

Weekday Homilies of Pope Francis



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1. An absurdity to love Christ without the Church

*In his homily that followed the readings of the day on **Monday, February 24**, the Holy Father spoke of Christian discipleship as an abiding in Christ – in His Church, to which Christ calls us and brings us to return – even those who are far away. [\(Video\)](#)*

The Pope took his cue from the Gospel of the boy seized by convulsions, foaming at the mouth, in a middle of a



*shocked and helpless crowd. “And his worried father emerges from the crowd and decides to hope against hope in Jesus. Jesus, moved with compassion by the crystalline faith of the father, drives away the demon and then leans gently over the young man, who appears as if dead, helping him to his feet. All the noise and excitement created by the crowd gathered round the disciples, who had failed to liberate the boy, all the talk, ends in an act: Jesus lowers Himself and takes up the boy. These acts of Jesus make us think. When He heals, when He goes among the crowds and heals a person, He never leaves that person alone. **He is not a wizard, a sorcerer, a ‘healer’ who goes and plies his trade and is on his way: everyone he helps, he helps to return to his proper place - He leaves no one on the side of the road.***

These acts of Jesus are very beautiful, indeed.

Such gestures are found throughout the Gospels: from the resurrection of Lazarus; to the raising of the daughter of Jairus or of the widow’s son – as well as the lost sheep returned to the fold or the lost coin

recovered by the woman. Jesus always makes sure we get safely home. **He never leaves us alone, along the way.**

...Because Jesus did not only come from Heaven. He is the Son of a People. Jesus is the promise made to that People, which, beginning with Abraham, made its way toward the promise. These gestures of Jesus teach us that every healing, every act of pardon, always helps us return to our People, which is the Church.



Jesus always forgives, and his acts of forgiveness become ‘revolutionary’ or ‘inexplicable’ when they reach those who seem to us to be too far gone, like Matthew the tax collector or his colleague, Zacchaeus. **Christ’s healing acts always lead people ‘home’** – and thus it is impossible to understand Jesus without the People of God. It is an absurdity to love Christ without the Church, to feel Christ but not the Church, to follow Christ from the outskirts of the Church. Christ and the Church are united. Whenever Christ calls a person, He

brings that person to the Church. For this, it is good that a child comes to be baptized in Church – Mother Church.

And these, Jesus’ gestures of so much tenderness make us realize this: that our doctrine, let us say, or our following Christ, is not an idea. It is a constant abiding at home – and though each of us has the opportunity and the real experience of leaving home for a sin, a mistake - God knows - salvation means going home with Jesus in the Church. These are gestures of tenderness. One by one, the Lord is calling us as well, to His people, into His family, our mother, the Holy Church. Let us ponder on these acts of Jesus.”

2. Children starve in refugee camps and lords of war throw parties

*There are hungry children in refugee camps, while masters of the arms trade are having dinner parties. This was the picture evoking strong feelings, presented by Pope Francis at Mass **Tuesday, February 25.** The*



Pope’s homily was an passionate plea for peace and against war, in the world as well as the families. The Pope said that peace can not be just a "word" and urged all Christians not to "get used" to the scandal of the war. [\(Video\)](#)

"Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from?" *The Pope took his cue from the First Reading of the day, the Letter of the Apostle James. Commenting on the disputes between the disciples over who was the greatest among them, the Pope immediately pointed out that "distant hearts give rise to war. Every day, in newspapers, we find war – ...at this place people are divided, five have dead. ...in another place... more victims.*

These deaths seem to have become an almost daily tally. **We are getting used to reading these things! And if we had the patience to list all of the wars going on in the world right now, it would surely be several pages long.** It seems that the spirit of war has taken hold of us. Events are arranged to commemorate the centenary of the Great War, many millions of deaths ... Everyone is scandalized! But today it is still the same! Instead of one great war, there are small wars everywhere, people divided... And to protect their own interests they murder and kill each other.

When we were children in Sunday School and we were told the story of Cain and Abel, we couldn't accept that someone would kill their own brother. And yet today millions kill their own brothers and we're used to it: there are entire peoples divided, killing each other over a piece of land, a racial hatred, an ambition.

Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? The wars, hatred, enmity - can not be bought at the market: they are here in our hearts. As children, when we were being taught the story of Cain and Abel, all of us were shocked. We could not believe that someone would kill his brother. Today, however, millions of brothers kill each other. But we're used to it. We all express our shock and scandal at the First World War, but this great war being waged all around, somewhat out of sight, does not scandalize us in any way! And many die over a piece of land, an ambition, hatred, a racial jealousy. Passion leads us to the war, this spirit of worldliness.



Quite often when faced with a situation of war we find ourselves in a curious position: in order to resolve it we push ahead, arguing. The language of war. It is not first the language of peace! And the consequences? Think of the starving children in the refugee camps ... Just ponder over that: that is the result of the war! And think about the great salons, the parties thrown by the masters of the arms industries, those who manufacture



weapons, weapons that end up there. And the child who is sick, hungry, in a refugee camp and these huge parties, the good life led by those who manufacture weapons.

"What happens in our hearts? The Apostle James gives us a simple tip: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you". In other words, he warned that "this spirit of war, which leads us away from God, is not at a distance from us... It is even in our homes.

"How many families have been destroyed because the father and the mother are unable to find the path of peace and prefer war, to involve lawyers... War destroys! Where do the wars and where do the

conflicts among you come from? May be from your passions? They are in our heart! I propose today to pray for peace, 'peace' which appears to have become just 'a word', nothing more. We pray that this 'word' becomes 'action', that we can follow the advice of the Apostle James: *'Recognize your misery'*.

That misery, from which wars come: The wars in families, the wars in communities, the wars that are everywhere. Who among us cry when reading a newspaper, when seeing those images on TV? So many dead... And again quoting the Apostle: *"Your laughter will change into mourning and your joy to gloom ..."* This is what you must do today, a "A Christian confronted by so many wars, everywhere, lament, mourn, weep, be humble. May the Lord make us understand this and save us from becoming used to news of war.



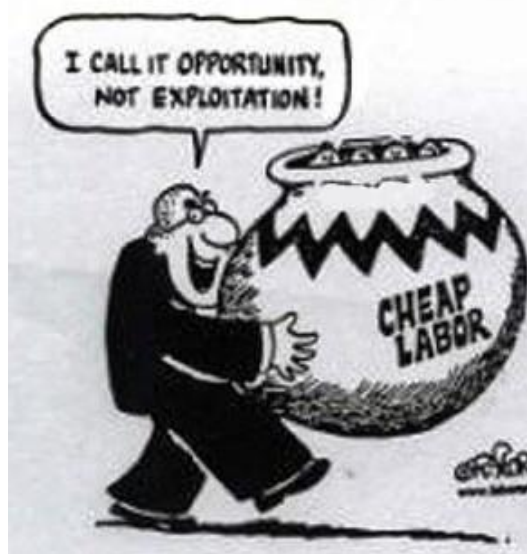
3. Practice what you preach



The incoherent Christian gives scandal, and scandal kills: those were the very strong words Pope Francis used in his homily at Mass on **Thursday, February 27.** ([Video](#))

The Holy Father took his cue from a Confirmation administered during the Mass. The person who receives this Sacrament, manifests the desire to be a Christian. To be Christian means to bear witness to Jesus Christ. A Christian is a person who thinks like a Christian, feels like a Christian and acts like a Christian. And this is coherency in the life of a Christian. Someone can be said to have faith, but if one of these things is missing, he is not a Christian, there's something wrong, there's a certain incoherence. And Christians who ordinarily, commonly live in incoherence, do so much harm.

We heard what the Apostle Saint James says to some incoherent people who boasted of being Christian, but took advantage of their employees. He says, 'Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.' The Lord who is strong... If one hears this, someone might think: 'But a communist has said this!' No, no, the Apostle James said it! It is the Word of the Lord. It's incoherent. And when there is no Christian coherency, and you live with this incoherence, you're causing scandal. And the Christians who are not coherent are causing scandal.



Jesus speaks so strongly against scandal: 'Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me, even one of these brothers, these sisters that have faith, it would be better

for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.’ An incoherent Christian does so much harm. Scandal kills. So many times we’ve heard ‘But Father, I believe in God, but not in the Church, because you Christians say one thing and do another.’ And also, ‘I believe in God, but not in you.’ This is because of inconsistency.



