



Victorian Council of Churches

STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF POPE FRANCIS

To the Catholic community, and all people of good will in Victoria,

On Easter Monday, Pope Francis was released from the bondage of this life and born into eternal life in Christ. Here in Victoria, the leaves are now falling, the bright reds and golds of recent days are now turning to brown and grey. So many of the leaves that once shone on the trees now need to be raked up and composted. Autumn this year was brilliant, but not long lasting. In this life, all things pass.

This year, all Christian traditions are united in celebrating the season of Easter together, the time when we celebrate the victory of life over death, of love over hate, and of the light over darkness. In the midst of this celebration, it is most fitting that the Catholic community, as well as Christians of other traditions, mourn together the death of Pope Francis who prayed so often for unity. We do this, asking God to grant him mercy so that his journey onward will be an easy one.

In much of the media, we see long discussions about what the papacy is, what the Pope does, or what he should do. At this time, however, we need to remember that, first and foremost, the Pope is one of us, a sinner in need of God's mercy and salvation. That's why we pray for our brother Francis and for all who mourn his passing.

We do this in the sure and certain hope of Easter. This is a hope that shines brighter than the brightest autumn colour. A hope that does not change with the seasons. A hope that will outlast even the deepest winter.

In the peace of Christ our Saviour,

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Victorian Council of Churches – Member Churches
Anglican Church – Archdiocese of Melbourne, and Dioceses of Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland and Wangaratta;
Antiochian Orthodox Church; Armenian Apostolic Church; Bulgarian Orthodox Church; Churches of Christ; Coptic Orthodox Church;
Greek Orthodox Church; Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East; German Lutheran Trinity Church;
Lutheran Church of Australia; Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church; Mar Thoma Syrian Church; Melbourne Church of South India;
Melbourne Welsh Church; Melkite Catholic Eparchy; Religious Society of Friends; Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne,
Dioceses of Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst; Romanian Orthodox Church; St George Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church; Salvation Army;
Syrian Orthodox Church; Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy; Uniting Church in Australia.