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Death of Pope Francis

Pope Francis has died at the age of 88. The Argentinian pontiff had been in hospital earlier this year where he was battling double pneumonia.

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He died at 7.35am on Easter Monday, at his residence in the Vatican's Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican announced in a video message.

On Sunday he had met with JD Vance, the US vice-president, addressed crowds from the balcony in St Peter's Square and blessed worshippers from his open-topped popemobile.

At 9:45 AM, **Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Apostolic Chamber**, announced the death of Pope Francis from the Casa Santa Marta with these words:

"Dearest brothers and sisters, with deep sorrow I must announce the death of our Holy Father Francis. At 7:35 this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the house of the Father.

"His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of His Church. He taught us to live the values of the Gospel with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favor of the poorest and most marginalized.

"With immense gratitude for his example as a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, we commend the soul of Pope Francis to the infinite merciful love of the One and Triune God."

Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires in 1936, he took the name Francis in honour of St Francis of Assisi, who led a humble life of service to the poor, and as a nod to St Francis Xavier, a founding member of the Jesuit Order in the 16th century.

In 2013, he was elected by cardinals to succeed Pope Benedict XVI, who took the world by surprise when he announced that he was abruptly terminating his eight-year papacy.

Pope Francis was the first pope from the Americas, the first Jesuit pope and the first from the Western hemisphere.

Tributes to Pope Francis

The Archbishop of York

The Archbishop of York has paid tribute to the Pope as “holy man of God” who was “also very human”.

Most Rev. Dr Stephen Cottrell said: “Francis’s whole life and ministry was centred on Jesus who comes among us not to be served, but to serve.”

He added: “We saw that compellingly in Francis’s service of the poor his love of neighbour, especially the displaced, migrant; the asylum seeker, his deep compassion for the well-being of the earth and his desire to lead and build the church in new ways.”

Acknowledging the pontiff’s efforts in working alongside the Church of England despite “division” with the Catholic Church, the Archbishop recalled Pope Francis’s historic trip to South Sudan in 2023 alongside Rev Justin Welby, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, and Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, the moderator of the Church of Scotland.

“Pope Francis was acutely aware of the divisions between our churches and how they stand in the way of seeing Jesus Christ more fully,” said Archbishop Cottrell.

“I remember, in the brief times spent with him, how this holy man of God, was also very human.

“He was witty, lively, good to be with, and the warmth of his personality and interest in others shone out from him.”

The Anglican Communion

The Right Reverend Anthony Poggio, The Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion has shared a message of condolence following the death of Pope Francis.

His Holiness Pope Francis was a man of great faith, humility, and compassion, who brought to the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome the joy of the Gospel. I want to express the deep appreciation of the Anglican Communion for the remarkable leadership that Pope Francis has given to the Catholic Church and to the world at large.

Throughout his papacy Pope Francis has consistently demonstrated a profound commitment to evangelisation, to show justice, mercy, love and reconciliation. His words and actions have touched the hearts of millions, transcending the boundaries of Christian divisions and inspiring people of



Pope Francis greeted Most Rev David Chillingworth, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Mrs Chillingworth

all faiths to join hands in pursuit of a more just and compassionate world.

The late Pope's unwavering dedication to the plight of the poor, the refugee and the vulnerable has been an inspiration to us all. His calls for global solidarity, for the protection of our common home and for the pursuit of peace have resonated deeply within the hearts of people across continents and cultures, especially in my home country South Sudan.

Renewal of the Church's structures through synodality and the voice of women and lay people within decision-making processes has been a defining mark of his Papacy – a

process that has drawn on friendships across the Christian world.

In the spirit of ecumenism, Pope Francis has sought to foster greater unity among Christians. His commitment to dialogue, understanding and shared mission has opened new avenues of collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. We have walked together on the way towards healing the wounds of division and towards the unity that Christ desires for His Church.

Anglicans are grateful for Pope Francis' support of the work of the Anglican Centre, Rome, the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), and the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission (IARCCUM).

