

Rebuild My Church

A few years ago I had the privilege of being in Assisi, and visiting the church of San Damiano. In the days of Francis the church had fallen on difficult times. It was deserted,

outside the walls of the city of Assisi. Francis tells the story of walking near the church and felt an inner call to go inside. When he went inside there was a life size icon of Jesus on the Cross - now known as the San Damiano Cross.

He was overwhelmed by the face of the crucified Jesus, asking for the light of Christ to give him the spirit of Christ to do God's will in his life. Francis told the story of kneeling and hearing Jesus speak from the cross, "Go Francis, and repair my house, which as you can see, is falling into ruin." This has been translated over the centuries as "Rebuild My Church."

Francis came to understand that his mission wasn't to rebuild the crumbling church of San Damiano, but to reform the institution of the church in its call to holiness, its faithfulness in to the mission of the church in the world, and the renewal of living as a witness to Christ the Servant.

Our prayer is that Francis, our Pope will continue to be given the Spirit of Christ in leading the Church in its constant renewal in reaching out to the crucified Christ found in the lives of so many persons on the streets of our world.

A story that is told about Pope Francis is one that moves the heart. The story is told of Cardinal Bergoglio visit to the Francisco Nuniz Hospital to celebrate Holy Thursday. While in the hospital he washed and kissed the feet of 12 AIDS patients. Speaking to the people at the hospital he said "I come, following the footprints of our only master, Our Lord Jesus Christ, to express how close the Church is to those who must suffer the pain and discrimination."

The marginalized and the disenfranchised have a particular place in rebuilding the church today. May our lives here as Christ the Servant, continue to reach out to crucified Christ as we meet him each day, celebrating the liturgy, committing ourselves in the educational and formational ministry of our school here at Our Lady of Peace, and our outreach to those whom Jesus tells us are our neighbors. L Gaetano

