

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/the-pope/11894008/Pope-Francis-brings-message-of-hope-to-Americas-immigrants-in-Philadelphia.html>

The Telegraph

Pope Francis brings message of hope to America's immigrants in Philadelphia

Pope tells Hispanics in the crowd 'you bring many gifts to your new nation. You should never be ashamed of your traditions.'

Facebook **10**

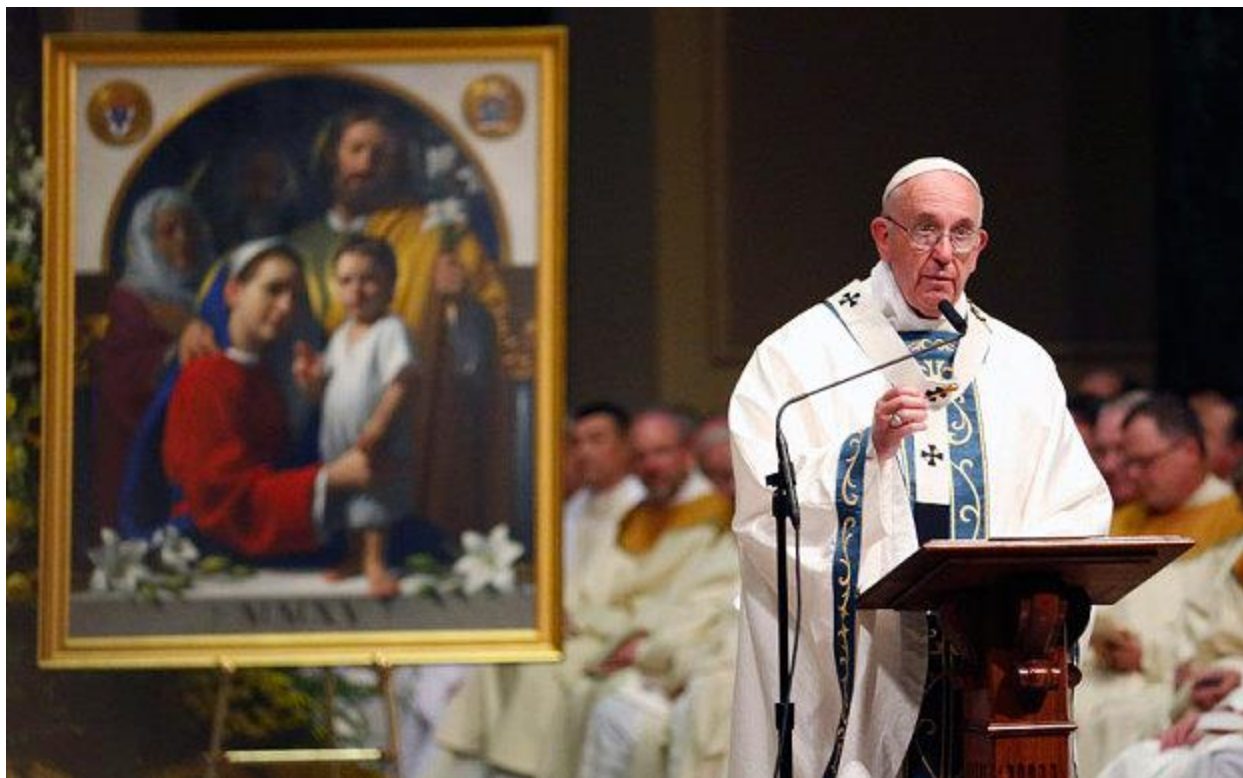
Twitter **67**

Pinterest **0**

LinkedIn **0**

Share **77**

Email



Pope Francis speaks during a Mass at Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul Photo: AP/Julio Cortez

By AFP

10:45PM BST 26 Sep 2015

[Pope Francis](#) paid tribute on Saturday to America's defence of basic freedoms, especially religious liberty, and urged immigrants not to be discouraged by the "challenges and hardships" they face in the United States.

[The Pope addressed a crowd of tens of thousands](#) - some waving Vatican flags - gathered outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence and the [US Constitution](#) were both debated and signed.

The 78-year-old Argentine pontiff - the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics - said the "ringing words" of the Declaration, adopted in 1776, still inspired people around the world today.

He specifically emphasised the importance of religious freedom, "a fundamental right which shapes the way we interact socially and personally with our neighbors whose religious views differ from our own."



Pope Francis arrives to speak in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia Photo: AP/Alex Brandon

Criticising "various forms of modern tyranny" that "seek to suppress religious freedom... or to use religion as a pretext for hatred and brutality," he urged those of all faiths to work together for "peace, tolerance and respect for the dignity and rights of others."

He paid homage to the Quakers, Protestants who founded Philadelphia in the 17th century, lauding their "profound evangelical sense of the dignity of each individual and the ideal of a community united by brotherly love."

"That sense of fraternal concern for the dignity of all, especially the weak and the vulnerable, became an essential part of the American spirit," he said.

At the end of his speech, the pope, the son of Italian immigrants, directed his attention to the thousands of Hispanics in the crowd.

"Many of you have emigrated to this country at great personal cost, but in the hope of building a new life. Do not be discouraged by [whatever challenges and hardships you face](#)," he said, speaking in Spanish.

He urged immigrants to remember that "you bring many gifts to your new nation. You should never be ashamed of your traditions," but called on them to be "responsible citizens, and to contribute fruitfully" to their communities.



Crowds gather on Independence Mall to watch Pope Francis speak on a jumbotron from the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia Photo: AFP

About a third of US Catholics are of Hispanic origin, according to the Pew Research Center.

Several in the crowd said they hoped that the pope's visit would lead to a reform of the broken US immigration system.

"I hope that he can soften the hearts of the members of Congress," said Silvina Rios, a 37 year-old mother from Argentina. Conservative US lawmakers are blocking immigration reform plans.

Mexican Marta Dominguez said she hoped Francis "can intercede to help immigrants and stop deportations.

"We have faith," she said.