Anglicans join with millions around the oikoumene, and with all people of goodwill, in giving thanks to God for Pope Francis. We offer our condolences to our sisters and brothers in the Roman Catholic Church. We pray God's blessing on us all and on all who, like Pope Francis, try to follow Christ in the strength of the Holy Spirit.

Read the statement on the Anglican Communion News Service here: <https://bit.ly/42AzhiL>

The Most Rev John McDowell

The Most Rev John McDowell, the Church of Ireland's Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh,

issued the following statement following the announcement of the death of Pope Francis:

"I wish to extend my sympathy on behalf of the Church of Ireland to Archbishop Eamon Martin and to the Roman Catholic people of Ireland on the death of His Holiness Pope Francis. Pope Francis was invested not only with his share in the official magisterium of the Church he served so joyfully, but also with a natural, self-authenticating authority which was the fruit of a deep devotion to God and an equally deep commitment to the service of all of the people of God.

"Pope Francis' respect for every person, wherever they may have found themselves on life's pilgrimage, was a powerful witness to the plenitude of God's grace, given as a gift to the world in His Son. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." and it was the whole world which expressed the magnitude of God's love. Pope Francis' brotherly affection for Christian people of all traditions, and for the whole of humanity, was worked out in practical action, particularly around the great defining issue for this era – the care of God's creation.

"In at least two of Pope Francis' Encyclicals – *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti* – he confronted the whole of humankind, believers and non-believers alike, with the scale of the challenges we face but also with an outline of the solidarity and the resources needed to tackle these challenges. It is difficult not to draw parallels with that other unlikely iconoclast Pope John XXIII in his involved goodness that had little time for an aloof and cool virtue which had no

redemptive power in it. *Laudato si'* in particular stands out as an historic and prophetic oracle.

"Pope Francis was manifestly a modest man of immovable faith who felt no need to cling frantically onto old certainties which no longer served God or His People. Drawing from the deep well of Scriptural resources acquired during a lifetime in the Ignatian tradition, Pope Francis was prepared to step out into a very unclear future in the company of Jesus Christ, which is "far better than a known way".

"His loss will be felt very keenly throughout the Catholic world and my prayers in the coming weeks will be for all who are bereaved and diminished by the passing of a great man and a humble disciple of our common Lord, especially my brothers and sisters in Christ on the island of Ireland.

"Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam."

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

In response to news from the Vatican that His Holiness Pope Francis has died, the Moderator has made the following statement:

May I express my condolences to the Catholic Church in Scotland following the news of the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. We recall with gratitude the hospitality extended by His Holiness to representatives of the Church of Scotland and also the occasion of the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace made by Pope Francis to South Sudan

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in the company of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2023. In recalling his contribution to Christian witness, we hear renewed the call made by His Holiness in *Laudato si'* to care for the earth as our common home, and in *Fratelli tutti* to discover the presence of Christ in each human being. We join with all Christian people in the prayer of Pope Francis:

Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.
Amen.

May the blessed memory of Francis continue to serve as an example to the faithful people of God in our shared pilgrimage and in our common task of caring for God's creation. May he rest in peace.

Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

Right Revd Adrian Wilkinson, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory

The **Right Revd Adrian Wilkinson** has expressed his sympathy and has extended the prayers and condolences of the Church of Ireland clergy and people of the Diocese of



Cashel, Ferns and Ossory to Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly, Bishop Niall Coll, Bishop Ger Nash, Bishop Denis Nulty and Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, their priests, religious and people, upon the announcement of the death of Pope Francis.

I had the honour of meeting Pope Francis in Rome in January of last year when Bishop Niall Coll and I were the Irish representatives at the International Anglican - Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. Since his election, Pope Francis has been known for his love, compassion and humility with a life centred on service. He has been a voice for the displaced, the asylum seeker, the migrant, the poor and those who live on the margins and frequently expressed a deep concern for the wellbeing of the earth. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Roman Catholic Church grieving today. In this season of Easter, we thank God for the life, witness and service of

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Pope Francis and offer our prayers to them in this time of mourning and transition.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Right Revd Dr Michael Burrows, Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe

Many were kind enough to view my Easter message, which referred to a personal encounter I had with Pope Francis only weeks ago. Now, amid the continuing atmosphere of Hope that characterises Easter, it is time to mourn him and to reflect upon his rich influence which extended far beyond his own Communion.

