



Easter Monday, 2025

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Easter blessings and peace to you!

With deep sorrow today, we received the news of Pope Francis' passing. As we mourn the loss of our Holy Father, let us come together in prayer, remembering that he has passed during this Jubilee Year of Hope. A few years ago, in one of his many memorable homilies, Pope Francis boldly preached, "Christ is risen and with Him rises our creative hope, a hope that encourages us to start anew."

Pope Francis will long be remembered for his outreach to those on the margins of the Church and of society. He renewed for us the mission to bring the Gospel out to the ends of the earth and offer divine mercy to all. Pope Francis also took the opportunity of the present Jubilee to call us to a profound hope: one that is not an empty or naïve hope, but one grounded in the promise of Almighty God to be with us always.

This is a providential moment for us witnessing that our Holy Father has died so soon after the celebration of Easter, the season of our Lord's resurrection. Together with great gratitude, hope and faith, let us pray: "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him."

May we continue to hold him and each other in our prayers during these Holy days. And may God bless you always.

As I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ

Bishop Ronald A. Hicks
Bishop of the Diocese of Joliet in Illinois