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UNIVERSITAS CATHOLICA PARISIENSIS

PRESS KIT

Apostolic Journey of Pope Leo XIV to France

Sequence at ICP — Saturday, 26 September 2026

ICP 150 ANS

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The Visit of Pope Leo XIV to ICP: A Cause for Joy for the University Community



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Nearly 50 years after the visit of John Paul II, Pope Leo XIV will honour ICP with his presence on 26 September 2026, shortly after the institution marked its 150th anniversary. For the entire university community, students, faculty and staff, this visit is a source of joy and an encouragement for our mission.

Our institution carries a long history: the Pope's spiritual guide, Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, served as a cook here in the 17th century. The martyrs of 1792, Mother Camille de Soyécourt, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and Blessed Christian de Chergé are daily reminders of the meaning of our commitment.

ICP is also a place of freedom. As the Pope writes in *Magnifica Humanitas*, education is essential *"at a time when truth is often subordinated to interests and communication strategies."* Our six faculties, where theology, law, art history and political science are engaged in dialogue, embody this pursuit of truth, a space of resistance to force, in service of human dignity, and a point of reference for young people in search of meaning.

Finally, it is a place of dialogue. Just as Professors Robert d'Harcourt and Yves de Montcheuil chose, during wartime, a *"disarmed and disarming peace,"* we wish to continue, with humility, this ongoing dialogue with the world of culture and human intellect.

Emmanuel Petit,
Rector of ICP



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Focus on... the Sequence at ICP

10:00 am	Arrival of the Pope in the courtyard of Saint-Joseph-des-Carmes church. Welcome by Emmanuel Petit, Rector of ICP
10:15 am	A moment of reflection at the foot of the Martyrs' Staircase, in memory of the martyrs of the French Revolution
10:20 am	Procession through the main courtyard, among members of the ICP university community, toward the Georges Bernanos auditorium
10:25 am	Entrance into the auditorium during the hymn of the Provincial Ecclesial Assembly, *"Hosanna! Let Us Give Thanks to Our God!"** Welcome address by Archbishop Laurent Ulrich, Archbishop of Paris and Chancellor of ICP
10:35 am	Testimony from a catechumen and a newly baptized member (neophyte)
10:45 am	Address by Pope Leo XIV
11:00 am	Departure from the auditorium; the Pope proceeds through the main courtyard
11:05 am	End of the visit to ICP

Saturday, 26 September 2026
Access by accreditation only
Live broadcast

*Hymn of the Provincial Ecclesial Assembly of Île-de-France.
Text: Marie-Antoinette Noury — Music: Guillaume Marionneau; Jubilus Voix nouvelles Éditions; SECLI reference: A 87-81.

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ICP Welcomes Pope Leo XIV

In 2026, more than 21,400 teenagers and young adults were baptized in France, three times more than in 2016. This increase has been especially notable over the past three years and is having a significant effect on parish life.

On Saturday, 26 September, **Pope Leo XIV** will visit ICP to meet members of **the Provincial Ecclesial Assembly, together with catechumens and neophytes**.

This meeting is part of an unprecedented ecclesial initiative bringing together eight dioceses of Île-de-France and the diocese for the French armed forces around a shared question: how to welcome, accompany and durably integrate the growing number of catechumens and neophytes joining the Church today? Announced last year by the bishops of the Île-de-France region, the assembly was opened widely: bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, lay leaders and catechumenate companions, as well as catechumens and neophytes themselves, take part in its work, around 350 delegates in total.

Several ICP faculty researchers are contributing to the assembly's reflections, including:

Emmanuel Petit
A graduate of Sciences Po and a doctor of canon law, Emmanuel Petit has taught at ICP's Faculty of Canon Law since 2011. Rector of ICP since 2021, he was re-elected in 2026. His research focuses on canon law, within the "Authority and Transmission" research team.





Anne-Sophie Vivier-Muresan
A doctor of theology and social anthropology, Anne-Sophie Vivier-Muresan has served as Dean of ICP's Faculty of Theology since 2023, the first woman and first lay person to hold the position. Her research focuses on Trinitarian theology, contemporary Orthodox theology and the theology of religions.

Cédric Burgun
Dean of ICP's Faculty of Canon Law since 2025, Cédric Burgun specializes in consecrated life and works on canonical marriage law, the Droitcanonique.fr database, and the implications of artificial intelligence for the field of law.



