



ARCHDIOCESE
OF LOUISVILLE

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Contact: Kanobia Russell-Blackmon
Phone: (256) 289-9029

Statement from Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre on the Death of Pope Francis

Together with my brother bishops, priests, the faithful of the Archdiocese of Louisville and Catholics around the world, I mourn the death of Pope Francis. As the shepherd of the Catholic Church for 12 years, the Holy Father led from the heart and showed compassion and care for others. He made history as the first Pope from the Americas and from Argentina. He was also the first member of the Society of Jesus to be elected pope.

I am grateful to Pope Francis for appointing me Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux in 2013 and then Archbishop of Louisville in 2022. I had the privilege and honor of meeting him on two occasions: in 2019 and in 2023. With both encounters, I remember him being welcoming and jovial.

Upon being elected Pope, on March 13, 2013, Pope Francis led the Catholic Church in his own unique way guided by the Holy Spirit. From the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis remained a humble man which was evident by the way he lived his life. He loved being among the people, greeting the faithful, and providing blessings to everyone he encountered.

Pope Francis was known for speaking Truth, even if it meant receiving criticism. He advocated for what is morally correct, for those who are marginalized, and for those who have no voice. Pope Francis constantly reminded the faithful to love and welcome everyone we meet because they are the face of Christ.

As the Vicar of Christ, the Holy Father provided the Church with the resources to build up the Kingdom of God. He will be remembered for many things, among them his encyclicals, especially *Fratelli tutti* and *Laudato si*, and for the Synod on Synodality. Additionally, he will be remembered for the catechesis he provided on Wednesdays during his general audience.

Pope Francis was a visible sign of our union and unity as Church. I will be forever grateful to him for missioning me to serve the people of the Archdiocese of Louisville. I invite you to join me in praying for the repose of his soul.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.