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Special Report: The Francis Interview

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SPECIAL REPORT: THE FRANCIS INTERVIEW

Forthright talk

'This church ... is the home of all, not a small chapel'



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need to discuss social reform.

Media headlines described Francis' interview with the *American* publication as "interview that changed the church," "epoch-making" and "historic" in many ways.

Francis expressed the tone of his interview with leaders, which were conducted in Italian, before it was translated and published.

In the interview Francis also mentioned his own experiences with homophobia, abortion and the "unhealthy" issue of "unhealthy" death, "especially in the case of the elderly," but he was not speaking about these things, and I was surprised that, but when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context. The teaching of the church, that means it is clear and it is a part of the church, but it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time.

Francis said the church has no right to "impose anything" in the lives of gays and lesbians, depending on the law of the country. "When you have a law," he said, "homosexuals during his archiepiscopal press conference following his trip to Brazil."

As the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Francis said, he married many gay men and lesbians who said they were "very unhappy" because they felt the church condemned them.

"The church does not want to be like this," he said.

"This church ... is the home of all, not a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people. We must not reduce the home of the universal church to a sort of printing press for the church," he said.

Francis was forthright speaking with leaders like he was. "The most serious of the evils that affect the world these days are social inequality and the loss of the sense of the good. The old need care and compassion. We need to work and hope but we have never seen our brother and the problems in their lives. We need to be more attentive. They have been created by the power. You tell me: Can you live crushed under the weight of the power? Because a moment of the past and without the desire to look ahead to the future by looking something, a future, a hope?" Can you go on like that? This, in fact, is the most urgent problem that the church is facing."

Mercy for the spiritually poor essential for reform

By Hans Küng

Pope Francis shows courage not only in his terms of appearance in the *American*, but also in his terms of content. He has written an open letter to leading bishops and cardinals in which he has written: "I am sorry that I cannot be with you in the same way as you are with me. I am sorry that I cannot be with you in the same way as you are with me." This is a powerful statement of solidarity and mercy.

Francis's words are a call to action for the church to be more merciful and to be more open to the needs of the poor and the marginalized. He is calling for a church that is not just a place of worship, but a place of love and compassion.

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Special to the National Catholic Reporter

The National Catholic Reporter October 11, 2013, edition includes a special section featuring reactions to Pope Francis' interview. Contributors include Richard Rohr, Hans Küng, Michelle Gonzalez, Richard Gaillardetz and Chris Lowney, as well as analysis from NCR staff. Additional copies of this edition are

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Two-page spread from National Catholic Reporter featuring 'SPECIAL REPORT: THE FRANCIS INTERVIEW'. The left page includes an image of Pope Francis and a section titled 'SENTENCE ON WOMEN 'INADVERTENTLY DELETED''. The right page features a large photo of Pope Francis with a section titled 'A 'culture of encounter''. A sidebar on the left contains 'FOR THE RECORD: NOT A VATICAN CENTER' and 'BOBBY: TEACHING US HOW TO LIVE'. A bottom sidebar contains 'NCR covers the important news and events that shape our church. And we've been doing so for nearly 50 years.' and a 'SUBSCRIBE TODAY' offer.

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