which preserves New England's Jewish history, and 10 Million Names, a project dedicated to finding the names of the enslaved men, women, and children in pre- and post-colonial America before emancipation. For more information, visit americanancestors.org.