



Diocese of Palm Beach

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Office of
THE BISHOP

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Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito's Statement on Pope Francis's Passing

“One of the myriads of wonderful characteristics for which Pope Francis will be long remembered, was his being known as a “Pope of Surprises,” and for presenting a surprise as a joy. While his death was not unexpected, it clearly was a surprise with it occurring immediately after the celebration of Easter and in view of his slow, but positive recovery. It was, as if, he taught us a powerful lesson on the true meaning of hope during this *Jubilee Year of Hope* which he gave us as we travel in this life as pilgrims of hope. He spent his period of Lent in “fragility,” his own description, and looked forward with great determination, in hope, to the fullness of life, which came to him at Easter. He was a man of tremendous hope, which he lived to the end, and which provided joy to all of us.

So much could be, and will be, said about his tremendous contributions to the life of the Church during his Pontificate. His final message on Easter Sunday, in his *Urbi et Orbi* address, a few hours before his passing into eternal life, speaks volumes to us at this time. He exhorted:

Christ is risen! These words capture the whole meaning of our existence, for we were not made for death but for life. Easter is the celebration of life! God created us for life and wants the human family to rise again! In his eyes, every life is precious! The life of a child in the mother's womb, as well as the lives of the elderly and the sick, who in more and more countries are looked upon as people to be discarded.

What a great thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of our world! How much violence we see, often even within families, directed at women and children! How much contempt is stirred up at times towards the vulnerable, the marginalized, and migrants!

On this day, I would like all of us to hope anew and to revive our trust in others, including those who are different than ourselves, or who come from distant lands, bringing unfamiliar customs, ways of life and ideas! For all of us are children of God!

We pray for our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, and we have every confidence to pray to him, as well.”

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In addition, we invite our faithful to [pray the Novena provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) in Memory of Pope Francis.

Introduction: The entire Church mourns the death of the Holy Father, Pope Francis. In cathedrals, basilicas, parish churches, shrines, and chapels the Holy Eucharist will be offered for the repose of his soul. Communities and individuals will ask God to bestow his infinite mercy on the man who served the Church as Bishop of Rome.

This novena has been prepared to help pray for the Pope during the time of mourning. The daily novena – lasting for the novendiales period as directed by the College of Cardinals – consists of a short reading from Scripture or some other ecclesiastical text and some brief prayers, including orations drawn from the Roman Missal and the Order of Christian Funerals.