

The Death of Pope Francis

Nine Days of Mourning

21 April – 29 April 2025

Day 1 – 21 April

Scripture Matthew 28:8 15

And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet.
Then Jesus said to them,
*'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee;
they will see me there'.*

Reflection

Our reaction to the fragile image of Pope Francis yesterday, Easter Sunday, 20 April 2025 is compounded by the sadness we feel on hearing of his death early today. Writing about the Holy Father's appearance on Palm Sunday, a week ago, Johnson Kotaram, described "a fragile old man in a striped poncho, worn black trousers, and oxygen tubing, rolling quietly through the grandeur of St. Peter's Basilica – this was not the Pope as prince or priest...this was the Pope as a reminder that grace may arrive not dressed in white but in weakness."

In today's Gospel we meet Jesus, risen from the dead, not clinging to the veneration of the women but commissioning them to spread the Good News to the other disciples because another chapter awaited them in Galilee.

Pope Francis has left us tasks too and many more chapters as we continue his mission to the poor and marginalised, to those experiencing homelessness and war, to the hungry and thirsty – all to be done with his customary humility.

Prayer

Let us pray,

Risen Jesus,

Accompany us on our journey of sadness
as you walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Help us respond to our calling, follow Your example
and the witness of Pope Francis to be there for each other,
in a spirit of solidarity as sisters and brothers.

Give us the courage to broaden our horizons
and reach out to those who need Your light,
no matter who they are or where they come from.

We ask this in Your name. Amen.

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Day 2 – 22 April

Scripture John 20:16

“Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’
She turned and said to him in Hebrew ‘Rabbouni’,
which means Teacher”.

Reflection

It was when Jesus called her by name that Mary Magdalene recognised the one she had presumed to be the gardener, as her ‘Teacher’. The closeness they had shared, broken by death was restored anew in the light of the resurrection and the calling of her name. He entrusted her to share this news with the other disciples.

Pope Francis highlighted the ‘genius of woman’ in feminine styles of holiness which he said were ‘an essential means of reflecting God’s holiness in the world.’

In his Apostolic Exhortation – *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018) on holiness- the Holy Father continued:

‘Indeed, in times when women tended to be most ignored or overlooked, the Holy Spirit raised up saints whose attractiveness produced new spiritual vigour and important reforms in the Church.’

Later in this document, Pope Francis describes the Beatitudes as a ‘Christian’s identity card’ ...we have to do each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount.’

Prayer The Beatitudes of Pope Francis (Sweden – 2016)

Let us pray,

Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart.

Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalised and show their closeness.

Blessed are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover him.

Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home.

Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others.

Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians

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Day 3 – 23 April

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Scripture Acts 3:6

Peter said, “I have neither silver nor gold,
but what I do have I give you:
in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and walk.”
Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up,
and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong.
He leaped up, stood, and walked around,
and went into the temple with them,
walking and jumping and praising God.

Reflection The Wisdom of Pope Francis

Everyone has experienced some degree of despair that “makes us feel as if our soul were crushed,” unable to breathe and perhaps even eager for death, Pope Francis said.

“We have to understand when our spirit is in this state of extended sadness, where there is almost no air. This happens to all of us” to some degree, he said.

So then what should people do when they go through “these dark moments because of a family tragedy, an illness, something that brings me down?” he asked. In times of hopeless, spiritual despair, he said, the answer is to pray hard, just like Job, who cried out day and night for God to listen.

The Pope of Hope

*The Message of Pope Francis this Jubilee Year for World Day of the Sick 2025 focused on hope and led with the quotation ‘**hope does not disappoint**’ from Romans 5:5. This was supported by a phrase ‘**but strengthens us in times of trial**’.*

Let us pray, in the spirit of Pope Francis, for all who are sick today:

God of tenderness and healing,
Be with those who are ill in their struggle at this time.
Fill them with Christian hope that does not disappoint
and strengthen them in this time of trial.
May they who are supported by so many in prayer
be lifted up on the wings of our intercessions.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.
May Mary, who stood at the cross of her Son comfort the sick today.
A Mhuire na nGrás, a Mháthair Mhic Dé, Go gcuire tú ar a leas iad.