

## **A Sea of People for Pope Francis' Inauguration Mass**

Azzurra Giorgi (March 19, 2013)



Last week Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope Francis I. Today, in a crowded St. Peter's Square, he celebrated his first mass focusing on the themes of respect, kindness and tenderness. And the faithful around him were enthusiastic.

From the early hours of the morning, St. Peter's Square embraced the pious crowd come from all around the world to celebrate the Inauguration Mass of the new Pope, Francis I.

Around 9.00 AM Jorge Mario Bergoglio arrived in the crowded square on a white jeep and took a long tour among those who were there to praise him. His arrival was hailed by the faithful with a long roar of joy, accompanied with long applauses when he suddenly asked the driver to stop the car in order to greet a disabled person and some children behind the barriers.



He then went to the sacristy where he put on the “Fisherman's ring,” an gold-plated silver artwork made by the sculptors of Pope Enrico Manfrini, as well as the “Pallium,” a band of white wool with red crosses symbolizing the Good Shepherd. The Pallium is the same one previously worn by Joseph Ratzinger.

Finally, along with one hundred-eighty celebrators, the Inauguration Mass started. During his homily, Pope Francis remembered former Pope Joseph Ratzinger having defined today as 'a very meaningful coincidence': the fact that it is the Saint's day of his predecessor. Bergoglio then recalled one of the themes of his Election speech, inviting his listeners to “have respect of everyone, especially of children, of older men, of those who are more fragile and who often are in the suburbia of our heart. We don't have to be afraid of kindness nor tenderness. Tenderness is not the virtue of the weak, but is the capability of love instead.”

A long applause accompanied the end of his address, and everyone seemed charmed by his speech. An old man admitted, “I'm eighty and I have seen many Popes, but this one is one step ahead the others. You can see that he likes staying with people. He is a hope for the future. We really needed a Pope like this.” These words echoed those of the many who showed their appreciation for the new Pope in St. Peter's Square. In fact, Bergoglio interrupted his homily various times because of claps and cheers saying "Hurray for Francis!" - while on social networks people praised him for being humble.

“Humble” is the most recurrent adjective these days when talking about the Pope. From his paying the bill at the hotel, to his refusal of the ermine stole, he gave the impression of a big change for the Church, and the choice of his papal name 'Francis' is certainly exemplary of this.

A great emotion occurred even to those who joined together in Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires when Pope Francis called his countrymen asking “to take care of each other and to pray together.”

The whole world is drawing attention to the sea of people that gathered this morning in Vatican City, where flags of many different countries waved for the new Pope. A Pope which, against the tide of Ratzinger, seems very willing to be encircled by people in a way reminiscent of Pope John Paul II, who was always known for staying close to his faithful believers.

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