Roland Lacroix
A faculty researcher and professor at the Faculty of Theology, Roland Lacroix holds a doctorate in theology. He is affiliated with the "Heritage, Liturgy and Transmission" team within the Cultures and Humanities division. His research focuses on liturgy and the history of liturgy.



Claudio Gazzola
A doctor of theology from ICP since 2018, Claudio Gazzola teaches liturgy, the sacraments and the history of liturgy. His research addresses liturgy, the sacraments, rites and Christian initiation, with a particular interest in the catechumenate and ecumenism.

A Respected Research Unit

From its founding, ICP has placed research at the centre of its activities. Its Religion, Culture and Society research unit, officially recognized by the French State, has enabled scientific collaborations with numerous universities in France and abroad.

The unit pursues an interdisciplinary approach, examining the relationship between theology, political philosophy and the common good; the relationship between humanity, technology and artificial intelligence; sustainable development; and the evolving geopolitics of religion and heritage.

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ICP, an Emblematic Site

Origins of ICP

In 1875, the Archbishop of Paris and 30 founding bishops entrusted Bishop d'Hulst with the task of establishing a new Catholic university. They took advantage of the law of July 1875, which authorized the creation of institutions of higher education. In 1880, the independent institution adopted the name Institut Catholique de Paris. Bishop d'Hulst served as its first rector, from 1881 until his death, and established three faculties: Law, Letters and Sciences.

A Site in the Heart of the Latin Quarter

The historic campus of ICP, located in the 6th arrondissement of Paris, occupies land granted in 1611 by Queen Regent Marie de Médicis, widow of Henri IV, to the Discalced Carmelite friars, who built the convent and the church of Saint-Joseph there.

Used as a prison during the Revolution, the buildings were purchased in 1797 by Camille de Soyécourt, who established a Carmelite convent on the site. In 1845, the Archbishop of Paris opened the School of Advanced Ecclesiastical Studies there, which trained priests until the institution was formally established in 1875.

A Distinctive Architectural Style

ICP occupies 17th-century buildings, including the Carmelite convent and the church of Saint-Joseph, the first church in Paris topped with a dome.

The buildings most closely associated with the Paris campus, however, are those inspired by English college architecture, built in a neo-Gothic style between 1894 and 1897, and later between 1929 and 1934 along Rue d'Assas.

From 2015 onward, extensive renovation work — including the creation of a 400-seat auditorium — was carried out to provide university facilities that combine heritage and modern design.

In 2027, ICP will inaugurate its new university library. Conceived as a unified space at the centre of the campus and an advanced interdisciplinary resource, it will also serve as a gathering place for students and researchers.

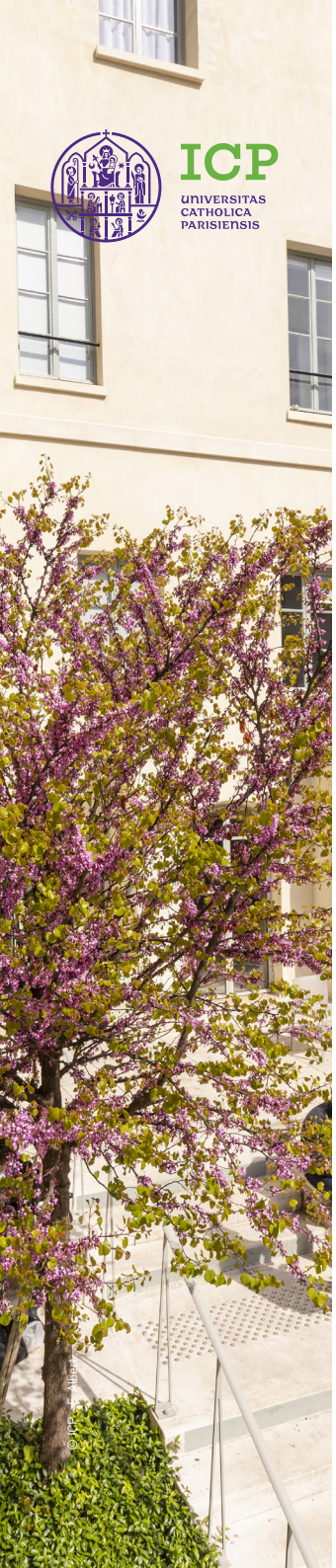
An Exceptional Documentary Collection

The university library holds nearly **700,000 documents**, making it one of the three largest collections in religious humanities in France.

