



World Methodist Council

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Lament for the Death of Pope Francis

We would like to speak in very personal terms and also on behalf of the Worldwide Methodist family.

It is with great sadness that the President and the General Secretary of the World Methodist Council received the news of the death of Pope Francis this Easter Monday morning. It was as recent as December 2024 that a small company of us were received by the Pope in a private audience at the Apostolic Palace in Rome.

Pope Francis welcomed us as sister and brothers. He invited all to have an open mind and heart to one another: "in this way our communities will manage to unite the different minds and wills, letting ourselves to be guided by the Spirit." Pope Francis addressed directly the fact that for a long time there was suspicion and distrust between ourselves. But that "we can now thank God because, for 60 years, we are progressing together in knowledge, in mutual understanding and love." He added that: "this has helped us to deepen our mutual communion."

The Pope referred to the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, "this occasion reminds us that we profess the same faith and, therefore, that we have the same calling to offer signs of hope that bear witness to God's presence in the world... to persevere on the path to visible unity and in the quest of finding ways to respond fully to the prayer of Jesus 'that they may all be one'."

We speak on behalf of the World Methodist Council to express our great sadness at the loss of Pope Francis. From the seat of Peter he exercised primacy calling us to unity in love and diversity.

The late Pope set an example from the beginning choosing the name Francis. The First Pope to take the name of the saint that brought such renewal to the Church, calling all to a life of holiness, setting an example of humility, and a deep spiritual love for the created world.

He was also the first Pope to come from Latin America, saying that cardinals went to the end of the world to find him. Truthful to his roots, he was always calling us all back to service to the poor, with the poor. He dared and called us to speak prophetically for justice. The Pope also invited us to share in the joy of the Gospel.

Francis was the first Pope from the Order of the Jesuits. Methodists understood his emphasis on a discipline of prayer, and his constant request for us not to forget to pray for him. Which we did.

Pope Francis goes but leaves us with an example to be followed.

We say goodbye Pope Francis, until we meet again in the Eternal City of God. Your sister and brother, personally and on behalf of the WMC,

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett
President of the WMC

Rev Dr Reynaldo Ferreira Leão Neto
General Secretary of the WMC