



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Holy Thursday, Mass in coena Domini: brothers with different cultures, religions and traditions

Vatican City, 24 March 2016 – "Gestures speak louder than images or words", remarked Pope Francis this afternoon during the Mass in coena Domini, celebrated in the Centre for Asylum Seekers (C.A.R.A.) of Castelnuovo di Porto, in which he washed the feet of twelve refugees, eleven men and one woman, during the Holy Thursday rite, also attended by members of the social cooperative Auxilium who work in the centre.

In his homily, the Pope recalled the two gestures which characterised the Last Supper: that of Jesus Who washes the apostles' feet, and that of Judas who leaves the Upper Room to collect the thirty pieces of silver for which he sold Christ. "Today, too, there are two gestures. The first of that of this evening: all of us together, Muslims, Hindus, Catholics, Copts, Evangelicals, but all brothers, sons of the same God, who want to live in peace, integrated. The other gesture is that of three days ago: a gesture of war, of destruction in a city in Europe, of people who do not want to live in peace. But behind that gesture, just as there was behind Judas, there are others. Behind Judas there were those who gave the money for Jesus to be delivered to them. Behind the gesture three days ago there are the weapons producers and traffickers who want blood, not peace; who want war, not fraternity".

"Today, in this moment, when I repeat Jesus' gesture, washing the feet of twelve of you", he continued, "we will all be carrying out a gesture of fraternity, and we will all say, 'We are diverse, we are different, we have different cultures and religions, but we are brothers and we want to live in peace'. And this is the gesture I will perform with you. Each one of us has a history: many crosses, much suffering, but also an open heart that wants fraternity. May each person, in the language of his or her religion, pray to the Lord that this fraternity spread throughout the world, so that there may no longer be the thirty pieces of silver to kill a brother, so that there may always be fraternity and goodness".

After the celebration the Holy Father greeted the residents of the C.A.R.A., and thanked them for meeting with him. Before leaving, he added, "Let us remember and show that it is beautiful to live together as brothers, with different cultures, religions and traditions; we are all brothers. And this has a name: peace and love".