Dear Friends in Christ,

This past week, the Catholic Church and the entire world received the sorrowful news of the death of Pope Francis, our Holy Father. His passing marks the end of a remarkable papacy—one that inspired not only Catholics, but countless people across religions, cultures, and nations. His was a pontificate marked by simplicity, courage, tenderness, and a prophetic call to mercy.

As the Mother Church of the Diocese of Phoenix, St. Mary’s Basilica bears a special responsibility in moments like these. We are called to mourn, to give thanks, and to lift our voices in prayer—not only on behalf of our parish, but on behalf of the whole local Church. It is fitting that we do so in this Easter season, when we proclaim with renewed hope the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As Pope Francis reminded us again and again, the Risen Christ is the face of God’s mercy.

In the coming days, we will be offering special Masses, prayers, and opportunities for remembrance. I invite you to join us not only in honoring Pope Francis, but in renewing our commitment to the Gospel he loved and preached with such integrity: a Gospel that goes to the margins, that lifts the poor, that forgives the sinner, and that proclaims joyfully that Christ is alive.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.

With you in hope,

Fr. John Muir

Pastor and Rector

St. Mary’s Basilica