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**DIOCESE OF
ROCKFORD**

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PRESS RELEASE

Bishop Malloy's Statement on the Death of Pope Francis

ROCKFORD—Bishop David J. Malloy, Bishop of the Rockford Diocese, today issued a statement on the death of the Holy Father Pope Francis, praying for the repose of his soul. Here is the full statement.

“With the news today of the death of Pope Francis, I join with the faithful of the Diocese of Rockford and with the Church throughout the world that mourns his passing. For the past 12 years, he has carried out the singular task entrusted to each of the Successors of St. Peter. That is, in union with the teaching of Christ, to be a witness to the Catholic faith and a source of unity for the faithful.

“Pope Francis, by living and preaching simply, sought to remind the world of the love of God and the love we must have for each other. He sought to raise up the plight of the poor and of refugees and immigrants, especially those fleeing violence and oppression. Pope Francis reminded the world of the goodness and sacredness of creation and the environment. But he reminded us as well that the human person is the highest good of creation and that we are the special recipients of God's love. For that reason, he was a tireless witness of the right to life of the child in the womb and of those close to death. He emphasized the gift of gender given to every person as part of creation, and its link to the family.

“During his Pontificate, many have sought to label the pontiff in political terms of being liberal or conservative. But because he fulfilled his papal calling as a witness to faith, those who sought to impose political categories upon his pontificate have been disappointed. In reality, Pope Francis was liberal with his love for God and conservative in keeping the teachings of the faith constant and consistent with the teaching of Jesus Himself.

“His life and vocation have been a lesson to the world in this moment and will be cause for reflection for years to come. The current Jubilee Year, with its theme stressing Christian Hope, will be a final testament to the legacy of Pope Francis.

“I pray for the repose of the soul of the Holy Father. And I offer my prayers now for the Cardinals of the Catholic Church who will soon gather to select the next Successor of St. Peter who will begin his own service, faithfully teaching and witnessing to Jesus Christ.”

NOTE: Bishop Malloy will celebrate a special Mass for the intention of Pope Francis on Friday, April 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Peter. All priests of the diocese and the public are invited to celebrate this Mass.

Established in 1908, the Diocese of Rockford is comprised of 105 parishes in Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Kane, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties in Northern Illinois serving a Catholic population of more than 300,000. For more about the Catholic Diocese of Rockford visit www.rockforddiocese.org.