Its holdings include incunabula — books printed before the 15th century — and a collection of nearly **800 cuneiform tablets**, a writing system dating back to 3000 BC. This is **the second-largest such collection in France, after that of the Louvre Museum**.

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ICP, an Emblematic Site

Lawrence of the Resurrection (1614–1691): The Spiritual Figure Who Inspires Leo XIV

A Little-Known Figure

Lawrence of the Resurrection, born Nicolas Herman, was a lay brother of the Discalced Carmelites. As a religious brother rather than a priest, he did not take part in the community's liturgical offices, but devoted himself to its manual and material work.

After serving as a soldier and later as a household servant, he entered the Carmelite house in Paris, where he worked first as a cook and then as a sandal-maker. In both his everyday tasks and his prayer, he sought to live constantly in the presence of God. His letters and conversations, gathered after his death in The Practice of the Presence of God, convey a simple spirituality: entrusting one's life into God's hands and speaking to him with confidence, in every circumstance.

His thought had considerable influence in France at the end of the 17th century before gradually fading from view. At the same time, his writings spread abroad, particularly in the English-speaking world, among Protestants and Anglicans.

Leo XIV, Following in the Footsteps of Lawrence of the Resurrection

The Parisian house where Lawrence of the Resurrection lived is today at the heart of the Institut Catholique de Paris. Between 1919 and 2026, the Carmelite seminary was based there, training several hundred priests, including Father Christian de Chergé.

In December 2025, Pope Leo XIV cited the writings of Lawrence of the Resurrection among the works that most shaped his spiritual life, describing their influence in these terms: "This has been my spirituality for years."



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ICP, an Emblematic Site

The Church of Saint-Joseph des Carmes

A Baroque Church in the Heart of Paris

Built between 1613 and 1625, the year of its consecration, the church of Saint-Joseph des Carmes is a notable Baroque ensemble in the Italian style.



Its understated yellow sandstone façade dates largely from 1622. Four statues occupy its niches: the Virgin and Child at the top; Saint Joseph, patron of the church, above the entrance; Saint Teresa of Ávila, a leading reformer of the Carmelite Order; and Saint Albert of Jerusalem, co-founder of the Order.



A dome surmounts the roof of the church, **the first of its kind built in Paris**.
The Discalced Carmelites introduced to France a practice that was widespread in Italy, their country of origin. Painted in 1647 by Walther Damery, the dome depicts the ascent of the prophet Elijah in a chariot of fire. Regarded as the spiritual father of the Carmelite Order, the prophet is shown being carried up to heaven immediately after casting off his cloak. In the biblical account, Elisha retrieves the cloak, a sign of prophetic succession; here, Elisha is depicted in Carmelite habit.

The Sainte-Anne Chapel

From 1620, the chapel was entrusted to Pierre Brûlart de Sillery, who commissioned its decoration — likely the oldest and among the richest in the church — devoted to the life of the Virgin Mary. Pope Leo XIV will pray here during his visit.
The altarpiece depicts *The Education of the Virgin Mary, shown with her parents, Anne and Joachim.*



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L'ICP, un lieu emblématique

The Church of Saint-Joseph des Carmes

The Bernini Statue

On the right side of the transept stands the Lady Chapel. The statue at the centre of this notable ensemble was carved in Rome by Antonio Raggi, after a design by Bernini. It was blessed in September 1663.



