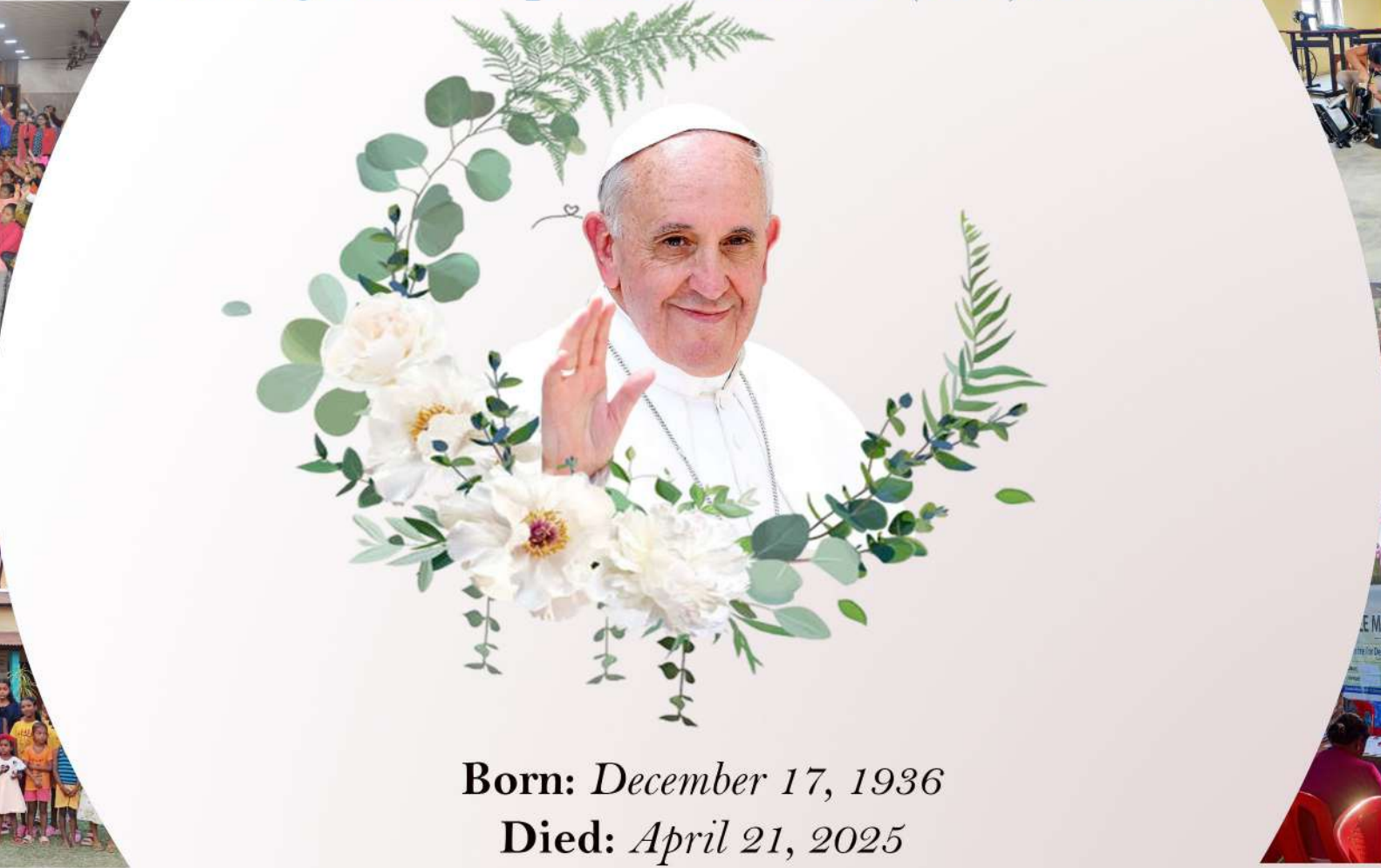


Date  
26<sup>th</sup> April 2025

*Special Edition Newsletter*

**A Shepherd's Legacy: In Loving Memory of Pope Francis in Mission with the Poor**  
*Centre for Development Initiatives (CDI), MSMHC*



