



Pope Francis meets with actor and comedian Whoopi Goldberg during a private audience at the Vatican Oct. 12. (CNS/Vatican Media)

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Vatican City — October 18, 2023

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Pope Francis praised actor and comedian Whoopi Goldberg for helping people laugh and feel joy, telling her, "You are very important."

"Not as important as you!" she replied, shaking her head in disbelief during a private audience at the Vatican Oct. 12, seen in a clip posted on social media and the U.S. network television show, "The View," Oct. 16.

Goldberg shared details of the meeting on "The View," saying, "He was quite amazing. He is exactly what I hoped he would be, which is a pope for all people regardless of religion, which I really appreciated."

"I wanted to thank him for all of my gay friends and for all of my divorced friends because he basically has said, 'Listen, God loves you no matter what, come back to the church.' I appreciated that," she said.

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Goldberg told Vatican News Oct. 12 that she believes inclusion is the path to healing and that exclusion, rejection and marginalization fuel hatred.

"Saying 'no, not you'... that's what fuels hate in the world; the real answer is 'Yes, them! And you, and you, and you...,'" she said.

On "The View" she said she was shocked to get the meeting with the pope, after trying for the past 11 years. "I thought, OK, I'm going to walk into this building and I'm going to burst into flames and, as it turns out, I did not."

Goldberg brought along a bag full of film merchandise from "Sister Act," the 1992 comedy film and its sequel in which she plays a nightclub singer disguising herself as a nun in a convent to hide from the mob and then turning the convent choir into a celebrity chorus.

The pope had actually requested she bring along something from the movie, she said, and they shared a laugh over her "disguise" on the film poster.

"Very interesting shoes," the pope said, smiling and pointing to bright red stilettos conspicuously clashing with her heavy black habit on the 1992 poster image.

"Yes, you know, we're trying to help bring the sisters into the 21st century," she joked with the pope. "It was, it's silly."

The pope told her one of the best things she can do for people is "to help them have joy and make them laugh," to which she replied, "I'm trying."

After showing a brief clip of the papal meeting on "The View," Goldberg told her co-hosts, "He's a human being, as it turns out, which is what I really liked. And he is doing his best to be a human for everybody because he knows that we're all flawed" but everyone can "bring the best we can, bring the best of us."

"I don't know that it's gonna jump me back into church," she said, "but what it did was it gave me good reason to not abandon" the church, but with the pope "there's something there," something good, "for everybody whatever your religion, whatever you denomination, it doesn't matter."

"I don't know what any of it means, but I know that I feel better because I feel like somebody up there likes me. That's the best way I can put it," she said.