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# Easter with Pope Francis (2023)

Excerpts of Pope Francis's homilies during the liturgical celebrations for Easter and Holy Week.

04/07/2023

Palm Sunday - Wednesday Audience - Holy Thursday

Good Friday - Easter Vigil

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## Palm Sunday (full text)

Why did it have to come to this? *He did it for us*. There is no other answer. For us. Brothers and sisters, today this is not merely a show. Every one of us, hearing of Jesus' abandonment, can say: *for me*. This abandonment is the price he paid for me. He became one with each of us in order to be completely and definitively one with us *to the very end*. He experienced abandonment in order not to leave us prey to despair, in order to stay at our side forever. He did this for me, for you, because whenever you or I or anyone else seems pinned to the wall, lost in a blind alley, plunged into the abyss of abandonment, sucked into a whirlwind of so many "whys" without an answer, there can still be a hope: Jesus himself, for you, for me. It is not the end, because Jesus was there and even now, he is at your side. He endured the distance of

abandonment in order to take up into his love every possible distance that we can feel. So that each of us might say: in my failings, and each of us has failed many times, in my desolation, whenever I feel betrayed or betrayed others, whenever I feel cast aside or have cast aside others, whenever I feel forsaken or have abandoned others, let us think of Jesus, who was abandoned, betrayed and cast aside. There, we find him. When I feel lost and confused, when I feel that I can't go on, he is beside me. Amid all my unanswered questions "why...?", he is there.

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## **Wednesday Audience (full text)**

God is stripped – He who has everything allowed Himself to be stripped of everything. But that humiliation is the path of our

redemption. This is how God overcomes our appearances. Indeed, we find it difficult to bare ourselves, to be truthful. We always try to cover the truth because we do not like it. We clothe ourselves with outward appearances that we look for and take good care of, masks to disguise ourselves and to appear better than we are. [...] But we do not find peace this way. Then the make-up goes away and you look at yourself in the mirror with the ugly, but true, face you have – the one that God loves – not the one with make-up on. And stripped of everything, Jesus reminds us that hope is reborn by being truthful about ourselves – to tell ourselves the truth – by letting go of duplicity, by freeing ourselves from peacefully co-existing with our falsity.

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## **Holy Thursday: Mass of the Lord's Supper (full text)**

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.

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## **Good Friday: Way of the Cross**

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### **Easter Vigil (full text)**

Brothers and sisters, to rise again, to start anew, to take up the journey, we always need to return to Galilee, that is, to go back, not to an abstract or ideal Jesus, but to the living, concrete and palpable memory of our first encounter with him. Yes, to go

forward we need to go back, to remember; to have hope, we need to revive our memory. This is what we are asked to do: to remember and go forward! If you recover that first love, the wonder and joy of your encounter with God, you will keep advancing. So remember, and keep moving forward.

Remember your own Galilee and walk towards it, for it is the “place” where you came to know Jesus personally, where he stopped being just another personage from a distant past, but a *living person*: not some distant God but the God who is at your side, who more than anyone else knows you and loves you.

Brother, sister, remember Galilee, your Galilee, and your call.

Remember the Word of God who at a precise moment spoke directly to you. Remember that powerful experience of the Spirit; that great joy of forgiveness experienced after

that one confession; that intense and unforgettable moment of prayer; that light that was kindled within you and changed your life; that encounter, that pilgrimage...

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