



# Catholic Diocese of Richmond

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## **Bishop Barry C. Knestout and the Catholic Diocese of Richmond Mourn the Passing of Pope Francis**

Along with the faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, I mourn the passing of Pope Francis with great sadness and offer prayers to Our Lord for the happy repose of his soul.

As I reflect on his pontificate, I marvel at the way each Holy Father makes a unique imprint on the papacy and the Catholic Church. Pope Francis' charisms were his simple, conversational style, and his charitable efforts in reaching out to those on the peripheries – the poor, vulnerable, and alienated. His emphasis on synodality has taught us that by listening attentively to one another, we can love as Christ in a fractured and polarized world.

I was blessed to meet Pope Francis three times – most recently in Rome last October during a pilgrimage made by the parishioners of the Basilica of St. Andrew, Roanoke. During each of our encounters, the pope greeted me with a gentle, friendly smile, and just a few words in English: “Pray for me!”

I assured him then of our prayers. We continue to pray now for this devoted shepherd of the Church. We commend his soul to the care of Christ, the Good Shepherd. Guided by Pope Francis' pastoral example, may the Church continually make progress in charity, imitating more perfectly Christ's merciful love in all we think, say, and do.

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