

Pope Francis' first Lenten message to focus on poverty, generosity

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Pope Francis has chosen the theme, "He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich," for this year's Lenten message, said a Vatican statement Friday.

The theme comes from a verse from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, where the apostle is promoting generosity in giving and wishes to "test the genuineness of your love by your concern for others."

The full verse reads: "For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

The text of the pope's message for Lent, which begins March 5, was to be released at a Vatican news conference Feb. 4.

Haiti was expected to be a focus for the Lenten season as a married Italian couple serving as missionaries in the Caribbean nation were scheduled to speak at the Vatican news conference along with top officials from the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, which promotes Catholic charitable giving.

According to the World Bank, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and is still struggling to rebuild four years after a devastating earthquake struck Jan. 12, 2010.

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