

The World Jewellery Confederation bows its head in memory of the Holy Father Pope Francis



His Holiness, Pope Francis, greeting CIBJO President Gaetano Cavalieri, during an audience in Vatican City on May 20, 2017.

When earlier this morning the peaceful silence of Easter Monday was suddenly broken by the sound of church bells ringing, I, like many Catholics around the world, instinctively understood that they brought news of the passing of our Holy Father, Pope Francis. This day was not unexpected. He had been desperately ill of late, but just a few weeks ago was released from hospital, and we had hoped that he would convalesce and get to spend more time among us.

And so ends an era and the life of a remarkable man, who used his special stature and moment in time on the world stage to look out first and foremost for the many who society often does not see, those less fortunate members of humanity, who contribute greatly to our success but frequently do not fully share its bounty.

I was privileged on several occasions to be in the Pope's presence, and to experience the natural warmth, wisdom and sense of caring that he emanated.

The first time was at Vatican City on March 20, 2017, when I was a featured speaker at a three-day conference of the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation, where business, academic and political leaders discussed ethical challenges and strategies. Pope Francis addressed our gathering and then met each one of us personally in the Clementina Hall of the Apostolic Palace, after a Roman Catholic mass over which he presided.

I will carry the words that he delivered that day together with me for the rest of my life. "The fight against poverty is not merely a technical economic problem, but above all a moral one, calling for global solidarity and the development of more equitable approaches to the concrete needs and aspirations of individuals and peoples worldwide," he said.

Quoting his predecessor Saint John Paul II, the Holy Father taught that economic activity cannot be conducted in an institutional or political vacuum, but as an essential ethical component. "It must always stand at the service of the human person and the universal common good," he said.

CIBJO pays tribute to a man in whose shadow we could proudly walk.

Gaetano Cavalieri
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The World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) is the international jewellery confederation of national trade organisations. CIBJO's purpose is to encourage harmonisation, promote international cooperation in the jewellery industry and to consider issues which concern the trade worldwide. CIBJO's chief mission is to protect consumer confidence in the industry. The World Jewellery Confederation is the sole jewellery industry organisation to have Special Consultative Status with the United Nation's Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and is a member of the UN Global Compact.