

Archbishop John Wilson statement on Pope Francis

"The death of Pope Francis fills me with great sorrow. This pain and sadness will not only be felt within our Church, it will also resonate deeply around the world, especially in the poorest and most marginalised communities.

"Like the Lord, when the poor cried, Pope Francis heard them. But as the Lord Jesus taught us, it is not enough just to hear these cries, we must commit ourselves to responding to them too. That is exactly what Pope Francis did and it is why he meant so much to so many.

"Pope Francis life is a reminder to us all that as Christ's disciples, we need to put the marginalised and vulnerable at the centre of the Church's ministry. His commitment to walk with the poor, to shine a light on their suffering and to offer a way forward is why so many considered him a Pope for the poor.

"Yet, Pope Francis has not just been a Pope for the poor, but also a Pope for peace and mercy. Whenever war tragically broke out across the world, the Holy Father led the call for peace.

"His calls for peace were always filled with a closeness to people suffering violence and despair. His calls for peace were a constant reminder that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. His calls for peace were always a reminder that God wants us to live as brothers and sisters, not enemies.

"I am grateful to God that He sent us such a ferocious advocate for the poor and for peace. I join the millions praying for Pope Francis as he returns to the Father's House, and I pray that he may rest in eternal glory in the Kingdom of Peace.

I ask Catholics across the Archdiocese of Southwark to pray for Pope Francis and for our priests to offer Mass for the repose of his soul."

There are books of condolence at the Cathedral.

There is an online book of condolence for use by clergy and lay faithful - franciscus.angb@gmail.com

There is also an in-person book of condolence which is open to the public at the Apostolic Nunciature in Wimbledon (54 Parkside, Wimbledon, London, SW19 5NE) from 10.30 am to 12.30pm on Tuesday 22, Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 April.

With the assurance of my prayers and warm best wishes

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ John

The Most Rev. John Wilson
Metropolitan Archbishop of Southwark