



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Statement on the Falling Asleep in the Lord of Pope Francis

Today, the twenty-first day of April in the Year of Our Lord 2025, Kevin Cardinal Farrell announced that the Holy Father had fallen asleep in the Lord at 7:35 in the morning local time. Cardinal Farrell is an American and is the Camerlengo, the official who oversees the Vatican when there is no Pope.

Pope Francis stunned the world in 2013 when he eschewed the trappings of monarchy and presented an example of humility to the universal Church and the world.

Pope Francis worked tirelessly to return the Catholic Church to the core message of our Faith, that the good God loves us so much that He is willing to forgive all of our mistakes, even paying the price for them Himself in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The core message of our Faith is not rules and accusations, but mercy and God's gentle call. "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

The key Gospel passage of the tenure of Francis was this, "It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Pope Francis did preach repentance, incessantly promoting the Sacramental Mystery of Confession. On Copacabana Beach in 2013 he said, "...with His mercy He will cure all the wounds caused by sin. Do not be afraid of God's forgiveness, because He never tires of forgiving us, like a Father who loves us. God is pure mercy." In 2014, he said, "Go – the priest will be good. Jesus is there, and Jesus is more benevolent than priests, Jesus receives you, he receives you with so much love." And for the Jubilee Year he said, "Let us place the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the center once more in such a way that it will enable people to touch the grandeur of God's mercy with their own hands. For every penitent, it will be a source of true interior peace."

It is the tradition in our Eastern Church that when people die during Bright Week, the gates of Heaven are open to them with no delay. I am grateful to God for the life and example of Pope Francis, Jorge Mario Bergoglio. May he dwell in a place of light, peace, and verdure, and may his memory be eternal.

+ Kurt Richard Burnette
Bishop of Passaic

+ Kurt