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“If the Church is alive, she must always surprise.”—Pope Francis

Loyola Press to Release a Second Collection of Pope Francis’s Writings: *Walking with Jesus: A Way Forward for the Church*

Chicago, IL—In a new book to be released on Easter Sunday, Pope Francis invokes the example of Jesus walking all over Palestine as a model for a Church that moves beyond its walls to meet the world. “This is something striking about the Gospels: Jesus is often walking, and he teaches his disciples along the way. Jesus did not come to teach a philosophy, an ideology...but rather ‘a way,’ a journey to be undertaken with him, and we learn the way as we go, by walking,” Pope Francis writes in *Walking with Jesus: A Way Forward for the Church* (Loyola Press, April 5, 2015; foreword by Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago).

“Walking means every single action of a Christian is to be a step closer and closer to God and to one’s neighbors,” says Giuliano Vigini, a professor at the Catholic University of Milan, who organized this second volume of the Pope’s homilies, speeches, and essays. The previous work edited by Vigini, *The Church of Mercy*, also published by Loyola Press, sold tens of thousands of copies.

Walking with Jesus demonstrates again the Pope’s appealing humility, the firm conviction and joy of his faith, the warmth of his personality, and his friendly, lively way of speaking. He emphasizes the communitarian nature of the Church as a channel of God’s grace and infinite love that is open to all: “In this community we share the beauty of the experience of a love that precedes us all, but that at the same time calls us to be ‘channels’ of grace for one another, despite our limitations and our sins,” he writes. “The communitarian dimension is not just a ‘frame’ or an ‘outline’, but an integral part of Christian life.” Pope Francis urges Christians to:

- Be open to the world: “Every Christian is called to go out to meet others, to dialogue with those who do not think as we do, with those who have another faith or who have no faith. To encounter all, because what we all share in common is that we were created in the image and likeness of God.”
- Bring hope to the hopeless: “No one is excluded from life’s hope, from God’s love. The Church is sent to reawaken this hope everywhere, especially where it has been suffocated by difficult and often inhumane living conditions, where hope cannot breathe....we need the fresh air of the Gospel....to rekindle it in peoples’ hearts.”
- Beware the dangers of consumerism: “The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience.”

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Walking with Jesus includes writings on the essential nature of the sacraments; the Christian duty to protect creation; the usefulness of social media in creating a sense of human unity; the revolutionary nature of the Beatitudes; the work of the Holy Spirit in individual lives; and the need to foster a “culture of encounter.”

The book ends with a call for the Church to be compelling: “Take note: if the Church is alive, she must always surprise. It is incumbent upon the living Church to astound. A Church that is unable to astound is a Church that is weak, sick, dying, and that needs admission to the intensive care unit as soon as possible!”

Walking with Jesus features a foreword by Blase J. Cupich, the new Archbishop of Chicago appointed by Pope Francis. He points out how Francis’s vision is informed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, “the company of Jesus” of which the pope is a member. “They walked with Jesus as his disciples and apostles who carried on the mission of Jesus in the Church and in the world,” the Archbishop writes. Pope Francis shares that spiritual heritage, “a life-giving force of renewal for the entire Church.”

Loyola Press is a Jesuit ministry serving the Catholic community since its founding in 1912. They are a nonprofit apostolate of the Chicago-Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus.

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Walking with Jesus: A Way Forward for the Church by Pope Francis

Foreword by Archbishop Blase J. Cupich

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