

## **Pope invites Christian and Muslim refugees to share each others suffering and faith**



*At today's closed-door meeting with young people from the Roman parish of the Sacro Cuore Basilica in Castro Pretorio, which Francis visited yesterday, he asked them to "cause a stir" on Church reform. "I also suffer," Francis told them*

**IACOPO SCARAMUZZI, VATICAN INSIDER, 20 JANUARY 2014**

The Pope asked young people to "cause a stir" on Church reform during the course of a closed-door meeting held today with youth from the parish of the Basilica dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Castro Pretorio, near Rome's termini railway station. Francis went on a four-hour visit of the parish yesterday afternoon. During today's meeting Francis confided that he also felt "suffering" and invited those among them who were Christians who read the Bible and those of them who were Muslims who read the Koran to share their suffering and faith because there is one single God, one same God.

An article published in today's issue of the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* says that "on the subject of Church reform," the Pope invited the young people to "cause a stir" and take action, avoiding "attitudes that are too rigid." Francis mentioned the example of a conference he held once with a group of young people who wanted to renew the Church: "they were all so serious ... then, during mass, they all stood there with their hands glued together, looking rigid that at one point I thought I was talking to a set of statues, not people. And they said: "This is what we have to do...". They had a recipe all ready. Poor things, they didn't do very well. So taking things seriously doesn't mean playing at being serious. It means joy, prayer, seeking the Lord, reading the Word of God, celebrating ... This is Christian seriousness. If a young person never smiles and doesn't cause a bit of a stir, he or she has grown old too quickly.".....

Jorge Mario Bergoglio also met with 80 or so refugees, from the 400 that receive assistance and support from the parish of the Sacro Cuore Basilica. "I feel at home among you. Thank you. One can go on a visit and be all polite and follow protocol perfectly but there is no warmth," the Argentinean Pope said. "There's just one thing I'm missing: Mariana hasn't given me any mate," he joked, referring to the traditional Argentinean beverage that was offered to him. The Pope also took questions from some refugees. Regarding suffering he said: "When I think about my own personal story, I see so many good and bad things." "No, the Pope doesn't suffer ... Does the Pope suffer or not? Yes or no? We all suffer, don't we? The Pope is a man like any other and has his own sufferings; but he also has good things" in his life. Francis then talked about the importance of sharing suffering: "It is important you do this when you meet. Those who are Christians with the Bible and those who are Muslims

with the Koran, with the faith you have received from your fathers, a faith that will always help you move forward. Share your faith, because there is one single God, the same God.” Finally, the Pope talked about “hunger” and “thirst”: not just physical hunger and thirst, but spiritual, typical of those who had everything but had a hungry and thirsty heart: they were lacking one crucial thing: the ability to love; God was lacking; and when God is lacking, there is a great deal of hunger and a great deal of thirst.”