

Pope Francis: Jesus' Life 'Ended in Failure'

The highest human official in the Catholic Church told parishioners at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York that Christ's human life ended in the failure of the cross.

"God sees to the fruits of our labors," Pope Francis said during his whirlwind U.S. tour. "And if at times our efforts and works seem to fail and produce no fruit, we need to remember that we are followers of Jesus ... and His life, humanly speaking, ended in failure, the failure of the cross."

The pontiff's words stir questions for Christians who believe in the saving power of the gospel, which declares Christ's sacrifice the greatest victory—not abject failure.

"Pope Francis means that from a superficial, human point of view, Jesus' death might make it look like he was a failure, but from God's perspective, this was not so," writes *Catholic Answers'* Jimmy Akin.

Akin continued: "In Jesus' day, people expected the Messiah to lead a triumphant rebellion against the Romans, restore political independence to Israel and reign in Jerusalem as a Davidic king. Jesus didn't do any of those things. ... From the perspective of most people of the day, based on their expectations of what the Messiah would do, he looked like a failed political revolutionary."

But from God's perspective, Akin writes, Christ fulfilled His destiny.

St. Patrick's homily comments aside, the pope frequents headlines and conversation topics among churchgoers, Catholics or otherwise. Earlier this week, the Vatican confirmed his

meeting with Kim Davis, the Kentucky clerk who refuses to issue gay marriage licenses.

He encouraged Davis to remain strong, which echoes additional sentiments addressed at St. Patrick's:

"I know that many of you are in the front lines in meeting the challenges of adapting to an evolving pastoral landscape. Whatever difficulties and trials you face, I ask you, like Saint Peter, to be at peace and to respond to them as Christ did: He thanked the Father, took up His cross and looked forward!"