Tu es Petrus: Welcome Chant for the Pope

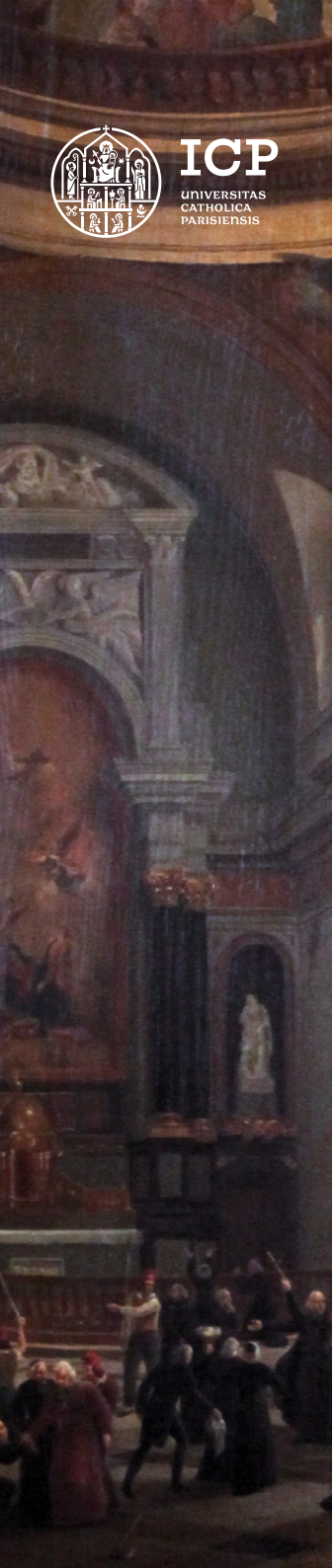
The Pope's entrance into the church will be accompanied on the organ by the Gregorian antiphon *Tu es Petrus*, followed by a setting composed by Maurice Duruflé in 1930.

This motet is intended to convey the word of God through song. It draws on Christ's words: *"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church."*

The sequence will conclude with a Cantate Domino composed by Henry Du Mont (1610–1684), a motet setting the first five verses of Psalm 95 to music. It alternates between meditative passages and expressions of joy, reflecting the spirit of Christian praise.

The motet will be performed by eight singers, accompanied by organist Nicolas Trotin.

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The Martyrs of 1792

The September Massacres

During the French Revolution, the Carmelite community was dispersed and the convent was converted into a prison.
Several well-known figures were held there, including Joséphine de Beauharnais, the future wife of Napoleon I.

On 2 September 1792, following a summary trial, more than a hundred priests were killed within a few hours in the garden. They were **beatified in 1926** and their relics rest in the crypt of the Saint-Joseph-des-Carmes church. **An anniversary cross** was created in the garden. One of the martyrs, Salomon Leclercq, a Brother of the Christian Schools, was canonized in 2016..

Pope Leo XIV will pause in reflection at the foot of the Martyrs' Staircase, the site where some of these religious were killed. The inscription *Hic ceciderunt, "Here they fell"*, commemorates them.







© M.-A. Bilcocq, Le Massacre des Carmes, Vizille, Museum of the French Revolution

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Figures Who Shaped ICP

Édouard Branly (1844-1940)

A physician, physicist and professor of science, Édouard Branly conducted extensive research at ICP in his laboratory. In 1890, his research on the conductivity of metals led to the first experiment in radio conduction, carried out in the institution's courtyard.

In recognition of his scientific contribution, ICP has converted his laboratory into a museum, displaying a collection of his instruments, including a notable piece: the "copper room," or Faraday cage, which he used in many of his experiments.

Robert d'Harcourt (1881-1965)

A Catholic intellectual and specialist in German studies, Robert d'Harcourt studied at ICP and later taught German literature there between 1920 and 1957. Severely wounded in the First World War, he warned against Nazism from the 1930s onward and became a leading figure of intellectual resistance to Germany. Elected to the Académie française in 1946, he worked after the war toward Franco-German reconciliation.
ICP honours his memory through a research room named in his honour.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)

A Jesuit, paleontologist and philosopher, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin shaped twentieth-century thought by bringing together faith and science.
A leading figure in paleontology, he also developed original concepts such as the noosphere and the Omega Point. Closely connected to the Institut Catholique de Paris, he studied and taught geology there and trained in research, uniting the two strands of his vocation.

Christian de Chergé (1937-1996)

Born in 1937 in Colmar, Christian de Chergé first encountered Algeria as a child, between 1942 and 1945, while his father served there in the military. Ordained a priest in 1963 after studying at the Carmelite seminary, he completed his military service in Algeria in 1959. During that time, a formative experience marked his life: his friend Mohamed, a Muslim guard, saved him and was later killed. Christian de Chergé saw in this his calling, to bear witness to Christ in Algeria.
In 1969, he joined the Trappists and later joined the community at Tibhirine, becoming its prior in 1984. On 21 May 1996, his death was announced, together with that of six fellow Trappist monks who had been abducted two months earlier. He is counted among the martyrs of Algeria, beatified in 2018.

Thirty years on, the memory of the monks of Tibhirine endures, and their message of peace and fraternal coexistence remains as relevant as ever.

Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853)

A university graduate and doctor, professor at the Sorbonne, lawyer and journalist, Frédéric Ozanam was known for his social and political engagement. Married, he combined his work as a teacher-researcher with his commitment to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, a charitable movement he founded in 1833. Beatified by the Catholic Church, he stands as a model of an academic engaged in service of the common good. The crypt of the church of Saint-Joseph des Carmes, at the heart of ICP, holds his tomb.

In 2026, ICP established the Institut Ozanam, specializing in political science, geopolitics and the humanities, in partnership with the Paris institutions Stanislas and Saint-Jean de Passy.

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Key Figures

1875 Founding of the Institut Catholique de Paris

3 campuses, Paris, Reims and Rouen, with two additional sites in Tours and Cergy

6 faculties
Letters / Philosophy / Social Sciences, Economics and Law / Education and Training / Theology / Canon Law

1 Research Unit
Religion, Culture and Society

250 doctoral students
within the doctoral college

8 schools and institutes
ESQESE, Ecole de Santé - Humanités et Soins, Institut Ozanam, Ifomene, Institut Vaugirard Humanités et Management, Institut du Savoir partagé, IER, ILCF Paris

9 associated schools
ESSEC, ISEP, EPP, EBD, UniLaSalle, ILEPS, ISIT, ESCOM, ECAM-EPMI

250+ partner universities
in **58 countries**

Notable alumni of ICP include:
journalist Laure Adler; Cardinal Jean-Marc Aveline; philosopher and novelist Simone de Beauvoir; writer Georges Bernanos; Charlotte Casiraghi, member of the princely family of Monaco; politician Bernard Cazeneuve; Christian de Chergé, the monk killed at Tibhirine, Algeria; Pope John Paul II; Pierre de Coubertin, reformer of the modern Olympic Games and founder of the IOC; politician Gérald Darmanin; Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger; François-Ghislain Morillion, co-founder of the Veja brand; politician Pierre Pflimlin; theatre director Olivier Py; advertising professional Clément Léonarduzzi; curator Louise Contant; and actress Audrey Tautou

1,000+ faculty members
including 120 faculty researchers

11,000 students across preparatory, bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes, 25% of whom are international

4,000 participants
in professional training programmes

30 000 alumni
on Linkedin

700, 000 documents
books, journals, theses and manuscripts held in the university library

20 bachelor's
et **40 master's programmes**

40 student associations

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Key Dates in the History of ICP

1611 Discalced Carmelite friars establish themselves on the current site

1613-1630 Construction of the Carmelite convent and church

1791 Departure of the Carmelite order; the convent is converted into a prison

1792 On September 2, more than 100 priests are killed in the garden of the Carmelite convent

1797 Establishment of a Carmelite convent on the site

1845 Founding of the School of the Carmelites

1875 On July 12, law establishing freedom of higher education

1875 Bishop Maurice d'Hulst founds the Catholic university that succeeds the School of the Carmelites

Opening of the Faculties of Law, Letters and Sciences

1878 Founding of the Faculty of Theology

1880 Law restricting the use of the title "University" by independent institutions
The Catholic institution becomes the Institut Catholique de Paris

1890 Édouard Branly, professor at ICP, discovers the principle of radio conduction, at the origin of wireless telegraphy

1894-1897 Construction of the buildings at 19 Rue d'Assas (architect: Victor Ruprich-Robert)

1895 Establishment of three additional faculties: Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law

1897 Beginning of education for young women

1905 Law on the Separation of Church and State

1913 Founding of ESSEC, the institution's first professional school

1923 Founding of the Institute of Social Studies, later the Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics and Law

1929-1934 Construction of the buildings at 21 Rue d'Assas by the son of Ruprich-Robert

1935 Founding of the Félix Klein library and the EBD

1944 Founding of ILEPS

1944 ICP is officially recognized as a "public interest institution"

1951 Founding of EPP-PsychoPrat

1953 Closure of the Faculty of Sciences, which is absorbed into several engineering schools (ISEP, ESCOM, ECAM-EPMI, etc.)

1957 Founding of ISIT

1963 Founding of the Institut Supérieur de Pédagogie, later the Faculty of Education and Training

1980 Official visit of Pope John Paul II to ICP

1995 Founding of the Jean de Vernon library

2015 Construction of the Georges Bernanos auditorium

2021 Inauguration of a regional campus in Reims

2023 Opening of the Rouen campus

2025 Opening of a site in Tours

2026 Official visit of Pope Leo XIV

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