

Unofficial Translation

Amid the Easter joy that proclaims to us the victory of life over death, we accompany our dear Pope Francis with faith and prayer on his journey to the house of the Heavenly Father.

I recall my personal experience of meeting him when, as a young bishop, I came to Argentina to serve the faithful of our Church. Cardinal Bergoglio received me as a true father and friend, helping me overcome pastoral challenges in the country that was his earthly homeland. He remembered with great gratitude the Ukrainian bishop Stepan Chmil, who opened our Church to him and told him about its path of martyrdom during the times of persecution by the communist regime.

On behalf of the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC, our clergy, monastics, and laity, I express my condolences on the passing of His Holiness Francis into eternity. I thank God for the gift of his life and ministry, for his many efforts to end the war in Ukraine, his constant calls for a just peace, and his paternal closeness to the “martyred” Ukrainian people. With prayerful gratitude, I recall the Pope’s willingness to help in various difficult situations, especially when it came to our captive and deported children. When the powerful of this world did not want to hear his calls for peace, he walked on the periphery of modern human life, revealing to him a merciful and loving God.

May the risen Christ open the doors of his Kingdom to the newly departed Servant of the Servants of God Pope Francis, grant him eternal rest, where there is no pain, no sorrow, no sighing.

Eternal memory! Christ is risen!