



DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

04/21/2025

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Knoxville,

As we join with Catholics around the world in mourning the death of his holiness Pope Francis, we remember his humbleness and his legacy of care for creation, mercy for our poor and marginalized brothers and sisters, and a profound joy in the lives of each of us in living and sharing the Gospel as followers of Jesus.

When I met Pope Francis during “new bishop school” back in September, I had the opportunity to personally thank him for all that he has done for the Church and to let him know of our love for him.

During this time of grief for our universal Church, I ask all parishes in our diocese to:

- Offer special Masses for the repose of his soul.
- Include specific prayers for him in the Prayer of the Faithful.
- Toll church bells as a sign of mourning.
- Display the deceased pope’s portrait in a dignified, well-lit area.
- Display papal flags at half-staff until the new pope is chosen.

Let us pray together for the eternal rest of our Holy Father and for the Church during this period of transition. May the Lord grant him a full share in the joy of the Resurrection and may perpetual light shine upon him. In the coming days, I will share additional information about diocesan observances and the process ahead.

Peace in the Risen Lord,

Most Rev. Mark Beckman

Bishop of Knoxville



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