

Pope Met Privately With Persecuted Christian Kim Davis During US Tour

Media is buzzing about the Pope's comments in support of conscientious objection and whether he knows about the Rowan County, Kentucky, Clerk of Court who was jailed for six days for refusing to issue same-sex marriage licenses.

The pope met privately with Kim Davis and her husband, Joe, at the Vatican Embassy in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, September 24, which was the birthday of Kim's father. Pope Francis spoke with Kim and Joe Davis in English.

During the meeting Pope Francis said, "Thank you for your courage."

Pope Francis also told Kim Davis, "Stay strong. He held out his hands and asked Kim to pray for him. Kim held his hands and said, "I will. Please pray for me," and the Pope said he would. The two embraced.

The pontiff presented Kim and Joe Davis each with a rosary that he personally blessed. Kim's mother and father are Catholic, and Kim and Joe will present the rosaries to her parents. Kim's mother was the elected Clerk of Court for Rowan County for 37 years until her retirement in 2014.

Kim Davis said, "I was humbled to meet Pope Francis. Of all people, why me? I never thought I would meet the pope. Who am I to have this rare opportunity? I am just a County Clerk who loves Jesus and desires with all my heart to serve Him."

Kim said, "Pope Francis was kind, genuinely caring, and very personable. He even asked me to pray for him. Pope Francis thanked me for my courage and told me to 'stay strong.'"

"The challenges we face in America regarding the sanctity of human life, marriage, and religious freedom are the same universal challenges Christians face around the world. Religious freedom is a human right that comes from God. These values are shared in common by people of faith, and the threats to religious freedom are universal. Kim Davis has become a symbol of this worldwide conflict between Christian faith and recent cultural challenges regarding marriage," said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel.

Speaking with reporters on board the papal plane to Rome, Pope Francis told Terry Moran of ABC News that conscientious objection is a human right, even for government officials: "Conscientious objection is a right that is a part of every human right. It is a right. And if a person does not allow others to be a conscientious objector, he denies a right. Conscientious objection must enter into every juridical structure because it is a right, a human right. Otherwise we would end up in a situation where we select what is a right, saying 'this right that has merit, this one does not.' It (conscientious objection) is a human right. It always moved me when I read, and I read it many times, when I read the 'Chanson de Roland' when the people were all in line and before them was the baptismal font and they had to choose between the baptismal font or the sword. They had to choose. They weren't permitted conscientious objection. It is a right and if we want to make peace, we have to respect all rights."

The ABC News Chief Foreign Correspondent asked if that includes government officials as well, and the Pope reiterated that conscientious objection is a human right: "It is a human right and if a government official is a human person, he has that right," Pope Francis affirmed.

After the above statement of Pope Francis was published, some in the media wondered if the pontiff knew of Kim Davis. "Not only did Pope Francis know of Kim Davis, he personally met with her to express his support," concluded Staver.