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**4/21/25    STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF POPE FRANCIS FROM ROB MCCANN, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES EASTERN WASHINGTON**

SPOKANE. WASH. --

The news of our Holy Father’s death today has saddened the world. We have lost a healer and peacemaker, an apostle of mercy and an inspirational leader who showed us the face of humanity at its best.

From the moment Pope Francis stepped out onto the balcony of St. Peter’s to greet the world for the first time as Bishop of Rome to his last breath, he inspired millions with his example of humility and the power of simple gestures. He left the world with striking images that spoke to us as directly and powerfully as any encyclical.

Equally forceful and gentle, he never tired in his quest to make ours a Church of and for those on the margins. He offered them the promise of God’s loving embrace and comfort, but to those who caused suffering or were indifferent to it, he offered forceful, prophetic words to encourage conversion.

Of course, as a Catholic Charities organization, we have felt blessed by a Pope who championed people in need.  He was a Pope who was the living embodiment of our Mission Statement here at Catholic Charities Eastern Washington:  Feed the Hungry.  Heal the Hurting.  Welcome the Stranger.  His example inspired us many years ago, to name our affordable housing project in Spokane Valley, "Pope Francis Haven" in honor of the Holy Father.  He was an amazng champion for life and for the poor, the vulnerable, the forgotten and the discarded from what he called, "the throw away culture."

On a personal note, The Pope's call for all of us to "be a field hospital for the poor" and his direction to us to "go out into the streets and come back smelling of the sheep" have been deeply meaningful for my own life, my own faith and my own role as CEO of Catholic Charities.

There will be ample time to reflect on the legacy of Pope Francis’s pontificate, but for now let us cherish the memory of a simple, holy man —a fellow pilgrim on the journey to the Father’s house. As he asked of everyone he met, let us pray for him.

Dr. Robert J. McCann

President and CEO, Catholic Charities Eastern Washington

**About Catholic Charities Eastern Washington**

Catholic Charities Eastern Washington works every day to Feed the hungry, Heal the hurting and Welcome the Stranger. CCEWU collaborates with parishes and the greater community to serve and advocate for those who are vulnerable, bringing stability, dignity and hope to people throughout Eastern Washington.

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