



# *Bishop Barres' Statement on the Death of Pope Francis*

April 21, 2025

As we mourn the death of Pope Francis on this Easter Octave Monday and the gift of his contemplative global evangelization grounded in Matthew 25 and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, we give thanks to Father, Son and Holy Spirit for his unique graces and charisms and the compelling way during his Pontificate that he has been a Light of Jesus Christ and the mission of mercy of the Catholic Church to the world.

In *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), Pope Francis speaks about the original freshness of the Gospel: “Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always ‘new.’” (11)

Pope Francis’ commitment to the freshness of the Gospel and his desire to forge new paths of mission creativity were expressed in his encyclicals *Lumen Fidei* (2013), *Laudato si’* (2015), *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), and *Dilexit Nos* (2024), along with his apostolic exhortations *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) and *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018), *Christus Vivit* (2019), *Querida Amazonia* (2020), *Laudate Deum* (2023), and *C’est la confiance* (2023).

This section of *Evangelii Gaudium* captures, I believe, Pope Francis’ passionate love for the Church and the world and it will continue to inspire us as the Holy Spirit leads us further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: “How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction! Yet I realize that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. A spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel...I once more invoke the Holy Spirit. I implore him to come and renew the Church, to stir and impel her to go forth boldly to evangelize all peoples.” (261)

Today, we pray for the soul of Pope Francis, we pray for the College of Cardinals which will elect his successor, and we pray for his successor who will be elevated to the Chair of Saint Peter.

As we pray for the soul of our Holy Father Pope Francis on this Easter Octave Monday, we remember his words on our Lord’s Resurrection.

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis writes: “Christ’s resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated the world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force...Each day in our world beauty is born anew, it rises transformed through the storms of history...Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelize are instruments of that power.” (276)

May the Word of God be a Light and a Lamp for our steps and may the Holy Spirit lead and guide us!

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