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Francis remark lends support to public breast-feeding

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The Francis Chronicles

Pope Francis' uncommon touch is being highlighted again, this time in a report of the pontiff offering his support to a woman to breast-feed in public.

Religion News Service's David Gibson reports on the comment, found in a papal interview recorded from a report in an Italian newspaper last Sunday.

It was reported as an answer to a reporter's question and came in the context of Francis talking about those suffering from hunger.

Said the pontiff: "There are so many children that cry because they are hungry. At the Wednesday General Audience the other day, there was a young mother behind one of the barriers with a baby that was just a few months old. The child was crying its eyes out as I came past. The mother was caressing it. I said to her: 'Madam, I think the child's hungry.' "

"Yes, it's probably time," she replied.

"Please give it something to eat!" I said. "She was shy and didn't want to breast-feed in public, while the pope was passing. I wish to say the same to humanity: 'Give people something to eat!' That woman had milk to give to her child; we have enough food in the world to feed everyone."

Gibson noted that in supporting public breast-feeding, Francis was merely advocating tradition. He pointed out that some of the earliest frescos in the catacombs displayed God's love through the imagery of Mary breastfeeding the infant Jesus.

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