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Francis' latest powerful words reflect themes of his papacy

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In a homily on Wednesday morning, Pope Francis makes clear that killing in the name of God can never be acceptable. He says, in fact, that it is blasphemy.

Francis further stresses that God has redeemed everybody through the blood of Christ, and that includes atheists.

At Religion News Service, David Gibson writes that the pope's homily identifies certain themes that keep appearing in the words of the pontiff during the early days of his papacy. Those themes include a greater openness to the world, and an avoidance of self-referential thinking and acting.

Also, the pope has stressed humility and a greater recognition and acceptance of the failings of the church. A final theme mentioned by Gibson is tolerance of nonbelievers.

One value Gibson didn't mention, but which ties to the others is a preference for the poor. Francis has exemplified this value in just about every action he has taken beginning with his choice of the name Francis.

These themes represent core Christian gospel values. They portend a church and a papacy determined to more closely model Christ in its approach to others. Please God, let this movement continue and be enhanced and intensified.

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