If you find yourself in front of – imagine! - in front of an atheist and he tells you he doesn’t believe in God, you can read him a whole library, where it says that God exists and even proving that God exists, and he will not have faith. But if in the presence of this atheist you bear coherent witness of Christian life, something will begin to work in his heart. It will be your witness that that will cause a restlessness in him on which the Holy Spirit will work. It’s a grace that we all, the whole Church must ask for: ‘Lord, grant that we might be coherent.’

And so we must pray, because to live in a coherent Christian way, prayer is necessary; because Christian coherency is a gift from God and we must ask for it. “Lord, grant that I might be consistent! Lord, grant that I might never cause scandal, that I might be a person who thinks like a Christian, who feels like a Christian, who acts like a Christian.” And when we fall because of our weakness, let us ask for forgiveness.

We are all sinners, all of us, but we all have the ability to ask for forgiveness. And He never gets tired of forgiving! Have the humility to ask for forgiveness: ‘Lord, I have not been consistent here. Forgive me!’ Go forward in life with Christian coherence, with the witness of one who believes in Jesus Christ, who knows that he is a sinner, but who has the courage to ask for forgiveness when he makes mistakes and who so afraid of giving scandal. May the Lord give this grace to all of us.”

4. Accompany, don't condemn, those who experience failure in marriage



*In his remarks following the readings of the day on **Friday, February 28**, Pope Francis focused on the beauty of marriage and warned that the Church must accompany – not condemn – those who experience failure in married life. He explained that Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church, and therefore you cannot understand one without the Other.*

The Pope was inspired by the Gospel of the day in which the Pharisees present Jesus with the problem of divorce. The Pope noted how their style is always the same: "casuistry", the question of whether "it is lawful or not".

"Always the petty case. **And this is the trap behind casuistic thought** [this rule based reasoning] **there is always a trap. Always!** Against people, against us and against God, always! 'But is it lawful to do this? Divorce ones'

wife?'. Jesus answers by asking them what the law states and by explaining why Moses made such a law. But he does not stop there: from casuistry, he goes to the heart of the problem and he goes right to the days of Creation. The Lord's reference here is so beautiful: 'from the beginning of Creation, God made them male and female, for this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. 'So they are no longer two, but one flesh''.



The Lord refers to the masterpiece of Creation which is precisely man and woman. And God said He did not want the man to be alone, He wanted him to have a companion on his journey. It is a poetic moment when Adam meets Eve: It is the beginning of love: go together as one flesh. The Lord always takes casuistic thought and brings it to

the very beginning of the revelation. On the other hand, this masterpiece of the Lord did not finish there, in the days of Creation, because the Lord has chosen this icon to explain the love that He has for His people. To the point that when the people are not faithful, He speaks to him with words of love.

The Lord takes this love of the masterpiece of Creation to explain the love He has for His people. And going further: when Paul needs to explain the mystery of Christ, he does it in a relationship, in reference to His Spouse: because Christ is married, Christ was married, He married the Church, His people. As the Father had married the People of Israel, Christ married His people. This is the love story, this is the history of the masterpiece of Creation – and before this path of love, this icon, casuistry falls and becomes sorrowful. When, however, this leaving one's father and mother, and joining oneself to a woman, and going forward... when this love fails – because many times it fails – **we have to feel the pain of the failure**, [we must] accompany those people who have had this failure in their love. **Do not condemn. Walk with them – and don't practice casuistry on their situation.**