My sympathy at this time goes to the bishops, priests and people of the various Roman Catholic dioceses with which we in Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe share territory.

Through his pastoral zeal, compassion, imagination and indeed humour, Francis captured the hearts of many of us. My own work with the Anglican Centre in Rome gave me a remarkable window onto his genuine warm and prayerful interest in our affairs.

We realised in a quite new way that when the bishop of Rome spoke out, for example on matters of climate change, the church in its widest ecumenical sense did well to listen. But, above all, I think of a Pope who never lost his sense of his own humanity, who lived out his calling to be, in that ancient phrase, a servant of the servants of God.”



Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

It was with immense sadness that I heard the news, earlier this morning, of the death in Rome of His Holiness Pope Francis.

On behalf of us all in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross I extend our deep sympathy and condolences, together with the assurance of our prayers at this time of grief, to Bishop Fintan Gavin, Bishop of Cork and Ross and the people of his Diocese, and also to Bishop William Crean, Bishop of Cloyne, and the people of his Diocese.

I had the honour of meeting Pope Francis in Rome in May 2017 and, like so many others, was affected and influenced by his human gentleness, empathy and humility and, most of all, by his prayerfulness and deep spirituality.

We have all been, I am certain, conscious of and have witnessed his frailty and vulnerability as, with immense fortitude, he endured his suffering but continued resolutely to fulfil his calling and duty. May he rest now in God's peace and rise in glory.

Right Reverend Andrew Forster of Derry & Raphoe offers condolences to members of the Roman Catholic community

Bishop Andrew Forster has offered condolences to members of the Roman Catholic community.

Yesterday morning, Bishop Andrew contacted the Bishop of Derry, Most Rev Dr Donal McKeown, and Monsignor Kevin Gillespie, the Administrator of the Diocese of Raphoe, to express condolences on behalf of the Church of Ireland family in Derry and Raphoe, and assure them of its prayers and support.

What happens when the Pope dies?

In the modern age, a doctor will confirm the Pope's death, but only the Camerlengo (Chamberlain) can initiate the complex process of rituals that begins after his death.

The Camerlengo is the Vatican's overseer of property and revenues. It is his job to execute the protocols and organize the funeral.

The current Camerlengo is Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who has held the post since 2019. He will refer to a 400-page handbook called "Funeral Rites of the Roman Pontiff" that will guide him through the strict protocols governing a papal funeral.

1. The first process

Firstly, he will call out the Pope's baptismal name three times (Jorge Mario Bergoglio for Pope Francis). This was traditionally done to ensure the Pope was dead and not just sleeping. Only when he receives no answer does he confirm the official death of the Pope.

There is an often repeated story that when a Pope dies, his death is confirmed in part by tapping his head with a hammer.

This, however, is a myth. The story started to appear in the 19th century and may reflect people's fear of being buried alive. It could also be confused with the rites of the opening of the Holy Door when a hammer was traditionally used.

2. Destruction of the Pope's ring

The next step is the ceremonial destruction of the "Fisherman's Ring".

This was traditionally a very important step as the ring was used as the seal of the Pope on official documents. Its destruction was to safeguard against any misuse, such as the ring being used to forge documents. Today, the act is purely symbolic and signifies the end of the Pope's authority.

3. Sealing of the Pope's apartment

Finally, the Papal apartments are sealed, a measure that historically was meant to guard against looting.

4. The death is announced

The first indication that the public receives of a Pope's death is the mourning bell of St. Peter's Basilica.

The bell of the Basilica tolls for every year of a Pope's life. It chimed 84 times when Pope Saint John Paul II in 2005. The bells did not chime in 2013 when Pope Benedict XVI's Papacy ended, as he didn't die; he resigned.

5. The empty throne

The Vatican has now entered an interregnum period known as Sede Vacante. The throne of St. Peter is empty.

6: What happened during the Sede Vacante

During Sede Vacante, the rule of the Church is temporarily handed over to the College of Cardinals, but no major decisions are made. During this time, the Papal funeral is organized, the funeral is held, and cardinals from around the world gather to start the process of electing a new Pope.

