



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسى الرسولي BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIE

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The Pope meets the children of the parish of Santa Maria Josefa del Cuore di Gesù

In the parish hall the Holy Father, accompanied by the cardinal vicar of Rome, Agostino Vallini, and the parish priest, greeted the children of the parish and responded to questions they posed to him. The following is a summary of the Holy Father's answers:

Alessandro: "Why are you a Pope?"

Pope Francis: "Because some people were 'guilty' of this, and one is here (indicates Cardinal Vallini, while the children laugh) ... Let me explain to you how one becomes Pope. Do you pay to be Pope? ['No'] Is there a draw for a Pope? ['No'] Who are the ones who choose the Pope? The cardinals .. And Don Agostino [Vallini] is a cardinal, he is the vicar of Rome, and was one of the 115 cardinals who gathered together to elect the Pope. Do you understand? ... They get together, they talk to each other, they think ... 'This one has this advantage, this other one ...', and they reason ... But above all - and this is the most important thing - they pray. ... These people who are in Cloister, that is, who cannot talk to people from outside ... they go from the Casa Santa Marta to the Sistine Chapel to choose the Pope. They talk to each other about what the Church needs today, and why she needs a personality with this profile or with that. ... And the Lord sends the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit helps us in the election. Then, everyone gives his vote, and in the end they are counted, and the one who has two-thirds of the votes is elected Pope. As you see, it is a process of much prayer. No need to pay, no powerful friends to push, no, no. ... Now I ask you, Who is the most important person in that group to choose the Pope? [Some reply 'God']. God, the Holy Spirit, Who, through the vote, chooses the Pope. So the one who is chosen may not be the most intelligent, perhaps not the most intelligent, perhaps not the most expedient to do things, but it is the one God wants for that moment in the life of the Church. ... When they made me Pope, there were 115 people. And I ask you a question: Who was the most intelligent of these 115? ... God was the 116th... The one who is chosen is not necessarily the most intelligent. ... There will be more intelligent ones than him, but God has chosen that one. And as in all things in life, time passes, the Pope must die like everyone else, or retire, like the great Pope Benedict, because he was not in good health, and another will come ... who will be different: Maybe he will be smarter or less intelligent, we do not know. But he will come in the same way: chosen by the group of cardinals in the light of the Holy Spirit".

Flavio: "When you were little, what did you want to be?"

Pope Francis: "I will tell you, but don't laugh. It's not a joke, I'm telling the truth. I wanted to become a butcher. Really! Because when I went to the market with my grandmother, I saw the butcher cut the pieces of meat: 'How well this man does his job!' And I liked it. 'When I grow up, I want to be a butcher' And now tell me, what do you want to be when you grow up?"

Flavio: "A footballer".

Pope Francis: [To the others] "Have you seen him play football? ['Yes!'] Does it do it well or not? And what position do you play?"

Flavio: "Centre forward".

Pope Francis: "Centre forward! Good".

Agostino: "To become Pope, do you have to get good grades?"

Pope Francis: "In order to become a Pope, first of all you have to be a good Christian. Normally, first you become a priest, then a bishop. However, in the early days of the Church, not all Popes were necessarily priests: some were deacons. But he had to be a good Christian. And the community indicated it at that time. There were many Christians who knew one person or another, and indicated them; some were priests, some deacons. But then, over time, the system of election was established and now only cardinals choose the Pope. The cardinals under the age of eighty".

Child: "What has been the most difficult moment of your life?"

Pope Francis: "There have been several. With health, I have had some difficult times. When I was 20, I almost died of an infection, and they had to remove part of a lung ... but the Lord carried me through. And then, there are the difficult moments that we all have in life. Pay attention to this. Life is a gift from God, but in life there are bad moments, there are difficult moments that we must overcome and move on from. I have had as many, like all people. I remember the illness of when I was 20 years old, and I have passed others also difficult. But I want to say that for me, life has not been easy. And I ask you, for people in general, is life easy? ['No'] Are there difficulties in life? ['Yes']. Yes, always! There are and there will be. But do not be intimidated. Difficulties are overcome, and we go ahead, with faith, with strength, and with courage".

Giulia: "What does it feel like to be the representative of the Catholic Church?"

Pope Francis: "I feel a great responsibility. You used the word 'representative', and he who 'represents' the Church cannot be wrong. Can the Pope look bad? ['No'] No, he cannot. So you have to be careful not to look bad. But there is also something else. The Pope is the bishop of Rome, but he also has the pastoral care of the entire Church throughout the world, with the other bishops. ... And the Pope is also bishop and father, and what the Pope must feel is that he is a priest; if the Pope or the bishop does not feel that he is a father, then something is missing".

Pope Francis: "Now, I will ask questions and you will answer me. ... How many 'Gods' are there? ['One']. But ... I know three! ['The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit']. Father, Son and Holy Spirit: one and two and three. They are three. What do you say ... are there three gods? Or just one? ... No, God is one ... But if it is one ... I ask you this question: the Father is God? ['Yes']. The Son is God? ['Yes, He is God']. The Holy Spirit is God ['Yes']. There are three, but this is something that is not easy to understand: three people, do you understand? But the three people are one God, all right? ['Yes']. ... And the Virgin is God? ['No']. What is the Virgin? ['Mother']. The Mother of God. Why is she the Mother of God, because she brought Jesus to the world? ['Yes'] And Joseph helped the Virgin, truly. How many 'Gods'? ['One']. Is Mary God? ['No']. The Virgin is ... the Mother of God. Is that clear? Do not forget".

"Now, in silence, and with our eyes closed, let us think of the Virgin and pray to the Virgin who is the Mother of God and of all of us. All together. Hail Mary ... May God Almighty bless you, and will you pray for me, okay? ['Yes!']. Thank you".