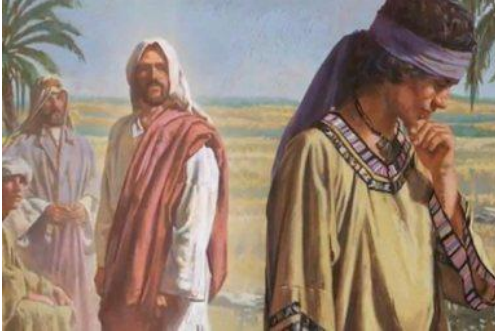


When one reads this, thinks about this design of love, this journey of love in Christian marriage, that God has blessed the masterpiece of his Creation. A blessing that has never been taken away. Not even original sin destroyed it. When one thinks of this, then, we see how beautiful love is, how beautiful marriage is, how beautiful the family is, how beautiful this journey is and how we love, how close we must be to our brothers and sisters who in life have had the misfortune of a failure in love. St. Paul speaks of the beauty of the love that Christ has for His Bride, the Church. Even here we must be careful that this love does not fail! By speaking about a bachelor Christ: Christ married the Church! And you can not understand Christ without the Church, and you can not understand the Church without Christ. This is the great mystery of the masterpiece of Creation. May the Lord give us, all of us, the grace to understand it and also the grace to never fall into these casuistic attitudes of the Pharisees, the teachers of the law".

5. Pope urges prayers for vocations free of vanity, power, money

Pope Francis at Mass on **Monday March 3**, asked the faithful to pray for vocations, so that God may send priests and nuns whose hearts are for Him only; free from the idolatry of vanity, of power and of wealth.

[\(Video\)](#) Pope Francis took his cue from the Gospel reading of day which tells of a rich man who ran up to Jesus, knelt down before him, and asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life.



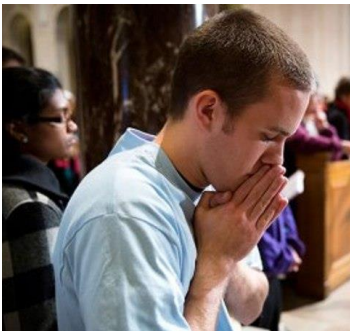
This man really wanted to hear what Jesus had to say. He was a good man, a man who had observed the commandments from his youth, but this was not enough for him, he wanted more. The Holy Spirit was pushing him further. Jesus looked at him, loved him and said to him: ‘Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor; then come, follow me’. At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions:

His heart was restless, because the Holy Spirit was pushing him to get closer to Jesus and to follow him. But his heart was full and he lacked the courage to empty it. **He made his choice: money. His heart was full of money... But he was not a thief, or a criminal: no, no, no! He was a good man: he had never stolen! He had never cheated anyone: his money had been earned honestly. But his heart was imprisoned,** it was attached to money and he lacked the freedom to choose. Money chose for him.

How many young people feel this call to get close to Jesus within their hearts, and they are enthusiastic about it. They are not ashamed to kneel before Him and to publically show their faith in Jesus Christ and they want to follow Him, but when their hearts are full of something else and they lack the courage to empty their hearts, they turn back and their joy becomes sadness. **There are many young people today who have a vocation, but sometimes there is something that stops them.**



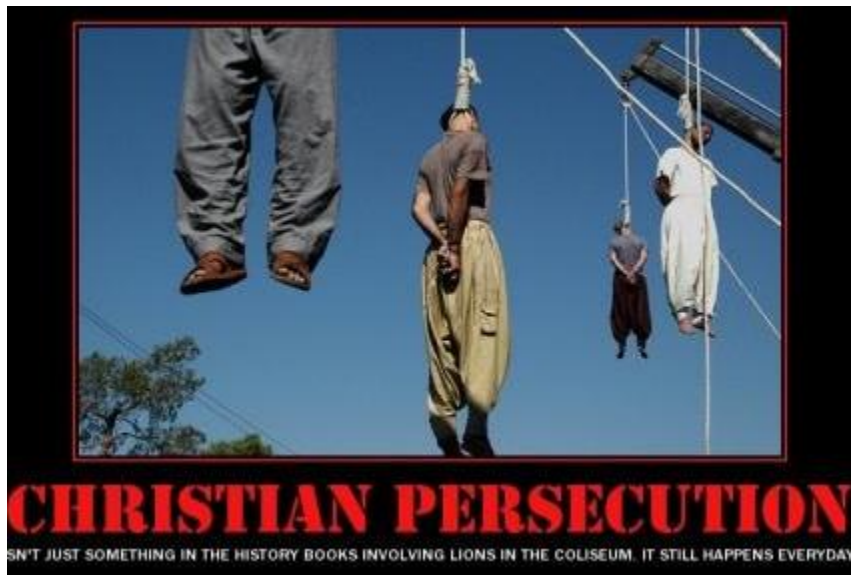
We must pray so that the hearts of these young people may be emptied, emptied of other interests and other sentiments, so that they may become free. This is the prayer for vocations. **“Lord, send us nuns and send us priests, defend them from idolatry, the idolatry of vanity, the idolatry of pride, the idolatry of power, the idolatry of money.”** This prayer of ours is to prepare these hearts so that they are able to follow Jesus closely.