**Born:** *December 17, 1936*  
**Died:** *April 21, 2025*

*A shepherd to millions, a voice for peace and a humble servant of God.  
His legacy of compassion, justice and care for the marginalized will forever guide our hearts.*

**May He Rest In Eternal Peace.**



# The Pope's Vision – CDI in His Footsteps

*The Pope's words were not meant for lofty halls alone — they were spoken for the marginalized, the forgotten and those at the periphery of society. Through our work, we endeavour to amplify his voice where it matters most.*

## His vision -Our Work

### 1) Promotion of Women's Rights and Empowerment

CDI's work to promote women's leadership, rights, and access to opportunities echoes his call for inclusion, respect and equity for all women.

### 2) Child Rights and Child Protection

CDI's commitment to child protection and development reflects Pope Francis' deep compassion for children — especially those suffering from abuse, poverty or neglect.

### 3) Economic Empowerment through livelihood promotion

By supporting sustainable livelihoods, CDI upholds the Pope's belief in dignified work as a path out of poverty and into hope.

### 4) Youth Empowerment through Skill Development

CDI's focus on equipping youth with skills and purpose honors Pope Francis' enduring advocacy for the education, employment, and moral formation of young people.

### 5) Healthcare and Health Promotion

CDI's initiatives in health promotion align with Pope Francis' vision of a just world where healthcare is not a privilege, but a right.

### 6) Environmental care and Sustainability

CDI's work in promoting sustainability and eco-conscious practices is a reflection of his plea to care for the planet and all its inhabitants.





# From Grief to Grace, Our Hearts Speak

**"A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just."**

**Pope Francis**

**Dear Readers,**

*It is with profound reverence and sorrow, we remember our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, whose passing away from among us on the 21 April, 2025, marks the end of a radiant chapter in the life of the Church, and the beginning of a legacy that will endure for generations. His papacy was a luminous witness to the Gospel lived with courage, tenderness, and uncompromising love for the poor and the forgotten.*

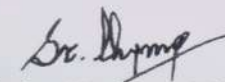
*Pope Francis taught us that mercy is not weakness, but the very strength of God. He reminded us that the Church must be a field hospital - close to the wounds of the world, never distant from human suffering. His voice echoed across continents, calling us to protect creation, to lift up the downtrodden, and to walk together with humility and joy.*

*To the Centre for Development Initiatives and all who serve the margins of society, the Holy Father was not only an inspiration but a fellow pilgrim. His vision of a Church that "goes forth" has stirred your mission, encouraging tireless work for justice, dignity, and inclusion. In your works, his vision finds concrete expression - through empowerment, compassion, and the daily act of seeing Christ in each person.*

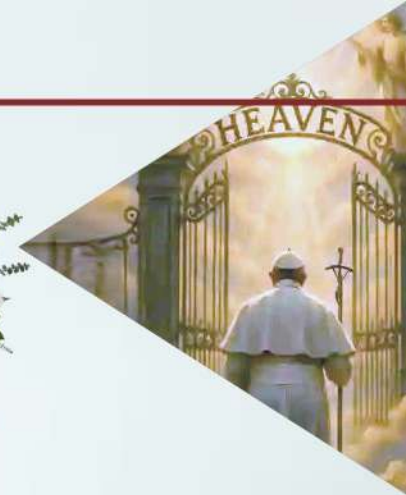
*As we mourn his passing, we also celebrate his life - a life poured out in service to humanity and to the dream of a world where no one is invisible.*

