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## Chancellor's Update

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### Understanding Pope Francis

Upon taking the throne of Peter, he took the name of Francis. When asked why, he said that like St. Francis of Assisi, I have to rebuild the Church. Like St. Francis of Assisi, who traveled to the Middle East and spoke to the Moslem leaders, Pope Francis has called for prayer, peace and understanding. In all his endeavors whether calling world leaders to peace, self control, patience, addressing marital problems, or sexual situations the pope has one constant message. From his General Audience of May 7 we have the following: "Today, as we give thanks for the gift of counsel, let us seek to support one another along the path of faith, as we seek to be ever more docile to the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts." Thus he starts his homily: "If my people... humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." -2 Chronicles 7:14. On April 3, 2014 the Pope gave the following homily based on the quote above from Chronicles (Paralipomenon) between Moses and God.

"This prayer is a real struggle with God. A struggle [on the part of] the leader of a people to save his people, who are the people of God. Moses speaks freely in front of the Lord and in doing so teaches us how to pray without fear, freely, even with insistence. Moses insists. He is courageous. Prayer must also be a 'negotiation with God,' to which we bring our 'arguments.' Moses eventually convinces God, and the reading says that 'the Lord repented of the evil that He had threatened to do to His people.'

"But," the Pope asked, "who changed here? Has the Lord changed? I think not." And then the Pope gave a penetrating analysis of what actually happens in intense prayer. God does not change; we change.

"Moses is the one who has changed," the Pope said. "Because Moses believed that the Lord would do this, he believed that the Lord would have destroyed the people, and he searches, he tries to remember, how good the Lord has been to His people, how He led them from slavery in Egypt and guided them with a promise.

"With these arguments, he tries to convince God, but in doing so, he rediscovers the memory of his people, and God's mercy.

"This Moses, who was afraid, afraid that God would do this thing, in the end comes down from the mountain with something great in his heart: Our God is merciful. He knows how to forgive. He can go back on His decisions. He is a Father."

“Moses knew all of this,” Pope Francis observed, “but he vaguely knew it.” Now, “he rediscovers it in prayer. This is what prayer does to us: it changes our heart.” And the Pope concluded: “Prayer changes our heart. It helps us better understand our God. This is why it is important to speak with the Lord, not with empty words - Jesus says, ‘as pagans do.’ No, no, talk with [Him about] reality: ‘Look, Lord, I have this problem, in my family, with my child, with this, with that’. What can you do? You cannot leave me like this!’ This is prayer! Does this prayer take a long time? Yes, it takes time. It takes the time we need to get to know God better...”

"This is how our prayer must be: free, insistent, with arguments. Even rebuking the Lord a little: 'You promised me this but you didn't do it,' just like talking with a friend. Open your heart to this prayer. Moses came down from the Mount invigorated: 'I have known more of the Lord,' and with that strength given him by prayer, he resumed the task of leading his people to the Promised Land.

"Because prayer invigorates: it is invigorating. May the Lord give us all this grace, because prayer is a grace.”

## Commentary

Here at headquarters we receive many comments from the left, right, middle of the road, liberals, conservatives and traditionalists, etc.

One must remember: the pope is the pope of everyone, not just your group. It is his job to bring all people to the Lord including those fallen away or have never heard of Jesus. The Church must always be forbearing, patient and loving. This requires an enormous amount of time.

Jesus spoke, not only to the Jewish people, but also to Canaanites, Samaritans and even Roman Centurions. He spoke to anyone who would listen. He even spoke to Pilate, a contemporary political leader.

Francis is reminding us that prayer will give us the forbearance and patience to confront our daughters being kidnapped as in Nigeria, towns destroyed as in the Ukraine, Churches burned as in the Middle East, our lives turned upside down in marital problems or sexual matters and our finances crushed by the actions of politicians and wars.

Over the last few months we have been trying to alert and awaken our fellow co-religious and citizens of what Pope Francis has said here, namely pray, talk to the Lord about your problems and **you** will be changed.

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