The man described in the Gospel reading is such a good man and then he is so sad. Today there are many young people like him. This is why we must pray intensely to God: **“Lord, help these young people so that they may be free, not slaves, so that their hearts be for You only”** so that the call of the Lord can be heard and can bear fruit. This is the prayer for vocations. We must pray a lot. But we must be careful: there are vocations. We must help them to grow, so that the Lord can enter into those hearts and give this indescribable and glorious joy that belongs to every person who follows Jesus closely”.

6. There are Christians nowadays condemned for having a Bible

The persecution of Christians in contemporary society was the focus of Pope Francis' homily at his Mass on **Tuesday, March 4**. He warned that the Cross is always on the road of a Christian, saying "there are more Christian martyrs today than during the early days of the Church." [\(Video\)](#)



In his homily, the Pope took as his cue the biblical account of where Peter asked Jesus what the disciples would receive in return for following him. "Peter probably thought that following Jesus would be a great commercial activity because Jesus is generous but, as Christ warned, **whatever they would gain would always be accompanied by persecutions.**

It's as if Jesus said, "Yes, you have left everything and you will receive here on earth many things: but with persecutions!" **Like a salad with the oil of persecution: always!** This is what the Christian gains and this is the road for the person who

wants to follow Jesus, because it's the road that He himself trod. He was persecuted! It's the road of humbling yourself. That's what Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians. 'Jesus emptied himself and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross'. This is the reality of Christian life. The Cross is always present on the road of a Christian! We will have many brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers in the Church, in the Christian community, but we also will have persecutions.

This is because the world does not tolerate the divinity of Christ. It doesn't tolerate the preaching of the Gospel. It does not tolerate the Beatitudes. And so we have persecutions: with words, with insults, the things that they said about Christians in the early centuries, the condemnations, imprisonment.... But we easily forget. We think of the many Christians, 60 years ago, in the labour camps, in the camps of the Nazis, of the communists: So many of them! For being Christians! And even today.... **But (people say) 'today we are better educated and these things no longer exist'. Yes they do! And I tell you that today there are more martyrs than during the early times of the Church.** There are many brothers and sister nowadays who bear witness to Jesus and are persecuted. **Some cannot even carry around a Bible.**



They are condemned for having a Bible. **They can't wear a crucifix.** And this is the road of Jesus. But it is a joyful road because **our Lord never tests us beyond what we can bear. Christian life is not a commercial advantage, it's not making a career: It's simply following Jesus!** But when we follow Jesus this happens. Let's think about if we have within us the desire to be

courageous in bearing witness to Jesus. And let's spare a thought -- it will do us good -- for the many brothers and sisters who today -- today! -- cannot pray together because they are persecuted: they cannot have the book of the Gospel or a Bible because they are persecuted.

Let's think, about those brothers who cannot go to Mass because it is forbidden and let's ask ourselves if we are prepared to carry the Cross and suffer persecutions like Jesus did? It's good for all of us to think about this.



7. There is no "Christian style" without Jesus or the Cross

*Humility, meekness, generosity: this is the Christian "style," a way of life that travels along the way the Cross, as Jesus did, and is a life that leads to joy. That was the message of Pope Francis in his homily on **Thursday, March 6**, during Mass. [\(Video\)](#)*



In the Gospel for the Thursday after Ash Wednesday, Jesus says to His disciples: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." This, the Pope emphasized, is the "Christian style," because it was first put into practice by Jesus.

We can't think of the Christian life apart from this path. There is always this journey, a journey that He took first: the journey of humility, the journey, too, of humiliation, of denying oneself, and then rising. But this is the path. **Without the Cross, the Christian style is not Christian, and if the Cross is a Cross without Jesus, it is not Christian.** The Christian style takes the Cross with Jesus and goes forward - not without the Cross, not without Jesus.

