



April 21, 2025
Easter Monday

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It was with deep grief that we received the news this morning that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, died today in Rome. In communion with the Catholic faithful across the Diocese, and with Catholics and people of good will across the world, we entrust Pope Francis into the mercy and love of God whom he served so faithfully for many years. I ask all of you to pray with me for our Holy Father, especially in these days of mourning.

“Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.”

Over the next days and weeks, I am sure that many commentaries will speak of the legacy of Pope Francis: his writings and Apostolic Visits; his love for the poor and marginalized and his work for peace and reconciliation in the world; World Youth Days and the Jubilee Year of Mercy (2015) and of Pilgrims of Hope (2025); the Synods and General Audiences; his interviews and his leadership during the Pandemic; and so much more.

Together, we unite in thanking God for the gift of Pope Francis, for twelve years of his ministry among us as our Holy Father, and for the ways in which he touched us personally and made a difference in our lives. Personally, I will never forget his joy, rooted in his friendship with Jesus Christ, and which shone forth in his smile and his words, and which he shared with all those he met – especially the poor and the marginalised.

I'd like to conclude this brief message with these words from the final homily prepared by Pope Francis which was proclaimed at the Easter Mass yesterday in St. Peter's Basilica:

“Christ is risen, he is alive! He is no longer a prisoner of death... Brothers and sisters, this is the greatest hope of our life: we can live this poor, fragile and wounded existence clinging to Christ, because he has conquered death, he conquers our darkness and he will conquer the shadows of the world, to make us live with him in joy, forever. ... Let us run towards Jesus, let us rediscover the inestimable grace of being his friends. Let us allow his Word of life and truth to shine in our life.”

Pope Francis has run towards Jesus to rediscover the inestimable grace of being his friend! May he live with him in joy forever!

May Mary, Mother of Mercy, welcome him into the eternal presence of her Son!

May God bless you all in Christ our Redeemer,

+ Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R.

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Bishop of Pembroke