**O God of mercy and love,  
We thank You for the life of Pope Francis,  
A shepherd who walked with his people,  
A prophet who spoke truth in love,  
A father who embraced the outcast.  
Grant him eternal rest in Your radiant presence.  
And may his legacy ignite our hearts  
To serve with joy, to lead with humility,  
And to love without limits.**

**-Amen.**



**-Sr. Christine Mynsong MSMHC  
Superior General**



*Let us be instruments of  
compassion, embracing  
every individual with  
respect and kindness.  
Together, may we forge  
ahead in building a  
world where justice and  
peace form the  
foundation of our shared  
humanity.*



# From Grief to Grace, Our Hearts Speak

## *Mercy and Mission – The Transformative Legacy of Pope Francis Inspiring Compassionate Service and Gospel-Centered Action in a Wounded World.*

*When he bent his head to receive the prayers and blessings of the people gathered in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis told the world—without speaking a word—that he was a different kind of pope. That simple act, performed just moments after his election, resonated deeply. It was not a gesture aimed at media attention, though many sceptics interpreted it that way. It was, instead, the outward expression of an inward reality: Pope Francis, like his Master Jesus Christ, came not to be served, but to serve.*

*Unlike his predecessor Benedict XVI, known for his intellectual and systematic theology, Francis brought to the papacy a theology rooted in daily life, in a way, complementing the deeply theological teachings of his predecessor with real life reflections of God's love in action. He was not a towering academic, but a practical theologian whose ideas were forged in the fires of pastoral ministry. The foundational pillars of his theology were mercy, hope, and the boundless love of the Father. His focus was not abstract doctrine, but the lived experiences of ordinary people—their pains, struggles, and silent sufferings. Pope Francis, in *The Joy of the Gospel*, reminds us that faith is not a burden but a source of deep joy. He urges everyone—especially simple, everyday people—to live with hope, kindness, and compassion. His message is clear: share love through small acts—help a neighbour, listen with patience, forgive freely. True evangelization begins not with words, but with a smile, a warm heart, and humble service. He wanted the Church to grow by attraction, rather. Francis teaches that God walks with us in daily life, and that holiness is found not in perfection, but in love lived simply and sincerely. Faith, he says, should always lift, never weigh down.*

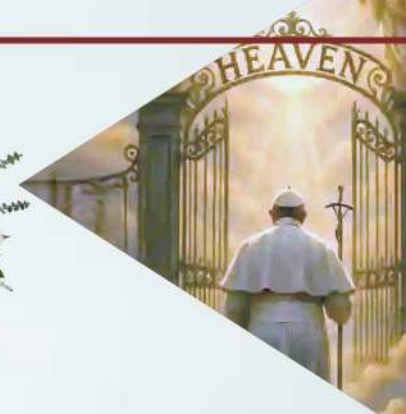
*From the beginning of his pontificate, Francis made it clear that the Church must be a field hospital after battle, not an institution obsessed with rules and regulations. He stepped away from the traditional papal palace and chose to live in the simpler Vatican guesthouse. He washed the feet of prisoners, including Muslims and women, on Holy Thursday—a powerful act that broke with centuries of tradition. These gestures weren't symbolic flourishes; they were deeply sacramental actions, grounded in the Gospel.*

*One striking incident that epitomized his theology occurred in 2013, during his visit to the island of Lampedusa. There, he mourned with African migrants who had risked—and in many cases lost—their lives crossing the Mediterranean in search of safety and dignity. He threw a wreath into the sea and celebrated Mass with a chalice made from a refugee's boat. This moment was not about policy or politics; it was about presence. It was mercy made flesh.*

