

Pope Francis's Last Day  
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Pope Francis's last day sums up his commitments.

His final official words found in his [\*"Urbi et Orbi"\* blessing](#), read on Easter from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, reprise the best of his pontificate. He bemoans "How much contempt is stirred up at times towards the vulnerable, the marginalized, and migrants!" He lists the armed conflicts that are offenses against humanity and creation. He urges countries instead to redirect "resources ... to help the needy, to fight hunger and to encourage initiatives that promote development. These are the 'weapons' of peace: weapons that build the future, instead of sowing seeds of death!" He references this time of year, "[M]ay Easter ... be a fitting occasion for the liberation of prisoners of war and political prisoners!" Also, "Easter is the celebration of life! God created us for life and wants the human family to rise again! In his eyes, every life is precious! The life of a child in the mother's womb, as well as the lives of the elderly and the sick, who in more and more countries are looked upon as people to be discarded."

For Pope Francis, Easter opposes fear. "I appeal to all those in positions of political responsibility in our world not to yield to the logic of fear which only leads to isolation from others." He's a realist and agrees that "Evil has not disappeared from history; it will remain until the end." Indeed, he often acknowledged his own failures and regularly asked his audience to pray for him as he would for them. For Pope Francis, however, evil "no longer has the upper hand; it no longer has power over those who accept the grace of this day."

Just as inspiring were his actions. He was committed to encounter and to listening, and he embodied that on his last day. Earlier this year, U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance stated that the Catholic perspective on *ordo amoris* (the order of love) calls for prioritizing those closest to us and justifies canceling foreign aid programs that support the suffering distant from the U.S. In a [letter to U.S. Bishops](#), Pope Francis responded that the "true *ordo amoris* that must be promoted is that which we discover by meditating constantly on the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' (cf. Lk 10:25-37), that is, by meditating on the love that builds a fraternity open to all, without exception." Despite their pointed and public disagreement, Pope Francis held a short but cordial meeting with the Vice President on his last day. Yet, Pope Francis's interests extended beyond the powerful. In his final public actions, he gave a short blessing from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to the Easter throngs gathered before him and then made his way one last time in his Pope Mobile through St. Peter's Square.

The most frequently occurring word in his Easter “*Urbi et Orbi*” blessing (besides words such as “the,” “a,” “and,” etc.) is “hope.” He urges us to live not in fear but in hope, as if “Love has triumphed over hatred, light over darkness[,] ... truth over falsehood[, and f]orgiveness ... over revenge.” What an inspiring summary of his life’s work; what a challenging invitation to action!