Vatican

Francis, the comic strip



Pope Francis poses with migrants during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican June 6. (CNS/Paul Haring)

Carol Glatz

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God shows his love, not with great speeches, but with simple, tender acts of charity, Pope Francis said.

"When Jesus wants to teach us how a Christian should be, he tells us very little," the pope said, but he shows people by feeding the hungry and welcoming the stranger.

Celebrating Mass in the chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae June 8, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the pope spoke about the boundless love of Christ, "which surpasses knowledge."

It is not easy to understand, he said, but God expresses his infinite love in small, tender ways.

In the day's first reading, the prophet Hosea says the Lord loved his people like a child, taking them into his arms, drawing them in, "close, like a dad" would, the pope said.

"How does God show his love? With great things? No, he becomes small with gestures of tenderness, goodness," he said. God stoops low and gets close.

In Christ, God then became flesh, lowering himself even unto death, the pope said, which helps teach Christians the right path they should take.

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"What does (Jesus) say? He doesn't say, 'I think God is like this. I have understood God's love.' No, no. I made God's love small," the pope said, that is, he expressed God's love concretely on a small scale by feeding someone who was hungry, giving the thirsty something to drink, visiting a prisoner or someone who is ill.

"The works of mercy are precisely the path of love that Jesus teaches us in continuity with this great love of God," he said.

Therefore, there is no need for grand speeches about love, he said, but there is a need for men and women "who know how to do these little things for Jesus, for the Father."

Works of mercy continues that love, which is made small so it can "reach us and we carry it forward," Francis said.