



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON WNYC

Soterios Johnson: Mayor de Blasio will be with the Pontiff most of the day, and he joins us now. Good morning, mayor.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, Soterios.

Soterios Johnson: So you were on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral last night to greet the Pope. Describe that moment – what did you talk about?

Mayor: I – it's an incredible moment when you met a leader of that moral authority. And that impact on the world. So, I very humbled by the moment. I greeted him in Italian –

[Mayor speaks in Italian]

– which means 'Welcome Holy Father'.

Soterios Johnson: Very nice touch.

Mayor: You know, I thought – we know he speaks some English, but his primary languages are Spanish and Italian, so I wanted to give him that salute. And it's amazing. You know, I simply said to him he was in the city – the greatest city of immigrants and a city built by immigrants. And I thanked him for all he had done to speak up for immigrants around the world.

Soterios Johnson: You know the Pope's message is that we all need to work together. He told Congress yesterday; let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. What have you taken away from his message?

Mayor: It's inspiring to me because the things I feel – the thing that I have devoted my life to – when I hear him speak it gives me energy. It gives me a sense of what can be achieved. Look, he is a global leader on a scale I don't think we've ever seen before. Maybe that's also a comment on the digital age – a single global voice for equality; for inclusion that is being felt all over the world. You know, I think he's changing the way people think. And he's changing what's possible. So for me it was extraordinarily inspiring and energizing to be in his presence. And you know, when you think about his message and the context of the politics that you face in New

York City whether it comes to police-community relations or things you've fought for like affordable housing or combating income inequality. Is that achievable?

Mayor: I think what Pope Francis is showing us and teaching us is that a lot more is achievable than we realize. There's so much that he is calling for that I believe in and I am trying to follow his example. We are trying to go farther on climate change for example than the city's ever gone before. That's in large measure inspired by his call on all of us to reset our sites to save the planet. We obviously think you can change a fundamentally unequal society and make it more just and inclusive. That's something he's demanding of people all over the world. So, I think the power of Pope Francis is he raises the bar. He sets a demand on all of us. But in a way that is believable, that makes us feel we can reach it.

Soterios Johnson: You know Pope Francis took criticism when he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires for his silence in the face of the regimes police tactics, and you've been criticized at times for speaking out about police abuse, and seem to have been searching for ways to tamp down on antagonism with the cops. What lessons do you take from the choices the Pope makes about how to speak on polarizing issues?

Mayor: First of all, I think he is someone has been very open, and I've seen, in extraordinary fashion about his own evolution – his own ability to learn over time. And I certainly think the urgency with which he goes about his work is based on a lifetime of experiences that changed him. And he is open to those changes. And that's part of why he's such a powerful and compelling leader. But look, for me I think it's important to speak the truth as you know it. That's what I've always tried to do. I think – I think in the end the Pope is showing us you can be a voice of truth; you can be a voice of urgency, but also be a voice of compassion and inclusion. That's certainly – I say this with humility because I think there's no other leader like him, but I'm trying to emulate that example.

Soterios Johnson: Mayor de Blasio, thank you so much for coming on this morning.

Mayor: Thank you.

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