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# Pope addresses, blesses media in silence 'from the heart'

Thomas C. Fox | Mar. 16, 2013 NCR Today

NCR's Josh McElwee reports meeting [1] of Pope Francis Saturday with the assemble 5,000 journalists in Rome.

Full Vatican text of Pope Francis' greeting follows:

> ?Dear friends, I am pleased, at the beginning of my ministry in the See of Peter, to meet with you who have worked here in Rome at this very intense period that began with the surprising announcement of my venerated predecessor Benedict XVI, this past 11 February. I warmly greet each of you.?
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> ?The role of the mass media has been continuously growing in recent times,? he said, ?so much so that it has become essential to narrate the events of contemporary history to the world. I therefore especially thank you for your distinguished service these past few days?you have had a bit of work to do, haven't you??when the eyes of the Catholic world, and not only, were turned toward the Eternal City, in particular to this area that has St. Peter's tomb as its focal point. In these past few weeks you've gotten a chance to talk about the Holy See, the Church, her rites and traditions, her faith, and, in particular, the role of the Pope and his ministry.?
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> ?A particularly heart-felt thanks goes to those who have been able to observe and present these events in the Church's history while keeping in mind the most just perspective in which they must be read, that of faith. Historical events almost always require a complex reading that, at times, can also include the dimension of faith. Ecclesial events are certainly not more complicated than political or economic ones. But they have one particularly fundamental characteristic: they answer to a logic that is not mainly that of, so to speak, worldly categories, and this is precisely why it is not easy to interpret and communicate them to a wide and varied audience. In fact, the Church, although it is certainly also a human, historical institution with all that that entails, does not have a political nature but is essentially spiritual: it is the people of God, the holy people of God who walk toward the encounter with Jesus Christ. Only by putting oneself in this perspective can one fully explain how the Catholic Church works.?
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> ?Christ is the Church's Shepherd, but His presence in history moves through human freedom. Among these, one is chosen to serve as his Vicar, Successor of the Apostle Peter, but Christ is the centre, the fundamental reference, the heart of the Church! Without Him, neither Peter nor the Church would exist or have a reason for being. As Benedict XVI repeated often, Christ is present and leads His Church. In everything that has happened, the protagonist is, ultimately, the Holy Spirit. He has inspired Benedict XVI's decision for the good of the Church; He has guided the cardinals in their prayers and in their election. Dear friends, it is important to take due account of this interpretive horizon, this hermeneutic, to bring the heart of the events of these days into focus.?
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> ?From this is born, above all, a renewed and sincere thanks for your efforts in these particularly challenging days, but also an invitation to always seek to know more the Church's true nature and the spiritual motivations that guide her and that are the most authentic for understanding her. Rest assured that the Church, for her part, is very attentive to your precious work. You have the ability to gather and express the expectations and needs of our times, to provide the elements necessary to read reality. Like many other professions, your job requires study, sensitivity, and experience but it bears with it a particular attention to truth, goodness, and beauty. This makes us particularly close because the Church exists to communicate Truth, Goodness, and Beauty 'in person'. It should be clear that we are all called, not to communicate ourselves, but rather this existential triad that shapes truth, goodness, and beauty.?
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> ?Some people didn't know why the Bishop of Rome wanted to call himself 'Francis'. Some though of Francis Xavier, Francis de Sales, even Francis of Assisi. I will tell you the story. At the election I had the archbishop emeritus of Sao Paulo next to me. He is also prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal Claudio Hummes [O.F.M.]: a dear, dear friend. When things were getting a little 'dangerous', he comforted me. And then, when the votes reached

the two-thirds, there was the usual applause because the Pope had been elected. He hugged me and said: 'Do not forget the poor.' And that word stuck here [tapping his forehead]; the poor, the poor. Then, immediately in relation to the poor I thought of Francis of Assisi. Then I thought of war, while the voting continued, until all the votes [were counted]. And so the name came to my heart:: Francis of Assisi. For me he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who love and safeguards Creation. In this moment when our relationship with Creation is not so good?right??He is the man who gives us this spirit of peace, the poor man ? Oh, how I wish for a Church that is poor and for the poor!?

?I wish the best for you, I thank you for everything that you have done. And I think of your work: I wish you to work fruitfully and with serenity and to always know better the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the reality of the Church. I entrust you to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of evangelization. I I wish the best for you and your families, for each of your families, and I wholeheartedly impart to all of you the blessing.?

After personally greeting some of the journalists present, Pope Francis, in Spanish, concluded:

?I told you I wholeheartedly imparted my blessing. Many of you don't belong to the Catholic Church, others are not believers. From my heart I impart this blessing, in silence, to each of you, respecting the conscience of each one, but knowing that each of you is a child of God: May God bless you.?

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