

Local leaders reflect on passing of Pope Francis at 88

By **Sam Odrowski and Brock Weir**

Catholics and religious people around the world are mourning the death of Pope Francis.

He passed away at 88 years old on Easter Monday, April 21.

A stroke and subsequent heart failure resulted in Pope Francis's death according to a statement from the Vatican.

Leaders around the world have issued statements or made social media posts reflecting on the legacy, life and loss of Pope Francis.

Locally, several leaders shared comments on the pope's passing.

"I offer my condolences to the Catholic community of Dufferin-Caledon and all Catholics around the world on Pope Francis' passing," said Dufferin-Caledon incumbent Conservative candidate Kyle Seeback. "The leadership displayed by His Holiness has been an inspiration to millions.

"My prayers are with all Catholics during this difficult time, as we all reflect on his many contributions and legacy, including his historic apology for residential schools in Canada," Seeback added.

Senior pastor at the Uptown Church in Orangeville, Matthew McLean, noted his surprise regarding the announcement of Pope Francis's death.

"I was especially shocked to hear of Pope Francis's passing after seeing him ministering publicly the day before on Easter Sunday (April 20)," said Pastor Matthew McLean.

"Pope Francis death happening at the end of a holiday (Holy Day), one that celebrates the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus is much to take in. To be 88 years of age and fighting to fulfill your ministry right to the end is a challenge for us all."

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones noted her sympathy for people impacted by the pope's death.

"I extend my deepest condolences to all those in Dufferin-Caledon who are mourning the loss of Pope Francis. His unwavering dedication to kindness will always serve as an inspiration, and his global leadership will never be forgotten," she told the Citizen.

Mayor Annette Groves, in a social media post, said she was "saddened" by the Pontiff's death and described him as "a spiritual leader with compassion and faith."

Added the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board: "Pope Francis served as a beacon of compassion, humility, and unwavering faith. His profound commitment to social justice, care for the poor and marginalized, care for creation and tireless advocacy for peace and reconciliation touched the hearts of millions and inspired countless lives around the globe. His legacy of kindness, inclusivity, and servant leadership will continue to resonate within the Catholic Church and beyond for generations to come.

"In remembrance and as a sign of mourning, all flags at DPCDSB schools and facilities will be flown at half-staff. We offer our prayers for the eternal repose of Pope Francis and for the global Catholic community during this time of mourning. May perpetual light shine upon him and may he rest in eternal peace with our loving and merciful God."

Pope Francis's body was held at the chapel of Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican guesthouse where he lived during his papacy before being moved to St. Peter's Basilica on Wednesday (April 23). His body will be kept at St. Peter's Basilica for three days, while

cardinals and members of the public pay their respect.

Pope Francis's funeral will be held outdoors on Saturday, April 26, beginning at 10 a.m., in St. Peter's Square.