



UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

UST:SO06-00-CI68
A.Y. 2024-2025

TO : THE THOMASIAN COMMUNITY
FROM : OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
RE : PRAYERFUL REMEMBRANCE OF †POPE FRANCIS (1936-2025)
DATE : 22 April 2025

With deep gratitude and profound reverence, the University joins the Universal Church in mourning the passing of our *Lolo Kiko*,

His Holiness
† Pope Francis
(17 December 1936 – 21 April 2025),

whose visit to the University on 18 January 2015 remains a defining moment in our history. In his *Encounter with the Youth*, he encouraged the Thomasians to live with compassion, courage, and faith rooted in action, calling them to see reality with the eyes of the heart. His call to witness mercy and compassion, and his emphasis on dialogue and synodality, deeply resonate with UST's mission "to form competent and compassionate persons committed to serving the Church, the nation, and the global community."

Through *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti*, and his joyful witness, Pope Francis shaped Thomasians to engage with the poor, care for creation, and foster "*a culture of encounter*"¹. Even in his passing, the Thomasian community continues to draw inspiration from the words he spontaneously delivered in Spanish, moved by the testimony of Glyzelle Palomar, who tearfully asked why innocent children suffer from neglect, abuse, and violence—and why God allows such pain despite their innocence: "*She today asked the only question that has no answer. And words were not enough for her—she had to express it with tears. The only answer we can give is by learning to weep.*"²

In prayerful remembrance of the passing of Pope Francis, the University has prepared the following events to honor his life and legacy.

1. [*A Message of Sorrow and Hope*](#) was prayerfully shared through the official University media platforms on the day of Pope Francis' passing, 21 April 2025, honoring his life of humble service and lasting legacy.
2. **University Masses for the Eternal Repose of the Soul of Pope Francis**
 - The Office of the Vice Rector for Religious Affairs (OVRRA) has organized the following:

¹ Written Message of Pope Francis in the University Guest Book, UST, 18 January 2015.

² "*Ella hoy ha hecho la única pregunta que no tiene respuesta. Y no le alcanzaron las palabras: tuvo que decirla con Lágrimas... La única respuesta que se puede dar es aprendiendo a llorar.*" (Pope Francis, UST, 18 January 2015).



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- a. 22 April 2025 (Tuesday), 5:15 pm, at the UST Chapel
- b. 25 April 2025 (Friday), 5:15 pm, also at the Chapel (*Note: tentative; updates will be announced via official social media channels.*)
- Academic units are encouraged to include a special intention for the eternal repose of Pope Francis in their respective community Masses.
3. **Prayer Intentions**
 - OVRRA also organized a *University Rosary for the Eternal Repose of the Soul of Pope Francis* from 23 to 25 April 2025 (Wednesday to Friday), 4:30 pm at the UST Chapel.
 - The Santísimo Rosario Parish-UST has respectfully placed a photo of Pope Francis at the lobby of the UST Chapel to invite Thomasians, parishioners and visitors to pause in prayer and offer intentions for the eternal repose of his soul.
4. **Lighting of University Landmarks**
 - In coordination with the Facilities Management Office, the UST Main Building, Arch of the Centuries, and the Carillon Bells will be lit in violet from 22 April 2025 (Tuesday) to 26 April 2025 (Saturday), 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm, to mark the period of mourning.
5. **Pope Francis Exhibit**
 - In coordination with the UST Museum and the *Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás*, an exhibit of significant memorabilia will be on display, beginning 23 April 2025 (Wednesday), at the UST Main Building Lobby, featuring the following:
 - The papal chair used during his 2015 visit to UST;
 - The original message and signature of Pope Francis in the University Guestbook; and
 - His life-size photo (standee), UST ID card, and other mementos
6. **Laudato Si'-inspired Activities**
 - In partnership with the UST Simbahayan Community Development Office, the following year-round initiatives are inspired by Pope Francis' teachings, particularly *Laudato Si'*:
 - a. Regular Community Service Days (held twice each academic year with an environmental focus);
 - b. ALERTOMAS: Annual Season of Creation (September 1 to the second Sunday of October, culminating in *Araw ng Katutubo* or Indigenous Peoples' Day);
 - c. Advocacy Campaigns with communities affected by ecological and developmental challenges;
 - d. Partnerships & Networking with various environmental organizations & advocates; and
 - e. Participation of students, academic staff, administrators, and support staff in ecological actions and events.
7. **Social Media Engagements**
 - Thomasians are encouraged to share their reflections and experiences in light of the Pope's passing using the hashtags: **#PopeFrancisUST #USTlovesLoloKiko**
8. **Media Productions**
 - The University will facilitate interviews with select members of the Thomasian community to share personal reflections and insights from their personal encounters with Pope Francis.



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Final Rites and Period of Mourning

According to [Vatican News](#), the remains of Pope Francis will be transferred from Casa Santa Marta to St. Peter's Basilica on Wednesday, April 23 at 9:00 am (Rome time), where the remains will lie in state until his funeral on Saturday, April 26 at 10:00 am (Rome time).

The Funeral Mass will be presided over by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Dean of the College of Cardinals, and concelebrated by Church leaders from around the world. It will conclude with the *Ultima Commendatio* (Final Commendation) and *Valedictio* (Farewell), marking the start of the *Novemdiales*—nine days of mourning and Masses for the repose of the Holy Father. Pope Francis will be laid to rest at the Basilica of St. Mary Major.

Closing Note: A Shepherd Who Walked with Us

After the Super Typhoon Yolanda, Pope Francis stood in the rain in Tacloban and said, *"I'm here to be with you—a little bit late, but I'm here."* During the pandemic, he walked alone through St. Peter's Square, raising the Blessed Sacrament and praying, *"Lord, do not leave us at the mercy of the storm."* On the eve of his passing, frail but faithful, he offered one final blessing on Easter Sunday: *"Christ is risen, and with Him, our hope is born anew."*

Pope Francis showed us that to be Christian is to be present—in the storm, in the silence, and at the limits of one's strength. Now, the humble servant returns to the embrace of the Risen One. Yet his voice lives on—with the poor, the suffering, and all who dare to hope.

Gracias, Santo Padre. You were here. And even in silence, you still speak.

**Eternal rest grant unto Pope Francis, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in peace. Amen.**

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FR. LOUIE R. CORONEL, O.P.
Secretary-General