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Holy Mass “in Coena Domini” in Rebibbia Women’s Prison, Rome

This afternoon, the Holy Father made a private visit to the Rebibbia Women’s Prison in Rome to celebrate Holy mass *in Coena Domini* and to meet with the prison inmates and employees.

Upon arrival, after greeting those who were waiting for him outside, the Pope presided over Mass, concelebrated with the Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations and Head of the Sistine Chapel Choir, Archbishop Diego Giovanni Ravelli. A representation of prison officers and staff were present, along with the inmates.

After the proclamation of the Holy Gospel, the Pope delivered an impromptu homily.

Then, as is customary, Pope Francis repeated the gesture of Jesus during the Last Supper, when the Lord washed the feet of His disciples, with twelve detainees of various nationalities.

At the end of the Holy Mass, the prison director, Dr. Nadia Fontana, addressed some words of thanks to the Holy Father, and offered the gift of a basket of produce grown on the farm inside the prison, and a rosary and two stoles produced by the inmates in the necklace and sewing workshops. Pope Francis left the gift of a painting with an image of Our Lady.

He then left the Institute to return to the Vatican.

The following is the homily delivered by the Pope after the proclamation of the Gospel:

Homily of the Holy Father

In this moment of the Supper, two episodes attract our attention. Jesus’ washing of the feet: Jesus makes Himself humble, and with this gesture He lets us understand what He had said: “I came not to be served but to serve” (cf. *Mk* 10:45). He teaches us the path of service.

The other sad episode is the betrayal of Judas, who is not capable of pursuing love, and then money and selfishness lead him to this bad thing. But Jesus forgives *everything*. Jesus *always* forgives. He asks only that we ask Him for forgiveness.

Once, I heard an elderly woman, wise, an elderly grandmother, of the people... She said, "Jesus never tires of forgiving: we are the ones who tire of asking for forgiveness": Today, let us ask the Lord for the grace not to grow weary.

We all always have small failures, large failures: each person has their own story. But the Lord awaits us always, with open arms, and He never tires of forgiving.

Now we will make the same gesture Jesus made: the washing of the feet. It is a gesture that draws attention to the vocation of service. Let us ask the Lord to make us grow, all of us, in the vocation to service.

Thank you.
