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# Francis interview offers fresh insights

Thomas C. Fox | Jun. 14, 2014 NCR Today

Pope Francis has conducted another personal interview and it?s likely to be scrutinized in the days ahead. This latest was with Vatican correspondent Henrique Cymerman of La Vanguardia [1], a Spanish daily headquartered in Barcelona.

The newly published interview [2] spanned more than a dozen topics. The full text of the English translation of the interview, which took place last Monday, has been published by CNA Daily News. [3]

Excerpts of the translated interview follow:

**Violence in the name of God**

It's a contradiction. Violence in the name of God does not correspond with our time. ? We arrive, sometimes, by way of religion to very serious, very grave contradictions.

**Fundamentalism**

A fundamentalist group, although it may not kill anyone, although it may not strike anyone, is violent. The mental structure of fundamentalists is violence in the name of God.

**Francis as revolutionary**

For me, the great revolution is going to the roots, recognizing them and seeing what those roots have to say to us today. There is no contradiction between [being a] revolutionary and going to the roots. ? You can never take a step in life if it?s not from behind, without knowing where I come from, what last name I have, what cultural or religious last name I have.

**Breaking security protocols**

I know that something could happen to me, but it?s in the hands of God. ? It?s true that something could happen to me, but let?s be realistic, at my age I don?t have much to lose.

**Poor and humble Church**

Poverty and humility are at the center of the Gospel and I say it in a theological sense, not in a sociological on. ? I think that Jesus wants us bishops not to be princes but servants.

**Reducing growing inequality**

We are discarding an entire generation to maintain an economic system that can?t hold up anymore, a system that to survive must make war, as the great empires have always done.

**Opposition to Middle East meeting in Vatican**

Here, in the Vatican 99 percent said it would not happen and then the 1 percent started to grow. I felt that we were feeling pushed towards something that had not occurred to us and that little by little, started to take shape. It was not at all a political act ? I felt that from the beginning ? but it was rather a religious act: opening a window to the world.

**Within every Christian there is a Jew**

Perhaps it would be more correct to say ?you cannot live your Christianity, you cannot be a real Christian, if you do not recognize your Jewish roots. .... I pray every day the divine office every day with the Psalms of David. We do the 150 psalms in one week. My prayer is Jewish and I have the Eucharist, which is Christian.

**Anti-Semitism**

I think it is very linked, in general, and without it being a fixed rule, to the right wing. Anti-Semitism usually nests better in right-wing political tendencies that in the left, right?

**Opening Vatican archives on the Holocaust**

They will bring a lot of light.

**Pope Pius XII**

They have said all sorts of things about poor Pius XII. But we need to remember that before he was seen as the great defender of the Jews. He hid many in convents in Rome and in other Italian cities, and also in the residence of Castel Gandolfo. Forty-two babies, children of Jews and other persecuted who sought refuge there were born there, in the Pope?s room, in his own bed. I don?t want to say that Pius XII did not make any mistakes ? I myself make many ? but one needs to see his role in the context of the time.

**Protocol**

My collaborators are very serious and professional. I have help to carry out my duty. One doesn?t need to play the parish priest Pope. It would be immature. When a head of state comes, I have to receive him with the dignity and the protocol that are deserved. It is true that with the protocol I have my problems, but one has to respect it.

**Change**

What I am doing is carrying out what we cardinals reflected upon during the General Congregations, that is to say, in the meetings that, during the conclave, we all maintained every day to discuss the problems of the Church. From there come reflections and recommendations. One very concrete one was that the next Pope had to count on an external council, that is, a team of assessors that didn?t live in the Vatican.

**Council of Eight**

They are eight cardinals from all the continents and a coordinator. They gather every two or three months here. Now, the first of July we have four days of meetings, and we are going to be making the changes that the very cardinals ask of us. It is not obligatory that we do it but it would be imprudent not to listen to those who know.

**Interplay of science and religion**

The clash between science and faith peaked in the Enlightenment, but that is not so fashionable today, thank God, because we have all realized the closeness between one thing and the other.

**Greeting Heads of State**

Many have come and it?s an interesting variety. Each one has their personality. What has called my attention is the cross-made between young politicians, whether they are from the center, the left or the right. Maybe they talk about the same problems but with a new music, and this I like, this gives me hope because politics is one of the more elevated forms of love, of charity. ? Some fifteen years ago the French bishops wrote a pastoral letter reflecting on the theme ?Restoring Politics.? This is a precious text that makes you realize all of these things.

**Renunciation of Benedict XVI**

Pope Benedict has made a very significant act. He has opened the door, has created an institution, that of the eventual popes emeritus. ? I will do the same as him, asking the Lord to enlighten me when the time comes and that he tells me what I have to do, and he will tell me for sure.

**World Cup**

Brazilians asked me to remain neutral (he laughs) and I keep my word because Brazil and Argentina are always antagonistic.

**Being remembered in history**

I have not thought about it, but I like it when someone remembers someone and says: ?He was a good guy, he did what he could. He wasn?t so bad.? I?m OK with that.

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