



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2025

Contact:

Annalise Laumeyer, director of communications
Phone: 616-551-5629 | 616-307-3474 cell
Email: alaumeyer@grdiocese.org

The Diocese of Grand Rapids Office of Communications issues the following statement from Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak, bishop of Grand Rapids, in response to the death of Pope Francis:

We are saddened by the death of our Holy Father, yet it is fitting that his passing from this life occurred in the Jubilee Year of Hope, which he inaugurated. For our hope in eternal life springs from our faith in the risen Lord.

Pope Francis sought to break down barriers and draw people into an encounter with Christ in the Catholic Church. Like Jesus, he served those whom the world often considered outcasts. He challenged priests to be shepherds with the 'smell of the sheep,' and constantly reminded us of the dignity of the unborn, migrants and refugees, and prisoners. He was a man of action, ministering to the homeless in Rome, visiting refugee camps, and washing the feet of prisoners. His pastoral heart, use of relatable language, and witness to serving people on the margins stand as an example for all people.

It is a privilege to be among the first bishops appointed by Pope Francis during his pontificate. His leadership and witness have shaped my episcopal priorities and ministry over these past 11 years.

May Pope Francis now rest in eternal peace. Please join me in praying for the repose of his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.*

The Diocese of Grand Rapids serves more than 179,371 Catholics, 79 parishes and 31 schools in an 11-county area of West Michigan. For additional information, visit our website grdiocese.org. Connect with the diocese on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofGrandRapids) (Diocese of Grand Rapids) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/GRDiocese) (@GRDiocese).

###