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PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS

# **BOLLETTINO**

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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## **Holy Mass “in Coena Domini” in the “Casal del Marmo” Prison for Minors**

This afternoon the Holy Father Francis went to the “Casal del Marmo” Prison for Minors to celebrate the Holy Mass of the Lord’s Supper with the detainees.

Upon arrival, the Pope proceeded to the Chapel where the Mass was held, concelebrated with the Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations and the head of the Sistine Chapel Choir, Msgr. Diego Giovanni Ravello. Along with the young detainees, a representation of prison guards and staff was also present.

After the proclamation of the Holy Gospel, the Pope gave 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 as a sign of love extended to the point of service and humiliation, towards twelve inmates, boys and girls of various nationalities.

At the end of Holy Mass, the prison director, Dr. Maria Teresa Iuliani, addressed some words of thanks to the Holy Father.

Before leaving the Institute, the Pope blessed the inaugural plaque of the Chapel, dedicated to Blessed Pino Puglisi. Subsequently, when greeting some of the detainees, Pope Francis received the gift of a cross produced by the young people following a course in woodworking, and some biscuits and a pack of pasta, made in the pasta factory in the prison. The Pope gave some rosaries and chocolate eggs to the young inmates, the director and staff.

The following is the homily delivered by the Holy Father:

### **Homily of the Holy Father**

What attracts our attention is how Jesus, just the day before is crucified, accomplishes this deed. Foot washing was customary at that time because the streets were dusty. People would come in from outside and, on entering a house, before dining, before gathering, they would wash their feet. But who would wash their feet? The slaves, the slaves – because this was work relegated to slaves.

Let us imagine how the disciples were astonished when they saw Jesus beginning to perform this task fit for slaves... He wanted to make them understand the message for the next day when he would die like a slave to pay the debt for all us. If we were to listen to these things from Jesus, life would be so beautiful because we would hurry to help each other out instead of getting the best of others, to take advantage of each other, the way con artists teach us. It is very beautiful to help each other, to give a hand – these are human universal gestures that are born from a noble heart. And with this celebration today, Jesus wants to teach us this: the nobility of the heart. Each one of us could say: “But if the Pope only knew the things I have inside....” But Jesus knows that, and he loves us just like we are! And he washes each of our feet. Jesus is never shocked at our weaknesses. He is never astonished, because he has already paid. He just wants to accompany us; he wants to take us by the hand so that life won't be so harsh for us.

I will perform the same deed of the washing of the feet, which is not something folkloric, no. We can all think of it as a gesture that tells us how we should treat each other. In society, we see how many people take advantage of others; how many people are in a corner and can't get out.... How many injustices, how many people are without jobs, how many people work and are paid half, how many people have no money to purchase medicine, how many families are destroyed, so many awful things....

And none of us can say, “Thanks to God I am not like, you know”. “If I am not like that it is because of the grace of God!” Each one of us can slip, every one of us. And this awareness, this certainty that each of us can slip, is what gives us the dignity – listen to the word – the “dignity” of being sinners. And Jesus wants us like this, and because of this he wanted to wash [his disciples'] feet and say: “I came to save you, to serve you”.

Now, I will do the same thing as a memory of what Jesus taught us, to help each other and in this way, life is more beautiful and we can carry on like this. During the washing of the feet – I hope I succeed in doing it because I cannot walk that well – but during the washing of the feet, think about this: “Jesus has washed my feet. Jesus has saved me, and I have this difficulty now”. But it will pass, but the Lord is always next to you, he never abandons, never. Think about all this.

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