



# The MESSAGE

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## Bishop celebrates Memorial Mass for Pope Francis

By JOHN ROHLF

The Message assistant editor

Members of the diocesan community filled Sacred Heart Church in Evansville Monday night for a Memorial Mass for Pope Francis.

Bishop Siegel celebrated the Mass April 28, seven days after Pope Francis' death. Concelebrants for the Mass were Father John Boeglin, senior priest of the diocese; Father Ray Brenner, senior priest of the diocese; Father Christopher Droste, pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Evansville; Father Ryan Hilderbrand, pastor of St. Philip Parish in Mount Vernon; Father Vargheese Kalaparakudi, parochial vicar of St. John the Baptist Parish in Newburgh; Father Bill Nicholas, administrator of Corpus Christi Parish in Evansville; Father Juan Ramirez, parochial vicar of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Washington; Father Tyler Tenbarger, diocesan director of vocations; and Father Lowell Will, senior priest of the diocese. Transitional Deacon Nick Biever and Deacon Dan Niemeier assisted during the Mass.



Bishop Joseph M. Siegel reads the Prayer after Communion during the Memorial Mass for Pope Francis April 28 at Sacred Heart Church in Evansville.

During his homily, Bishop Siegel said it was hard to believe it was just a week prior to the Memorial Mass that we awoke with the surprising news of the passing of Pope Francis, who was 88 years old. While we knew the pope was in frail health, the pope's death seemed sudden, he said.

Bishop Siegel said that if our first reaction when hearing of Pope Francis' death was sadness, he



Several diocesan priests served as concelebrants during the Memorial Mass.

The Message photos by John Rohlf

thinks our second reaction was gratitude. For just over 12 years, Pope Francis led the church with courage and love and challenged the church not to be inward looking but to always be on a mission, intent on serving the gospel, he said. Bishop Siegel noted just as Peter led the 11 apostles in proclaiming the gospel in the first reading in the Acts of the

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## Poor and powerful pray for eternal repose of a pope 'with an open heart'

OSV News photo/Vatican Media

At right, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, blesses the coffin as he leads the funeral Mass of Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 26.

CNS photo/Lola Gomez

Pallbearers, far right, carry the casket of Pope Francis into the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome April 26, ahead of his burial. The pope requested to be buried in the Marian basilica following his funeral Mass at the Vatican.



By CINDY WOODEN

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis was "a pope among the people, with an open heart toward everyone," said Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, as he presided over the funeral of the pope, who died April 21 at the age of 88.

And the people — an estimated 200,000 of them — were present as 14 pallbearers carried Pope Francis' casket into St. Peter's Square and set it on a carpet in front of the altar for the funeral Mass April 26.

His burial was scheduled for later the same day in Rome's Basilica of St. Mary Major after being driven in a motorcade through the center of the city where he served as bishop from the day of his election to the papacy March 13, 2013.

Security around the Vatican was tight, not only because of the number

of mourners expected but especially because of the presence of kings, queens, presidents — including U.S. President Donald J. Trump — and prime ministers from more than 80 countries and official representatives from scores of other nations.

Also present were the residents of a Vatican palace Pope Francis had turned into a shelter for the homeless and the 12 Syrian refugees he brought to Rome with him from a refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos in 2016.

The Gospel reading at the funeral was John 21:15-19 where the Risen Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" And when Peter says yes, Jesus tells him, "Feed my sheep."

"Despite his frailty and suffering toward the end, Pope Francis chose to follow this path of self-giving until the last day of his earthly life,"



Cardinal Re said in his homily. "He followed in the footsteps of his Lord, the Good Shepherd, who loved his sheep to the point of giving his life for them."

The 91-year-old cardinal told the crowd that the image of Pope Francis that "will remain etched in our memory" was his appearance on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica the day before he died to give his Easter blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) and then to ride in the popemobile among the people who had come to celebrate Christ's victory over death.

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