

The Archbishop of Kigali and President of the Council of Catholic Bishops in Rwanda, Cardinal Antoine Kambanda, has announced that the Catholic Church in Rwanda is saddened by the death of the Shepherd of the Universal Church, Pope Francis.

The death of Pope Francis was announced on Easter Monday morning at 7:35 AM, when Cardinal Kevin Farrell released a statement saying that the Pope had “returned to the house of the Father.”

In a message of condolence broadcast on the Catholic television station (Pacis TV), he stated that His Holiness Pope Francis was characterized by humility and love for the vulnerable.

He said, “We are deeply saddened to inform you of the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome and the Supreme Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world.”

He continued, “It saddens us. He was a Shepherd who loved people, who loved God. He had a profound love for God. He also loved people, especially the poor, the unknown, and those in danger.”

Antoine Cardinal Kambanda stated that Pope Francis has left Catholic Christians and all people with a good example of a true teacher.

He said, “He has left us a good example and a great legacy as a true teacher in the likeness of Jesus Christ. We pray that God receives him, that he rests in peace in the house of the Father, in eternal life.”

On Easter Sunday, he had joined in the Mass with the Christians of Rome, blessing them.

Pope Francis became the Shepherd of the Catholic Church in 2013, the first South American to hold that office.

On March 23, 2025, Pope Francis was discharged from the hospital after spending nearly a month and a half receiving treatment for respiratory issues.

Pope Francis passed away after 12 years of leading the Catholic Church worldwide, having been enthroned in March 2013, succeeding Pope Benedict XVI, who had resigned.

He was born on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to immigrant parents of Italian origin. His birth name was Jorge Mario Bergoglio, and he had four siblings.

He studied at the Villa Devoto seminary before entering the Society of Jesus in 1958.

Pope Francis also studied humanities in Chile before returning to his native country to study theology.

He was ordained a priest on December 13, 1969, and rose through the ranks until in 1973 he was appointed provincial superior of the Society of Jesus, he became Archbishop of Buenos Aires in Argentina, before Pope John Paul II made him a cardinal in 2001.