



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is with profound sadness that I learned this morning of the death of our Holy Father, Pope Francis. Along with Catholics and men and women of good will throughout the world, I gave thanks to Almighty God for his life and example, and I pray with Easter hope for the repose of his soul.

How providential that our loving God would call Pope Francis home just as we begin our 50 days of celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death. I trust that he felt the comforting prayers of the world as he joined the crowd in St. Peter's Square yesterday for the Church's celebration of Jesus' victory over sin and death. The Holy Father's powerful Easter greeting, expressing his closeness to those experiencing the scourge of war and abandonment will be long remembered as his testament.

I will always be grateful to Pope Francis for assigning me to serve as the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. I have fond memories this day of all the times that he assured me of his prayers for this Archdiocese.

I ask you to join me in praying for the Holy Father, especially over the next nine days. I ask our pastors to open their Churches today for all desiring to offer their prayers for Pope Francis and for the Church that he so generously led.

I will be celebrating a noon Mass today at the Cathedral, as the first of the traditional nine Masses offered for the repose of his soul.

For members of the media who have inquired, I will be available in the Cathedral following Mass. The Archdiocese's communications team will coordinate that availability.

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