Jesus gave us an example. Although He is one in being with God, He 'denied Himself, and was made a servant for all of us.' And this style will save us, will give us joy and make us fruitful, because this path of denying oneself is there to give us life; It is opposed to the path of selfishness, of being attached to all the good things for myself alone... This path is open to others, because the path Jesus took - of abnegation - that path was to give life. **The Christian style is precisely this style of humility, of mildness, of meekness.**

'For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it,' Jesus said, 'because, if the grain of wheat does not die, it can't bear fruit.' This is a source of joy, because He Himself gives us this joy. Following Jesus is a source of joy, but following Jesus in the style of Jesus, not in the style of the world. Following Jesus means following the way of the Lord, as far as one is able, to give life to others, not to give oneself life. It is the spirit of



generosity. Our selfishness makes us want to appear important in the sight of others. The book, *'The Imitation of Christ'*, gives a good advice. **“Love to be unknown and considered as nothing.”** This is Christian humility; the kind of humility practiced in the first place by Jesus.

And this is our joy, and this is our fruitfulness: to go with Jesus. Other joys are not fruitful; as Jesus said, they think only to gain the whole world, but in the end lose and ruin their lives. At the beginning of Lent, let us ask the Lord to teach us a little of this style of Christian service, of joy, of self-abnegation, and of fruitfulness with Him, as He desires.”



8. Charity is touching the flesh of the wounded and suffering

“Are we ashamed to touch the flesh of our wounded or suffering brothers and sisters?” *was one of the key questions posed by the Pope during his homily at the morning Mass on **Friday, March 7**. The Pope stressed that our life of faith is closely linked to a life of charity and Christians who do not practice the latter are hypocrites.* [\(Video\)](#)



*Pope Francis used his homily to reflect on the essential role of charity in the life of every Christian. He said, “**Christianity is not a repository of formal observances for people who put on a hypocritical good appearance to conceal their hearts empty of any charity.** Christianity is showing the flesh of Jesus who bends down without shame in front of whoever is suffering. This contrasts with the Pharisees who criticized Jesus and the disciples for not practicing the commandment to fast and who as Doctors of the Law transformed the observance of these commandments*

into a formality and transformed religious life into an ethic.

Receiving from our Lord the love of a Father, receiving from our Lord the identity of a people and then transforming it into an ethic means we are refusing that gift of love. These hypocritical people are good persons. They do all they should do. They seem good. **But they are ethicists without goodness because they have lost the sense of belonging to a people!** Our Lord gives us salvation through belonging to a people. **True charity or fasting means breaking the chains of evil, freeing the oppressed, sharing our bread with the hungry, opening our houses to the homeless and clothing the naked.**

This is the charity or fasting that our Lord wants! Charity that is concerned about the life of our brother, that is not ashamed - Isaiah said it himself - of the flesh of our brother. Our perfection, our holiness is linked with our people where we are chosen and become part. Our greatest act of holiness relates to the flesh of our brother and the flesh of Jesus Christ. **Our act of holiness today, here at the altar is not a hypocritical fasting: instead it means not being ashamed of the flesh of Christ which comes here today!** This is the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ. It means sharing our bread with the hungry, taking care of the sick, the elderly, those who can't give us anything in return: this is not being ashamed of the flesh!"



The most difficult charity (or fasting) is the charity of goodness such as that practiced by the Good Samaritan who bent over the wounded man unlike the priest who hurried past, maybe out of fear of becoming infected. And this is the question posed by the Church today: **“Am I ashamed of the flesh of my brother and sister?”**



When I give alms, do I drop the coin without touching the hand (of the poor person, beggar)? And if by chance I do touch it, do I immediately withdraw it? When I give alms, do I look into the eyes of my brother, my sister? When I know a person is ill, do I go and visit that person? Do I greet him or her with affection? There's a sign that possibly may help us, it's a question: Am I capable of giving a caress or a hug to the sick, the elderly, the children, or have I lost sight of the meaning of a caress? These hypocrites were unable to give a caress. They had forgotten how to do it..... **Don't be ashamed of the flesh of our brother, it's our flesh!** We will be judged by the way we behave towards this brother, this sister.”