



MEDIA RESPONSE - IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION - 21 APRIL 2025

LGBT+ CATHOLICS WESTMINSTER MOURN THE LOSS OF POPE FRANCIS -

A STATEMENT FROM JOE STANLEY, CHAIR - LGBT+ CATHOLICS WESTMINSTER PASTORAL COUNCIL

It is with deep mourning that the LGBT+ Catholics Westminster Community learns of the death of Pope Francis, tempered by the certainty that he will be welcomed into the Kingdom of Heaven with open arms, and a profound respect for his stewardship of the Body of Christ as Servant of the Servants of God.

His papacy has had a profound impact on the Church, particularly his drive towards a Synodal Church, his focus on the Environment in Laudato Si, his emphasis on the Preferential Option for the Poor, his elevation of women to senior positions in the Roman Dicasteries, his commitment to the abolition of the death penalty worldwide, his opposition to the misinterpretation of Christian teaching on the reception and treatment of migrants and refugees, his response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and his openness to other Christian traditions and to other religions.

As LGBT+ Catholics, we particularly remember his remark made while returning from Brazil in July 2013: - "If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?".

The humility, compassion and respect shown in this statement did not, of course, change Catholic teaching on the subject, but marked an important change in tone from that of his predecessors, and we drew great encouragement from it in our mission to take our place in the Body of Christ.

We also drew great encouragement from His Holiness's warm welcome to us during several Audiences with him at the Vatican, as well as from, for example, his ongoing relationship with the trans community in Rome.

We give thanks to Almighty God for the life, hope and faith of Pope Francis, and above all for the gentle, humble love for all which he brought to his role, and we pray for the Fathers of the Conclave who are charged with finding a successor to this wonderful man.

NOTE : LGBT+ Catholics Westminster met Pope Francis on Ash Wednesday 2019, during its 3rd Rome Pilgrimage.



FURTHER INFORMATION:

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