



STATEMENT

Death of Pope Francis

**Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB DD
Archbishop of Perth**

21 April 2025

In this unprecedented moment in time following the death of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, I wish to share with you my thoughts on his extraordinary life and ministry.

The Holy Father passed away at Casa Santa Marta at 7:35am local time in Rome on Monday, 21 April 2025. While it does not come as a surprise given the Holy Father's age and declining health in recent months, the news will be received with great sadness by Catholics, and by people of good will, all over the world.

Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, became the first non-European pope in nearly 1300 years, the first Latin American pope, the first Jesuit pope and the first pope to take the name Francis when he was elected to succeed Pope Benedict XVI in March 2013.

With an emphasis on our own formation, it is important that we take this opportunity to learn from his teachings, which have challenged us to look beyond our church walls and engage with the world, embracing those on the peripheries of society.

From the moment when, as Cardinal Bergoglio, the Holy Father was introduced to the world as the newly elected Pope Francis, his simplicity and humility set the tone for a papacy which would be marked by an emphasis on the mercy and compassion of God.

His famous description of the Church as a field hospital, where wounds could be healed and hearts could be warmed, was a call to a renewal of the Church's life and mission, grounded in a return to Christ as the source and inspiration of everything the Church sought to do and to be.

His approach to leadership and service has been, and will continue to be, profoundly marked by his Jesuit background, emphasising discernment and "finding God in all things." This spirituality was evident in his daily life and decisions, reflecting a deep personal relationship with Jesus and a commitment to making the Church a more inclusive, compassionate, and merciful place for all.



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His efforts to reform the Vatican, to address issues of financial transparency, and to tackle the scourge of clerical abuse spoke of his resolve to purify the Church and restore its credibility and moral authority. This task, though daunting, was pursued with courage and determination, reflecting his belief in a Church that mirrors the merciful face of Christ.

In our Archdiocese of Perth, let us take inspiration from Pope Francis's pastoral guidance. Let us remember his call to be the Church that is a field hospital after battle, ready to heal wounds and warm the hearts of the faithful. Let us embody the joy of the Gospel in our communities and families, fostering a culture of encounter, dialogue, and respect.

I encourage you, my dear brothers and sisters, in reflecting on the passing of Pope Francis, to let his life be a beacon that guides us in our mission to be messengers of joy and bearers of Christ's love.

As we continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities of our times, may we remain united in our commitment to the Gospel and to the mission of our Church.

Since we are in the Easter Octave, it is not permitted to offer Votive Masses for the Dead. However, from Tuesday 22 April, during the nine days of mourning known as *Novendiales*, I ask you to offer Mass for the repose of his soul, to mention him by name in the intercession for the dead during the Eucharistic Prayer, and to pray for Pope Francis in the Universal Prayers.

From Monday 28 April, I would ask all priests in the Archdiocese of Perth to offer Votive Masses for a dead Pope, the texts for which can be found in the Roman Missal.

I will also celebrate a Solemn Pontifical Mass for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis at St Mary's Cathedral with the clergy and the faithful of Perth on Tuesday, 22 April 2025 at 12.10pm.

Finally, a reminder that from now until the election of a new Pope, no name is mentioned in the Eucharistic Prayer, except for that of the Bishop.

Pray for our dearly departed Holy Father, and let us move forward with hope, guided by the light of our faith and his example.

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

Requiescat in pace.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Timothy Costelloe SDB
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