



22 April 2024

Dear sisters and brothers,

As you know, Pope Francis died yesterday at 7.35am Rome time. You, your priests and I share grief at his death. He was a good man given to us by God and it is right that we came to love him and now mourn him.

I invite you to offer five Holy Communion for Pope Francis, that is, to say to God something like:

"Lord Jesus, I offer all the good and beauty of this moment and Communion for Pope Francis. Please forgive whatever wrong he might have done and welcome him into the bosom of Abraham and to life to the full with you, his Lord and ours."

I would be very happy if you let your family members know that you were doing this and invited them to join you in this.

Our parishes will each celebrate a Requiem Mass for Pope Francis. You might like to come and celebrate at this Mass. My understanding is that Archbishop Timothy Costelloe, the President of the ACBC, will represent us all at the funeral in Rome.

The grace Pope Francis received at that confession when he was 21, was very significant in his life. After that he could never doubt that God was close, tender and merciful. He KNEW it was true. I suspect that this was the deep motive behind his writing on the joy of the Gospel and his enthusiasm for a Church that would go out and share this.

On one reading of his pontificate, this encounter provided the direction and the underlying theme for all of the important events of his pontificate. Among other things, these include:

- his prayer life (he prayed for four hours a day),
- his reaching out to the poor, the refugee and the prisoner
- his desire to honour and strengthen of family life,
- his encyclical on the Sacred Heart,
- his modelling of going to Confession,
- the encouragement he gave us to walk tenderly with those whose lives are messy,
- his desire that the Church be a mother and field hospital for them and us,
- his defence of life from conception to natural death,
- his work for peace in Ukraine and Palestine
- his desire that the Church's decision-making be expanded to include those who were to be impacted; and
- his many journeys to those at the periphery.

I am deeply grateful to God for Pope Francis and the leadership he has given us.

The episcopal ordination of Bishop-elect Peter Murphy on May 8th will not be affected by Pope Francis' death.

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The canonisation of Carlo Acutis has been delayed. I presume that this is because Pope Francis' body will be lying in state in St Peter's and that this will make the canonisation impossible. The delay in the canonisation will not affect the Cathedral Divine Mercy/Carlo Acutis/Pilgrimage events on Sunday 27 April. These will go ahead as planned with added prayers for our recently deceased Pope.

You might like to join me in this prayer from the 1974 Sacramentary from the section of Masses for the Dead: For a Pope who has just died.

A Prayer for Pope Francis

(1936 - 2025)

*Father, Eternal Shepherd,
hear the prayers of Your people for Your servant Pope Francis,
who governed Your Church with love.*

*In your mercy, bring him with the flock entrusted to his care
to the reward You have promised Your faithful servants.*

*May he who faithfully administered the mysteries
of Your forgiveness and love on earth,
rejoice with You forever in heaven.*

*In Your wise and loving care,
you made Your servant Pope Francis, teacher of all Your Church.
He did the work of Christ on earth.*

May Your Son welcome him to eternal glory.

*May Your servant Pope Francis whom You appointed high priest of Your flock
be counted now among the priests in the life of Your kingdom.*

*Give him the reward of eternal happiness
and let Your mercy win for us the gift of your life and love.*

*We entrust Pope Francis to Your mercy with faith and confidence.
In the human family he was an instrument of Your peace and love.*

May he rejoice in those gifts forever with Your saints, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Amen.

*Eternal rest grant unto the soul of Pope Francis, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace, Amen.*

Let us pray for each other, for Pope Francis and for our Church.

Yours in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate



Most Rev Mark Edwards OMI
Bishop of Wagga Wagga