

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Saint Peter's Square
XXXI World Youth Day*

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[...] But this is only the beginning. The humiliation of Jesus reaches its utmost in the Passion: he is sold for thirty pieces of silver and betrayed by the kiss of a disciple whom he had chosen and called his friend. Nearly all the others flee and abandon him; Peter denies him three times in the courtyard of the temple. Humiliated in his spirit by mockery, insults and spitting, he suffers in his body terrible brutality: the blows, the scourging and the crown of thorns make his face unrecognizable. He also experiences shame and disgraceful condemnation by religious and political authorities: he is *made into sin* and *considered to be unjust*. Pilate then sends him to Herod, who in turn sends him to the Roman governor. Even as every form of justice is denied to him, Jesus also experiences in his own flesh indifference, since no one wishes to take responsibility for his fate. And I think of the many people, so many outcasts, so many asylum seekers, so many refugees, all of those for whose fate no one wishes to take responsibility. The crowd, who just a little earlier had acclaimed him, now changes their praise into a cry of accusation, even to the point of preferring that a murderer be released in his place. And so the hour of death on the cross arrives, that most painful form of shame reserved for traitors, slaves and the worst kind of criminals. But isolation, defamation and pain are not yet the full extent of his deprivation. To be totally in solidarity with us, he also experiences on the Cross the mysterious abandonment of the Father. In his abandonment, however, he prays and entrusts himself: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23:46). Hanging from the wood of the cross, beside derision he now confronts the last temptation: to come down from the Cross, to conquer evil by might and to show the face of a powerful and invincible God. Jesus, however, even here at the height of his annihilation, reveals the true face of God, which is mercy. He forgives those who are crucifying him, he opens the gates of paradise to the repentant thief and he touches the heart of the centurion. If the mystery of evil is unfathomable, then the reality of Love poured out through him is infinite, reaching even to the tomb and to hell. He takes upon himself all our pain that he may redeem it, bringing light to darkness, life to death, love to hatred. [...]