



**OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF
HIS EXCELLENCY,
MOST REVEREND ALFRED A. SCHLERT,
BISHOP OF ALLENTOWN
ON THE DEATH OF
HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS**

Together with the clergy, religious, faithful, and all people of good will, we, the Diocese of Allentown, unite with the Universal Church in mourning the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis on 21 April 2025 at approximately 7:35 a.m. in Rome.

Following his election to the papacy as the 266th Pope on 13 March 2013, Pope Francis exhibited the call to mercy we so often see through Christ in the Gospels.

Upon being elected Vicar of Christ, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina took the name Francis in honor of St. Francis, who was told in the San Damiano Church, "Rebuild my Church."

Every age has its struggles, trials, and temptations, and the twenty-first century likewise has its own task of developing strategies and modes to carry the Gospel to an ever-changing world. Pope Francis prioritized the method of accompaniment, reaching both those within the Church and especially those on its periphery.

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis also welcomed many into conversation with the Church. He reminded the faithful that the Church is a hospital for the sinner and not just for the saints and righteous, transmitting hope for those who feel distant from Christ.

May this Jubilee Year, which His Holiness Pope Francis opened before his death, be a year of genuine trust in the Gospel and the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is in the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:7).

May eternal rest be granted to Pope Francis and may his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.