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Leaders of Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii reflect on legacy of Pope Francis

HONOLULU — The Vatican has announced that Pope Francis, who led the Catholic Church since 2013, died early April 21 (late April 20 Hawaii time) at age 88.

According to Catholic News Service, U.S. Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church, announced that Pope Francis died at 7:35 a.m.

“His whole life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and his church,” Cardinal Farrell said in a video announcement broadcast from the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Pope Francis lived.

Pope Francis gave new energy to millions of Catholics — and caused concern for some — as he transformed the image of the papacy into a pastoral ministry based on personal encounters and strong convictions about poverty, mission and dialogue.

Bishop Larry Silva of the Diocese of Honolulu said in a statement late April 20: “After many prayers for his recovery, Pope Francis has passed to his eternal rest. How blessed is Pope Francis to have died on this Easter week, after dedicating his life and his papacy to proclaiming the Lord Jesus as alive and active in our world!”

“May he be raised up to eternal life with the risen Lord he loved so much. May his apostolic ministry bear much good fruit for generations to come!”

Vicar General Msgr. Gary Secor of the Diocese of Honolulu said late April 20 that “I was surprised and saddened by the death of Pope Francis which occurred late this evening/early morning in Rome.”

Noting that the pontiff had appeared in St. Peter’s Square on Easter Sunday, the day before his death, to deliver his annual “urbi et orbi” (“to the city and the world”) message, Msgr. Secor said: “It seems that he really desired until the end of his life to fulfill his important duty as the Holy Father and did that with much courage and determination.”

“I know that an essential part of his pontificate was a desire to reach out to people, as he said, ‘on the peripheries of the world,’ and that was certainly something that he did and something that he challenged us to do as a church and for that I am very grateful.”

Right Rev. Robert L. Fitzpatrick, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii, on April 21 offered to Bishop Silva the “prayers of the faithful in the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis, and for our siblings in the Roman Catholic Church.”

A Memorial Mass is being planned for Monday, April 28, with the time and location still to be determined.