

Pope opens foot-washing rite to women

BY NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has changed church regulations to explicitly allow women and girls to participate in the Easter Week foot-washing ritual, after having shocked many Catholics by performing the rite on women and Muslims just weeks after he was elected.

Proponents of women's ordination hailed Francis' decree, while traditionalist Catholics warned that it would weaken the church and lead to questions about the inviolability of the all-male priesthood.

Vatican rules for the Holy Thursday rite had long called for only men to participate. Popes past and many priests traditionally performed the ritual on 12 Catholic men, recalling Jesus' 12 apostles and further cementing the doctrine of an all-male priesthood.

Shortly after he was elected, Francis raised conservative eyebrows by performing the rite on men and women, Catholics as well as Muslims, at a juvenile detention facility in Rome.

He has continued to include men and women, young and old, sick and healthy and people of different faiths, traveling each year to encounter them to show his willingness to serve. It was a tradition he began as archbishop in Buenos Aires.

Last week, the Vatican published a decree from the Vatican's liturgy office introducing an "innovation" to the church's rules that better corresponds to Francis' way of doing things.

The decree said the rite can now be performed on anyone "chosen from among the people of God." It specifies that the group can include "men and women, and ideally young and old, healthy and sick, clerical, consecrated and lay."

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Photo provided by L'Osservatore Romano

Pope Francis kisses the foot of an inmate at a juvenile detention center in Rome in 2013. Francis washed the feet of a dozen inmates at the juvenile detention center in a Holy Thursday ritual that he celebrated for years as archbishop and is continuing as pope.



Photo provided by Caged Movie LLC

Skye, played by Cassidy Gifford, is auctioned at a Greek brothel in 'Caged No More,' a new film which shines a light on human trafficking.

INSPIRED CINEMA

La. filmmakers' faith fuels movie projects

BY GEORGE MORRIS
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Jarred Coates always wanted to work in movies. He just took a roundabout way to get there.

"When I graduated from high school in '88, the option of doing film here in Louisiana was not even thought about," Coates said.

Now it is, and Coates is half of a Louisiana collaboration that helped produce the surprise Christian cinematic hit "God's Not Dead," and now has another faith-inspired movie in theaters.

"Caged No More," which shines a spotlight on human sexual trafficking, opened Jan. 22 in selected theaters, includ-



Photo provided by Icon Media Group

Louisiana filmmakers Lisa Arnold and Jarred Coates wrote, directed and produced 'Caged No More,' and were behind the surprise Christian hit 'God's Not Dead.'

ing Cinemark Perkins Rowe. It's the latest project of Film Incito, which was founded by Coates and Lisa Arnold, of Covington, who both have production companies.

They formed Film Incito (the Latin word meaning "inspire") because they share the goal of making films with inspirational themes that appeal to

Christian audiences. Coates, however, said he'd be doing this whether the market was big or small.

"It was never something I decided to do because I thought there was an opportunity," he said. "I felt like that was a calling."

Coates, 46, was born in Baton Rouge, graduated from Traf-

ton Academy (now The Dunham School), LSU and Bethany World Prayer Center's Minister's Training Institute.

He taught at Christian Life Academy, became an associate pastor in Memphis, Tennessee, and directed a Christian work-release program in Monroe for

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Special services put emphasis on mercy

Last spring, Pope Francis announced that 2016 would be a jubilee year, or holy year.

This Extraordinary Jubilee Year for the Church is being hailed as a "Holy Year of Mercy."

It began Dec. 8, the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second Vatican Council, and will end Nov. 20, the Feast of Christ the King.

In honor of the jubilee, St. Agnes Catholic Church is holding a special Wednesday night emphasis during Lent. Starting at 6:15 p.m., Feb. 17, and running Wednesdays through Holy Week, March 23, the church is holding special reflections on mercy.

Different speakers will comment on aspects of mercy, such as God's mercy in the Bible, mercy in the liturgy and sacraments, and ways to show mercy to one's family.

