

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15)

It is with heavy hearts that the National Black Sisters’ Conference learned of Pope Francis's passing at the age of 88. He leaves a transformative legacy that reshaped our Catholic Church and extended its global moral influence.

From the outset of his papacy in 2013, Pope Francis emphasized mercy as the cornerstone of the Church’s mission. He championed a compassionate and inclusive approach, reaching out to marginalized communities, including the poor, refugees, and LGBTQ+ community.

We were so aware of Pope Francis as a vocal advocate for social justice, addressing economic inequality and environmental degradation. His encyclicals, *Laudato Si’* and *Laudate Deum*, called for urgent action on climate change and criticized the exploitation of the planet, highlighting the disproportionate impact on the poor and future generations.

Beyond the confines of the Church, Pope Francis emerged as a global moral leader. He engaged in interfaith dialogue, advocated for migrants and refugees, and called for peace in conflict zones. His final public act, the Easter Sunday blessing, included prayers for peace in regions like Gaza and Ukraine.

Pope Francis’s legacy is one of humility, compassion, and a relentless pursuit of justice. His leadership has left an indelible mark on the Church and the World, inspiring us to continue his mission of inclusiveness and mercy.

We can only imagine that in his own way, Pope Francis must have sung:

Precious Lord, Take My Hand,
Lead me on, let me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Thru the storm, thru the night,
Lead me on to the light,
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.

We join our Prayers with the Faith Community. May He Rest in Peace!

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