

POPE'S UNSCHEDULED MEETINGS TELL ALL

The pope made several impromptu stops and visits while in the United States: he hugged disabled children on the street; he visited orphanages; and he stopped by St. Joseph's University. But beyond these pastoral gestures, he made two very important cultural statements: he visited the Little Sisters of the Poor and he greeted Kim Davis.

The Little Sisters of the Poor are suing the Obama administration for forcing them to sanction the distribution of abortion-inducing drugs in their health care plan. The pope's visit was a clear rebuke of the heavy-handed tactics of the administration's HHS mandate. Indeed, he encouraged the brave sisters to stand fast.

Then we learned that the pope met privately with Kim Davis, the Kentucky county clerk who refused, on religious grounds, to issue a marriage license to a gay couple. "Thank you for your courage. Stay strong." These words by the pope need no interpretation. Moreover, his invocation of conscience rights as a fundamental human right can only be read as a statement against the Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage.

These two unscheduled meetings by Pope Francis should convince everyone that he is an ardent advocate of life, religious liberty, and marriage (properly understood). He didn't have to make himself available to the Little Sisters of the Poor or Kim Davis, but he did.

Kudos to Pope Francis.