NEWS BREAK

Article: **Pope apologizes for church's support of slavery**

Section: **MAIN, A4**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, November 15, 2026,** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

Feel free to adapt this lesson for your students. For instance, some educators may assign this as a homework task, while others might facilitate the reading and discussion of questions within small groups or larger class discussions.

Please take a moment to review all NIE content before classroom use to ensure it is suitable for your students.*

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Learning Objectives:

After reading the article, students will examine Pope Leo XIV's apology for the Catholic Church's historical role in legitimizing slavery and its impact on African-descended people throughout the Americas. Students will explore the history of the African slave trade in Peru, the experiences and contributions of Afro-Peruvian communities, and the lasting effects of slavery and discrimination. Students will evaluate the importance of acknowledging historical injustices, taking responsibility for past actions, and recognizing the cultural contributions and dignity of communities whose histories have often been overlooked.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted word means using context clues? A ***context clue*** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

“Leo has made clear on this trip that he modeled his ***ministry*** on Mogrovejo’s example.”

Ministry Guess:

Ministry Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. He knows the city and the history of African-descended Peruvians well, and the continued _____ that Afro-Peruvians face today.
2. In remarks to the community Saturday, Leo said Zaña “preserves the memory of generations of Africans who were torn from their homes and subjected to _____.”
3. “Many endured great _____ and _____. Dear brothers and sisters of African descent, today I want to express my affection and closeness to you,” he said. “Thank you for all that you contribute to the life of this church.”

4. Zaña is also home to the sanctuary of St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, the first archbishop of Lima. Mogrovejo is revered here for what?
   _____
   _____
5. In addition to having crisscrossed his vast archdiocese on foot and horseback, Mogrovejo learned _____ _____ and was known for having confirmed St. Martin de Porres, the first Black saint of the Americas and the patron saint of _____ _____, _____ _____ and people of _____ _____.
6. In his first encyclical, “Magnificent Humanity,” Leo made a sweeping apology for the role of past popes in _____ _____ in the Americas and failing to condemn it for centuries.
7. It was a reference to the series of 15th-century directives from the Vatican that authorized what?
   _____
   _____
   _____
8. The estimated _____ African slaves brought to Peru after the arrival of Spanish conquistadores toiled in sugar plantations and silver mines, with some becoming urban artisans.
9. At one point, they and their descendants were more than _____% of Lima’s population.
10. “Historically, the Afro-Peruvian community — much like other Afro-Latin American communities — has faced a twofold form of invisibility. What were they?
    _____
    _____
    _____

<u>Class Discussion Questions:</u>

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

Deeper-Dive “Connect & Explain” Comprehension Questions for Small Groups, Entire Classes or Journal Entries and/or Essay Prompts for Extended Enrichment

1. The article describes Pope Leo XIV's apology for the Catholic Church's historical role in legitimizing slavery and supporting the expansion of the African slave trade in the Americas. Why do you think it is important for individuals, institutions, and governments to acknowledge and take responsibility for injustices committed in the past? Should present-day leaders be held responsible for decisions made by previous generations?

Explain your reasoning. How might acknowledging historical wrongdoing help communities move toward healing and reconciliation?

2. The article explains that 15th-century directives from the Vatican authorized European rulers to conquer lands in Africa and the Americas and enslave non-Christians. Why do you think religious institutions held so much influence over political decisions and European expansion during this period? How might religion have been used to justify colonization, slavery, and the treatment of Indigenous peoples? What responsibilities should religious institutions have when their teachings or actions contribute to discrimination or human rights abuses?
3. The article describes how approximately 100,000 enslaved Africans were brought to Peru, where they were forced to work on sugar plantations and in silver mines. It also explains that Afro-Peruvian communities have continued to experience discrimination and cultural invisibility. How can the effects of slavery continue to influence communities long after slavery has ended? What social, economic, and cultural challenges might descendants of enslaved people experience today? Why is it important to understand the connections between historical injustice and present-day inequality?
4. The article explains that Afro-Peruvian communities have experienced a form of invisibility, with their contributions to the development of Peru often overlooked or reduced to folklore. Why might certain groups or communities be left out of a nation's historical narrative? Who has traditionally had the power to decide which stories are included in history books, museums, and public celebrations? How might recognizing the contributions of Afro-Peruvian communities change the way people understand Peru's history and national identity? What responsibility do schools have to ensure that diverse cultural histories are represented accurately?
5. The article describes St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, a religious leader who spoke out against abuses committed by Spanish colonizers toward Indigenous and enslaved people. He also learned Indigenous languages and traveled throughout his archdiocese to serve communities. Why might it have taken courage for a religious leader to challenge the actions of powerful colonizers during this period? What qualities make someone an effective leader when confronting injustice? How can individuals use their positions of influence to advocate for people who have been marginalized or denied a voice? Identify a historical or contemporary leader who has demonstrated similar qualities.
6. Pope Leo XIV expressed sorrow on behalf of the Catholic Church for its historical role in supporting slavery. Do you believe that a public apology from an institution is enough to address generations of injustice? What additional actions might demonstrate a genuine commitment to accountability and change? Consider education, preserving cultural heritage, addressing discrimination, supporting affected communities, and

changing institutional policies. What is the difference between expressing regret for past actions and actively working to correct their lasting effects?

Extended Essay Prompts

- The article explains how the enslavement of Africans shaped Peru's history and how Afro-Peruvian communities continue to experience discrimination and cultural invisibility. In your essay, examine the lasting effects of slavery on communities, cultures, and national identities. Consider how forced migration, labor exploitation, racial discrimination, and the loss or suppression of cultural traditions have shaped societies over time. Explain why understanding these historical connections is important when addressing inequality and building more inclusive communities today.
- The article highlights the UNESCO recognition of Zaña, Peru, as a site of memory of slavery and African cultural heritage. It also describes how the contributions of Afro-Peruvian communities have often been overlooked in the nation's history. In your essay, examine why some historical experiences and cultural contributions receive greater recognition than others. Consider who has the power to shape historical narratives, the importance of preserving cultural landmarks and traditions, and the role of education in representing diverse perspectives. Explain why including overlooked histories creates a more complete and accurate understanding of a nation's past.
- The article connects centuries of slavery and discrimination to the challenges Afro-Peruvian communities continue to face today. In your essay, examine how knowledge of history can influence civic responsibility and efforts to create social change. Consider the roles of government policies, education, community leadership, cultural preservation, and individual action in addressing inequality. Explain how citizens can help ensure that marginalized communities are heard, represented, and treated fairly. What lessons should future generations take from the history described in this article?
- The article highlights St. Turibius of Mogrovejo's efforts to challenge abuses against Indigenous and enslaved people during Spanish colonial rule. In your essay, examine what it means to demonstrate moral courage when confronting injustice, particularly when challenging powerful institutions or widely accepted beliefs. Consider the risks leaders may face, the importance of listening to marginalized communities, and the responsibility of individuals to stand up for human rights. Compare Mogrovejo's actions with those of another historical or contemporary leader who worked to challenge inequality. Explain what makes leadership meaningful and effective.

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