7. What happens after the funeral of the Pope?

After the funeral, the College of Cardinals gather in Rome to prepare for Conclave. There are currently 252 cardinals, 138 of whom are cardinal electors. Most of them will already be in the city for the funeral.

The Conclave usually begins within 15-20 days after the death of the Pope. In the days before, there are a number of pre-Conclave meetings. These meetings are to discuss core issues facing the Church and for the cardinals to get to know one another better. They also discuss the ideal qualities for a new Pope - so these meetings act like an unofficial campaign period. By the end, a number of Papabile (pop(e)able' or 'able to be pope') contenders usually emerge.

May the Pope rest in peace.

Education

Belfast High School Abaana Uganda Team

The team has arrived safely back in Northern Ireland (albeit less 7 missing suitcases which we hope will be delivered tomorrow!).

It was an absolutely amazing 12 days for everyone involved. Thanks to Auntie Sue and Auntie Fiona as well as all of the Abaana staff and volunteers who looked after us so well



during our stay. Every member of the team has amazing memories which will last a lifetime.

We hope you have enjoyed following the team during our stay in Uganda. Unfortunately due to some technical FB issues we were unable to share reports of our final 2 days - these will follow shortly.

Big Campbell Quiz

As we headed towards the Easter break, The Big Campbell Quiz returned for another night of challenge, competition, and most of all - fun!

Over the course of three hours, Quizmaster Gavin guided our teams through rounds on general knowledge, music,



geography, and the arts. With prizes for the winning team and best team name at stake, there was plenty of jockeying for position, but the Reservoir Hogs emerged victorious, with Make Campbell Great Again securing the best name prize.

A huge thank you to those that attended, we hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did. We look forward to more exciting events with the Campbell Community!

Clergy and ministry

New rector for Killiney-Ballybrack



Congratulations to the parishioners of St. Matthias' Church in Killiney-Ballybrack and the Revd Scott Evans and his family.

It was announced on Sunday morning that Scott will be the new Rector. He is currently Curate Assistant in Holy Trinity Church Rathmines.

You can read all about it on the diocesan website here:

<https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2025/04/20/the-revd-scott-evans-appointed>

Resignation of the Rev Sarah Marry

Bishop Pat Storey has made the following announcement. “Having met earlier this week with the

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Select Vestry of these parishes, I am now in a position to be able to announce that The Rev Sarah Marry will be resigning as Incumbent of Edenderry Union, on 31st May, 2025, due to ill health. Please keep Rev Sarah and her family in your prayers as they prepare to make this move”.

Holy Week retreat at Drumalis



Our Holy Week retreat at Drumalis was a wonderful experience for all concerned.

The partnership between the retreat team here at Drumalis Retreat and Belfast Jesuit Centre resulted in a very successful retreat. We hope that this partnership is destined for even great things in the months ahead!

The creativity in bringing traditional devotions like the Seven Last Words and the Seven Sorrows of Mary made it a truly Passionist experience - even for the Jesuits involved!

St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat & Conference
Center Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center



Passionists Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center Tobar Mhuire

Events

Renaissance Chamber Choir Sound of Spring in Limavady

Join with Renaissance Chamber Choir for an uplifting evening of beautiful music as they present The Sound of Spring.

Saturday 10 May | 7:30PM

Drumachose Presbyterian Church, Limavady

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Featuring works by Mozart, Fauré, Chilcott, Lauridsen, and Rutter — with special guest soloist Abigail Medcalf Dip LCM Piano.

Tickets: £10 for adults | Free for under 18s

Available from choir members, via email, or at the door.

Let the music of springtime refresh your soul

Contact:

renaissancechoirbelfast@gmail.com

chsec\drumachose@outlook.com

A landmark Good Friday Passion for our times

The Irish premiere of James MacMillan's St John Passion was performed on Good Friday at 3.30pm

Hailed by Rowan Williams as 'a landmark for contemporary music' the work was undertaken by the National Symphony Chorus, Chamber Choir Ireland, baritone Seán Boylan with conductor David Hill

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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