

POPE FRANCIS – REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Pope Francis has died aged 88, the Vatican Press Office has confirmed. He served as the 265th successor of St Peter from his election on 13 March 2013 to 21 April 2025.

A Tribute to Pope Francis

Today, Easter Monday, with deep sorrow and deeper gratitude, we mourn the death of His Holiness Pope Francis—a shepherd whose life radiated humility, compassion, and a joyful faith. As the Church throughout the world reflects on his extraordinary legacy, we give thanks to God for the gift of this remarkable servant of Christ.

Pope Francis lived the Gospel with simplicity and sincerity. From choosing to live in Casa Santa Marta to washing the feet of prisoners, his every gesture pointed to a Church that is close to the poor and tender with the wounded. He called bishops and priests to be “shepherds with the smell of the sheep,” and he reminded all of us that true leadership is found in service.

He renewed the Church not through power but through listening. His vision was shaped by the Second Vatican Council—synodal, inclusive, and missionary. In his encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, he called us to care for our common home and to live as brothers and sisters in an often divided and weary world.

In his most recent encyclical letter, *Dilexit Nos*, Pope Francis reflected on the heart of Christ as a place of “openness, gift and encounter.” It is there, he said, that we learn how to live with one another “in wholesome and happy ways,” building a world shaped by love and justice.

With the tenderness of a true shepherd, he called the Church to walk gently with others, to listen with the heart, and to witness to the quiet, patient power of love. A Jesuit at heart, and a bridge-builder to the end, Pope Francis fostered dialogue across religions, cultures, and ideologies. He urged us to meet others with mercy, never harsh judgment.

Above all, he will be remembered for his love—for God, for the Church, and for every person.

As we commend him to the Lord, may we honour his memory by living the joy of the Gospel, walking with the poor, and keeping our hearts open to all.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

+Bosco

Bishop of Clifton