

"A Hindu man, Vinod Sekar, has written one of THE most moving and beautiful tributes every written for anyone... for the late Pope Francis." Shared by Shalini Tuscano.

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## The Loss of a Good Man: A Tribute to Pope Francis and the Power of Universal Faith

I only met Pope Francis once. It was brief. Just a few moments in a crowded room filled with dignitaries and seekers, some there out of duty, others out of belief. I was neither Catholic nor there on some divine pilgrimage. I was just a man in need of a little hope. And somehow, in that fleeting encounter, I received it.

It's hard to explain without sounding overly romantic, but when you're in the presence of someone truly good — not performatively good, not "publicly moral" or selectively kind — but genuinely, deeply, relentlessly good... something shifts in you. You feel lighter. You feel braver. You feel like humanity, for all its wounds and wickedness, is still worth fighting for.

That was the gift Pope Francis gave me. And I imagine, from the tears I've seen today and the aching silences of millions across faiths, races, and borders, that he gave that same gift to many.

Today, we mourn not just the passing of a Pope. We mourn the loss of one of the strongest chess pieces humanity had on this plain of existence.

He was a man who made kindness radical again. Who reminded the powerful that humility was not weakness. Who spoke of love not as doctrine but as duty. He was not just a religious man. He was something far more rare — he was universally spiritual.

I am a Hindu. My God wears different names. My prayers come in different rhythms. But I would have followed this man through fire. Because in his belief in God, he carried a belief in all of us. His eyes didn't see denominations — they saw dignity. His voice, always soft but never weak, carried the weight of truth even when it unsettled the comfortable. Especially when it unsettled the comfortable.

This world has a way of chipping away at your soul. The noise, the greed, the hate, the empty rituals that masquerade as faith or patriotism or family values. It's easy to go numb. It's easy to give in to cynicism. But once in a while, someone comes along who reminds us that the better angels of our nature are still within reach. That goodness is still possible. That we don't need to be perfect to do good — we just need to be brave.

Pope Francis was that man.

He chose love over doctrine. He chose compassion over judgment. And most remarkably, he chose action over applause. He walked with the poor. He knelt before the discarded. He challenged the powerful not with anger, but with moral courage. And he did all of this with a smile that felt like a prayer.

He understood something many religious leaders forget: that God doesn't reside only in temples or churches or mosques. That holiness isn't a place — it's a way of living. A way of seeing others. A way of choosing kindness, over and over, even when it hurts.

So yes, today we mourn. I mourn. Not just for the Catholic world, but for all of us. Because when a man like this leaves, it feels like a light has been dimmed.

But maybe — just maybe — the way we honour him is by becoming the light ourselves.

Let us remember his faith in humanity, and let it fuel our own. Let us keep making the right chess moves in this complicated, brutal, beautiful game of life. Let us speak truth with grace. Let us protect the vulnerable, question the powerful, and lift each other up not because of who we are, but because we are here — together.

Pope Francis believed in a world where dignity wasn't conditional. Where faith was lived, not just preached. That world can still exist — if we build it.

And maybe that's the final gift he's given us. A call not to despair, but to duty.

Because as long as we carry his belief in each other, then truly, he has not left us at all.

Vinod Sekhar