



Office of the Archbishop

## The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

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### STATEMENT OF ROBERT CARDINAL MCELROY ON THE DEATH OF POPE FRANCIS

Today the Church and the world have lost a true shepherd of souls, a beacon of unwavering hope, and a voice of penetrating truth. From the very first moments of his service to the universal Church, Pope Francis enshrined the mercy of God at the heart of his proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In doing so, he illuminated with new depth the pastoral dimension of the Church's mission, which is rooted first in embracing love rather than in judgment.

It is this embracing love which led Pope Francis to be a prophetic advocate for the poor and the dispossessed, the unborn and the immigrant, the victims of war and the earth which is our common home. It was this love also that animated his tender personal care for all those whom he encountered personally in their suffering --- those who saw their life marked by failure, the sick, those suffering from addictions, the incarcerated, those who had lost their way in life. It was in these intimate moments of pastoral care that we saw with such poignancy the heart of the pastor who had embodied mercy and love to the suffering in Buenos Aires and refused to diminish that commitment even when the strictures of the papacy fell upon him.

Pope Francis vision of a synodal Church – the people of God journeying together, nourished by Word and Sacrament, missionary in its outreach, including all and animated by the participation of all, constantly renewing itself in the light of the Gospel – stands as an enduring legacy of Pope Francis in his fidelity to the Second Vatican Council and its call to preach the Gospel in the modern world. It provides a clear foundation for the journey of God's people in the years which are to come.

Yesterday we celebrated the victory of Christ over death itself, and the foundation for our conviction that we live on this earth on a journey that leads to eternity and the loving embrace of our God. Pope Francis lived that journey preaching the Gospel and ennobling the world in which we live. Amidst our sadness at this death, we thank God for the penetrating grace that he has brought among us.