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Pope Leo speaks on community 'suffering' on visit to remote Andes



CHENNAI – 16 Nov, 2026 Pope Leo XIV has spoken about the "suffering of those who are forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future", which he said had left communities under threat, during a visit to an isolated Andean village in his former diocese.

About 6,000 people live in Santa Cruz de Succhabamba, located in a remote part of the Andes mountains of northern Peru, but the Pope's visit still drew a crowd of about 20,000, according to the Vatican.

At an outdoor Mass, the Pope spoke of "declining birth rates that are emptying villages" and the unequal distribution of the land's resources.

More than 40% of the population in the Cajamarca region, where the town is located, live in poverty - the highest figure in Peru, according to official data.

Cajamarca has lost the highest number of people to internal migration, with 729,000 people born there now living elsewhere in Peru.

In his sermon, the Pope thanked those who had made the journey to see him and emphasised the importance of never losing heart, despite life's difficulties.