

Papal Visit to the United States 2015

Thoughts by: Fr. John Catoir

Pope Francis is the true Vicar of Christ on earth today. During his first visit to America he touched us deeply with his wisdom and love. He encouraged us to live joyfully and to keep our hopes high. Countless millions, both young and old alike, through the miracle of television, experienced the sights and sounds of the cheering crowds reacting to his smiling presence.

It all began with the jubilant Cuban youngsters. Imagine this, these kids were born and raised in an atheistic state, and yet they were ecstatic as the Pope told them to work together to keep their hopes high for better days-- "hope will fill your soul with joy."

On the plane to the US, the press questioned him, "are you a Marxist?" He answered, "Divine Mercy is not Marxism." His words on the White House lawn--"God Bless America" thrilled us. To the US Congress he said, "You share the noble responsibility of caring for all Americans, rich and poor alike."

The zinger that riled some bankers and politicians was his warning: "people dedicated to loving money and riches have lost their way." Even though this 5000 year old concept originated in the Hebrew Bible and was a constant theme in the public ministry of Jesus Christ, some bankers took offense at the man, Pope Francis, whom they labeled: anti-Capitalist. The truth is that Francis denounced greed not capitalism. The World Economy is failing the 11 million women who die each year of malnourishment. Francis was not afraid to afflict the comfortable, even as he went about comforting the afflicted.

I was on the air with FoxNewsTV-International-when the Pope visited Our Lady Queen of Angels Catholic School in Harlem. Neil Cavuto asked me, "why did he choose this school?" I replied, "I think he wanted to draw attention to the importance of providing children with a spiritual foundation before they go out into the world, and get hit by the drug subculture"- a very good idea! This school was due to close in 2007 when the parish that supported it was closed, but a partnership of dedicated laymen got together to save it. Pope Francis applauded the work of the laity many times.

He continually tried to lift our spirits, encouraging all of us to live joyfully because of knowledge of God's love. He never stopped stressing joy, because the central message of Christianity is joy. This supernatural truth was revealed to us by Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, who said, "I have come that your joy may be full,"(Jn 15:11).

Jesus Christ, in whom we live and breathe and have our being, is the inspiration behind everything this pope says and does.

Farewell Holy Father, we thank you, and ask God to bless you. We will always keep you in our love and our prayers.

Amen!