

Our Anjali to Pope Francis

2013-2025

Lord, Make Me an Instrument Of thy Peace

We had in Pope Francis a leader for humanity.

With quiet strength and unwavering compassion, he redefined what it means to lead- not from above alone, but from among the people. His leadership brought hope in today's turbulent global order.

On the 21st of April, 2025, we gathered as a community at Shanti Ashram to celebrate his life in thanksgiving. We offered interfaith prayers, dedicated our Anjali, our collective tribute and remembered what he stood for: **PEACE, PEACE FOR ALL.**

India together recalls, how he drew on Mahatma Gandhi's life and their shared inspiration, St. Francis of Assisi. Their commitment to inter-religious dialogue for building a more peaceful world stands out as their lasting legacy as does their extraordinary ability to building bridges between people & cultures. Pope Francis also made historic strides in fostering peace among religions.

Our founder Dr. M.Aram, as Moderator of Religions for Peace, chaired the first inter-religious gathering at the Synod hall of the Vatican, generously hosted by Pope John Paul II and in the presence of Founder Nikkyo Niwano and Dr.Bill Vendley. Over 500 faith representatives from all major religious traditions gathered for this historic meeting in 1994. At this hour we re-dedicate ourselves to active peace building and positive peace.

Pope Francis listened to young people and children first, before he spoke to them. Touched by this outreach they in turn listened to him with an open heart and willingness to act - something every leader, every adult can do more when it comes to intergenerational dialogue and living together.

When I first met him with the Religions for Peace delegation - his passionate call for 'human fraternity' about which he wrote in Fratelli Tutti, was the central to our dialogue with him. To the Catholic church and the global family – he lived this call by example & moved us to address many challenging issues that confront us today with deep understanding and awareness of people's suffering.

Shanti Ashram, her leadership, her members and the wider Sarvodaya Gandhian Movement had the honour to interact with him, many times over the past decade. Each time he left us with joy and enthusiasm for collaborative work.

Last May, when I met him in the Vatican, alongside faith representatives who had come together for the One human family conference convened by the Focolare movement, he greeted me with his familiar smile & whispered in my ears, 'Please do more for children!'. This last call stays in my heart.

May we remember Pope Francis's lived words:

"Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God."

Dr.Kezevino Aram

President, Shanti Ashram



***MGIPLD: Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace Leadership and Development at Shanti Ashram shares this announcement as the second edition of public education effort. (MGIPLD PEE 2)**