*Another powerful moment was his encounter with a severely disfigured man in St. Peter's Square. Pope Francis embraced him tightly, his face unflinching and warm. That image circled the globe—not as a photo-op, but as a living parable. It spoke more than any homily: that every person, no matter how broken or scarred, is worthy of love and dignity. Closely following, came the document *Fratelli Tutti*, calling the world to a true sense of fraternity, and offered a bold response to rising fundamentalism and division. It teaches that all people are brothers and sisters, regardless of race, religion, or nationality. In a world fractured by exclusion and fear, Francis called for dialogue over dogma, encounter over isolation. He rejected closed ideologies that breed hatred and violence, urging instead a culture of peace, compassion, and mutual respect. The encyclical challenges us to build bridges, not walls, and to seek truth through love and solidarity. *Fratelli Tutti* reminds us that humanity's future depends on fraternity.*

*His emphasis on climate justice, especially in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, reflected his belief that care of creation is a matter of faith. It was a theology that included not just the soul, but the soil—affirming that the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one and the same. No other leaders thought so deeply about the urgency of care for creation than Pope Francis.*

*In all these actions, Pope Francis taught less with words and more with his life. His daily Masses were filled with homilies that spoke to the heart, not the head. He was a man of deep prayer and profound humility, and through his authenticity, he reminded the Church that the essence of faith is love in action—just as it was for Christ.*



**-Sr. Lisa Elavunkal MSMHC  
Director, CDI**



# From Grief to Grace, Our Hearts Speak

## POPE FRANCIS LEAVES BEHIND A PATH FOR US

As the world says goodbye to this remarkable shepherd, his life continues to echo through every act of compassion, every stand for justice, and every migrant who finds a home. We join people everywhere in mourning for him, who became a symbol of hope, both in his person and in his ministry.

Pope Francis leaves behind a path not paved in power or prestige, but in humility, compassion, and courage. His leadership was never about holding on to tradition for tradition's sake, but about returning to the heart of the Gospel: love of neighbor, mercy for the broken, and justice for the poor.

His life was a radiant testimony of service, humility, mercy, and a profound love for everyone. In his last message, just hours before his death, Pope Francis once again turned our gaze outward—to the stranger, the foreigner, the forgotten: "On this day, I would like us to once again have hope and trust in others... with customs, ways of life, ideas and habits different from our own because we are all children of God." This final benediction is more than a farewell; it is a commission.

Pope Francis challenged us to be the Voice of the Voiceless. He challenged the comfortable, uplifted the forgotten, and called every one of us to live more simply, more honestly, and more freely in service of others. The path he leaves behind is not easy, but it is holy. It is a path of listening deeply, speaking kindly, and living boldly—rooted not in fear, but in love. Now, the journey is ours.

Will ever remember Pope Francis, for walking with the poor, for building bridges, for loving without limits. May his legacy continue to inspire millions of people in the world. Rest in peace, Holy Father. Your mission continues in us.

**-Sr. Teresa Salemthangi MSMHC  
Asst. Director & Finance Head, CDI**

*May our lives echo his call to serve the forgotten,  
welcome the stranger, and lift up the brokenhearted.  
May his final blessing become our daily mission:  
to build a world rooted not in fear, but in hope,  
mercy, and boundless compassion.*





# From Grief to Grace, Our Hearts Speak

## Empowering Youth through Skill Development & Quality Education

In an era marked by rapid socio-economic changes and shifting job market demands, the need for adaptive, inclusive, and value-based education has never been greater. The Centre for Development Initiatives (CDI) has responded to this call by championing Bridge Courses and Skill Development Training Programs that serve as vital instruments in reversing the decline of skilled labour—particularly among the underserved populations of Assam and Northeast India.

Rooted in the spirit of Pope Francis' vision for young people—one that upholds the dignity of every individual and calls for integral human development—CDI's mission is to nurture hope through education and empowerment. Echoing his appeal to "dream big and act courageously," CDI places marginalized youth, women, and children at the heart of its efforts, helping them become protagonists of their own future. Aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)—CDI has crafted inclusive pathways that uplift the most vulnerable, transforming education into a means of liberation and social justice.

To date, 387 youth and women have benefited from CDI's programs, which go beyond technical instruction. These initiatives integrate digital literacy, soft skills, and entrepreneurial training, equipping participants with the tools to become job-ready, self-reliant, and socially conscious citizens.