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines mercy as "compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm" or something "performed out of a desire to relieve suffering; motivated by

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compassion."

The Rev. Charbel Jamhoury, pastor at St. Agnes, discussed in email the importance of mercy and the jubilee year.

"Pope Francis is convinced the conversion of the world needs to come, at this time, through

mercy," Jamhoury said. "... He noted how clergy sex abuse, corruption and clericalism had hurt so many. (Francis) said, 'The Church is a mother, she has to go out to heal those who are hurting, with mercy. ... She must travel this path of mercy, and find a form of mercy for all.'"

The pastor said mercy allows people to experience the truth about God.

"This is a call to everyone, every human being, every Catholic, and especially to those alienated from God and his church," he said. "But, like the prodigal son, seeking a way back, judgment only reinforces the exclusion. For those who have been hurt, the pope encouraged us to carry them on our shoulders. And this is called Mercy."

Jamhoury said the pope declared, "God has the power to transform lives and heal the planet."

"No one can be excluded from the mercy of God; everyone knows the way to access it and the Church is the house that welcomes all and refuses no one," he said. "Its doors remain wide open, so that those who are touched by grace can find the certainty of forgiveness. The greater the sin, so much the greater must be the love that the Church expresses toward those who convert."

He also took time to explain the concept of jubilee, which dates to the time of Moses. In the Old Testament, it was a time of forgiveness. Debts were to be forgiven and slaves set free.

The Catholic Church has continued that tradition by using a holy year or jubilee to emphasize something through the liturgy, for example, faith or consecrated life, Jamhoury said.

These special years have happened every 25 years since 1475.

This year, 2016, is an extraordinary jubilee year, which has happened four times.

Jamhoury said extraordinary jubilees are called for special occasions. John Paul II called one in 1983 on the 1950th anniversary of the Year of Redemption, when Jesus was crucified. The most recent jubilee was known as the "Great Jubilee" in 2000.

Hour of Mercy Lenten Reflections

St. Agnes Catholic Church, 749 East Blvd., is marking the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy — Holy Year of Mercy with a series of meetings, which will be held at 6:15 p.m. Wednesdays during Lent. Mass starts at 5:30 p.m.

FEB. 17: INTRODUCTION TO MERCY AND THE HOUR OF MERCY SERIES

What is mercy? Why the misery and lack of peace in our lives? Trust, our response to God's mercy. The Our Father and steps to forgiveness. Presented by Monsignor Robert H. Berggreen, pastor of St. Mary of False River Church, New Roads.

FEB. 24: GOD'S MERCY REVEALED IN THE BIBLE

Mercy in the Old Testament and Psalms, the Great Hallel. The Mercy parables and St. Luke. How lectio divina leads us to experience God's divine mercy and helps us show mercy to others. Presented by Stephen J. Binz, Catholic biblical scholar, licensed clinical social worker and award-winning author.

MARCH 2: JESUS, GIFT OF DIVINE MERCY IN THE LITURGY AND IN THE SACRAMENTS

Liturgy, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Sacrament of Reconciliation. Presented by the Rev. Michael H. Champagne, of Commu-

nity of Jesus Crucified, a Catholic private association of the Christian faithful, canonically erected in the Diocese of Lafayette.

MARCH 9: FORGIVENESS IN THE FAMILY AND BECOMING A WITNESS TO MERCY

"Be merciful just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36). Presented by James and Karen Broussard, married couples retreat rectors for Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat Center, St. Martinville; past presenters/coordinators for Retrouvaille of Acadiana.

MARCH 16: IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO TRUST

Steps to self-awareness. Seeking the right help. Presented by Sister Dulce Maria Flores, regional superior, Mercedarian Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

HOLY WEEK, MARCH 23: THE SACRED HEART AND DIVINE MERCY

Experiencing God's unconditional love. Presented by the Rev. Miles D. Walsh, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Baton Rouge.