

# *Walking with Francis*

A Journey of Gratitude,  
Grief, and Gospel Hope

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**RENEW**  
International

# Introduction: Remembering Francis—Living the Legacy

In every age, the Holy Spirit raises up a shepherd who helps the Church hear the Gospel anew. In Pope Francis, we were given not just a pope but also a pastor—a man who walked with the wounded, spoke with the boldness of the prophets, and smiled with the joy that comes from Christ.

His papacy was not about perfection but about presence. He reminded us that God’s mercy is bigger than our mistakes; that the Church’s doors must always be open; and that joy, even in struggle, is a sign of the Spirit at work. He challenged us to care for creation as a sacred trust and to draw near to the poor—not out of pity but out of shared dignity.

Now that his earthly journey is complete, we pause not only to grieve but also to give thanks. And more importantly, to carry the mission forward.

This four-session faith-sharing guide is a gift from RENEW International to all who wish to reflect, remember, and recommit. Through prayer, scripture, the words of Pope Francis, and shared conversation, we honor a life well lived—and we step into the dream he dared to imagine.

A Church of mercy.

A people of joy.

A world of justice.

And a future foreseen with hope.

- Meredith



# Session 4 - The Race is Finished, the Dream Endures



## Opening Prayer

*God of every season, you called your servant Francis to walk humbly, love boldly, and dream with you for a Church renewed. Now that his earthly race is finished, help us to carry forward what he began—a dream of mercy, of justice, of joy, of a Church with open doors and open hearts. May his words echo in our lives. May his witness live on in our choices. And may the work of your Spirit continue through us. We pray in the name of Jesus, who calls each of us to run the race set before us. Amen.*



## Scripture: 2 Timothy 4: 6-8 (I have finished the race...)

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”



## Wisdom of Pope Francis

*“No one is saved alone; we are either saved together or not at all.”*  
–Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*



## Reflection: The Audacity of Joy

In his final years, Pope Francis often spoke of “dreaming together”—dreaming of a Church that listens, that welcomes, that walks with the wounded. He dreamt of a world where fraternity replaces fear, and where tenderness reshapes power.

He did not live that dream in ease. With remarkable grace, he bore criticism, frailty, loneliness, and the weight of leadership. Yet through it all, he never lost the joy of the Gospel or the fire of his mission.

Like St. Paul, Francis can now say,

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”  
(2 Timothy 4:7)

But his dream was never meant to end with him. It was always meant to be passed on. We are that legacy. We are the continuation of his hope, the next verse of the song he began to sing.

Pope Francis taught us that holiness is not perfection, but closeness to Christ and compassion for the world. His dream is not a blueprint—it’s a way of living. And the invitation is now ours: to walk, to accompany, to proclaim, to hope.



## Faith-Sharing Questions

1. What part of Pope Francis' legacy do you feel most called to carry forward?
2. How has his life and message changed your understanding of the Church?
3. What does it mean for you to run the race and keep the dream alive?

## Invitation to Action

- Write a letter or prayer to Pope Francis—sharing what his witness has meant to you and how you will carry it forward. Keep it as a spiritual commitment.
- Gather others to continue his dream. Consider forming or joining a small group in your parish or neighborhood focused on accompaniment, social justice, care of creation, or joyful faith-sharing.

## Closing Prayer

*Holy Spirit, you stirred the heart of Jorge Mario Bergoglio and raised him up as Francis—a brother to the poor, a voice for the forgotten, a dreamer of a Church reborn. Now that he has returned to you, we give thanks for his life poured out in love. Let his legacy take root in us. Let his gospel joy be our strength. Let his dream become our mission. And may we, like him, live in hope, walk in mercy, and finish our race with love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

