



**His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster**  
**President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales**

21<sup>st</sup> April 2025

*"Surely we belong to God, and to Him shall we return." (Qur'an, 2:156)*

**Condolences on the Passing of His Holiness Pope Francis**

Your Eminence,

It is with profound sorrow that I extend my heartfelt condolences on the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. On behalf of the Al-Khoei Foundation and the wider Shi'a Muslim community, I convey my deepest sympathies to Your Eminence, the Holy See, and the Catholic world at this time of immense loss.

Pope Francis was a beacon of hope in a time of immense uncertainty - he manifested the great virtues of compassion, humility and devotion to God and Humanity, recognising and promoting the dignity of all. His life's work in the service of the Church – and through the Church to humanity - transcended boundaries and inspired people of all faiths and none to strive for justice, peace, and solidarity. His legacy will doubtless reflect this.

We have always recognised the vital importance of interfaith cooperation and take pride in our historic relationship with the Catholic Church since the times of His Holiness the late Pope John Paul II. The Foundation was privileged to have met His Holiness Pope Francis on various occasions, discussing inter-religious dialogue and other global issues through the lens of faith. These exchanges were symbolic of the warm relations between our communities, and a testament to the mutual respect that has grown between our institutions. Pope Francis built upon that foundation with integrity, wisdom, and open-heartedness, deepening the bonds between Muslims and Christians across the world.

You will also be aware of His Holiness's visit to the holy city of Najaf, Iraq, in March 2021 and meeting with His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani. That encounter marked an unprecedented step in Muslim-Christian dialogue, affirming the shared values of our Abrahamic faiths and highlighting the essential role that religious leadership plays in promoting mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. It was a powerful message of unity and understanding at a time when sectarian conflict threatened the social fabric of many societies.

In this moment of mourning, we also take time to celebrate as we reflect on His Holiness's supreme service to the Almighty and his championing of peace, his care for the marginalised, his recognition that as vicegerents of God on Earth we must become stewards of our one fragile planet, and of course his tireless efforts to promote dialogue, understanding and friendship among all.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may God grant solace and strength to all those who grieve his passing.

With my personal prayers and deepest sympathies,

**Sayyid Saheb Al-Khoei**  
Secretary-General