CDI's approach transcends conventional education by fostering a holistic ecosystem of learning. Through hands-on experience, mentorship, and real-time industry exposure, the organization ensures that young people are not only trained but truly empowered—capable of navigating through and contributing meaningfully to a rapidly evolving world. Ultimately, CDI's work embodies Pope Francis' call to "build bridges, not walls," as it strives to close the gap between opportunity and access, paving the way for a more inclusive, compassionate, and just society.

**-John Gautam Rabha  
Business Planner, CDI**



*May our efforts to educate  
and uplift the young be  
guided by wisdom,  
compassion and the  
unwavering hope and believe  
that every life has the power  
to transform the world.*





# From Grief to Grace, Our Hearts Speak

## A Tribute to Pope Francis – The People's Pope

Pope Francis, lovingly known as the "People's Pope," leaves behind a profound and lasting legacy. His life was defined by humility, simplicity, and a deep commitment to caring for the most vulnerable, especially migrants and refugees. Through his actions and words, he became a beacon of compassion, bringing comfort to the forgotten and strength to the displaced.

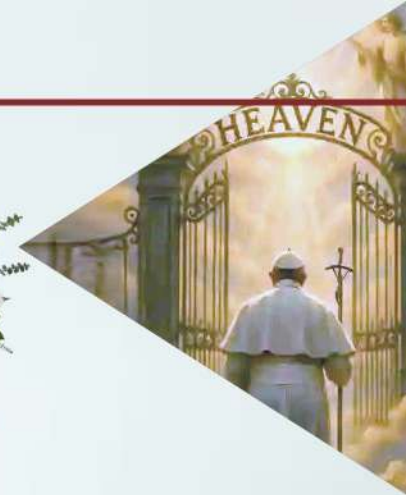
Pope Francis embodied the Gospel with his constant acts of mercy and justice. He urged the world to welcome migrants not out of mere charity, but with recognition of their inherent dignity and the many contributions they bring to host societies. He reminded us that migration is not a choice but a necessity, often driven by conflict, poverty, or persecution. In every migrant, Pope Francis saw the face of Christ, and he called for a world united in solidarity and compassion, especially for those fleeing their homes.

His papacy also carried a prophetic call for environmental stewardship. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis raised the urgent issue of environmental degradation and the need for sustainable living, reminding humanity of its power to rise above its flaws and rebuild a better world:

*"All is not lost. Human beings... are capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start."*

At the Centre for Development Initiatives (CDI), we are deeply inspired by Pope Francis's unwavering commitment to human dignity. His example encourages us to view the migrant not only through a spiritual lens but as part of a shared human responsibility. His leadership, moral clarity, and unwavering compassion have made an indelible mark on the world. As we continue his work, we are called to embrace the vulnerable as members of one global family, holding his vision of love, empathy, and shared humanity close to our hearts. In doing so, we keep his legacy alive, nurturing a world grounded in justice and compassion.

**-Chihanphi Ruth Luiram  
Project Manager, CDI**



*May we embrace all with  
love, dignity, and compassion,  
and work together to build a  
world rooted in justice, peace  
and shared humanity.*





# A Prayer and A Promise – Moving Forward as Pilgrims of Hope

*"May His Light Guide Our Steps"*

*God of mercy and compassion, you have given us Pope Francis, a shepherd who loves your people and follows your Son with unwavering faith, walks with the poor, speaks for the forgotten, and shows us how to love without limits. Lord, help us to walk in his footsteps, to listen to the 'cry of the earth, cry of the poor' and to defend the dignity of every person. Inspire us to imitate his joyful love and dedication to serving the poor and marginalized. May we, like him, be instruments of peace and bring your love to the world. Grant us the strength to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respond with compassion and understanding, just as he does. -Amen*

*His journey on Earth is complete. Ours begins a new, with his spirit beside us.*