A Heart for Asia: Pope Francis in Asia

心系亚洲：教宗方济各的亚洲之行

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FIRST ATTRACTION TO ASIA

As a young seminarian in Argentina, Jorge Mario Bergoglio heard of the suffering of the victims of the Hiroshima bombing. Fr Pedro Arrupe, a Spaniard, was serving as novice master for the Jesuits near Hiroshima, and used his medical background to be a first responder for some victims. He shared that story with Bergoglio and many others. Bergoglio was so moved, that in 1963 he applied to be sent as a missionary to Japan, but was rejected because of the illness to his lungs. (Francis, 2025, 153-156) Bergoglio never lost his heart for the poor and the victims of all kinds of tragedies.

缘起：初识亚洲

年轻的阿根廷神学院修士豪尔赫·马里奥·贝尔格里奥(译者注：即后来的教宗Francis/方济各)，听闻了广岛原子弹爆炸遇难者的苦难。西班牙人佩德罗·阿鲁佩神父当时正在广岛附近担任耶稣会初学导师，他凭借自己的医学背景，成为第一批救助遇难者的救援人员之一。他向贝尔格里奥和许多人讲述了这段经历。贝尔格里奥深受触动，于1963年申请前往日本传教，却因肺部疾病而被拒绝。（Francis，2025，153-156）但贝尔格里奥从未失去对穷人和各类悲剧受害者的关怀之心。

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FRANCIS AND THE LOVE OF GOD

Although Francis has given us many words, both written and in speech, he has only four times used the high-level document, an encyclical. His encyclical on the human and divine love in the heart of Jesus Christ is the fourth encyclical, and coming so close to his death, it may be considered (with a classical image) his "swan song". (Francis, 2024) Perhaps because of its timing, this encyclical may not have drawn as much attention as the previous ones. But it is worth re-visiting, especially in the light of Pope Francis' personal "heart for Asia". When writing, Pope Francis said: "I believe it will be very beneficial for us to meditate on various aspects of the Lord's love that can illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal; but also to say something significant to a world that seems to have lost its heart." (Bordoni, 2024)

FRANCIS IN ASIA: SEVEN VISITS

As Pope Francis, he made a number of visits to Asia. He visited not only powerful states, but also smaller and poorer countries without much influence in the world. His last visit to Asia was in 2024, when he visited Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Singapore. This journey, over 12 days, was the longest which he took during his papacy. Timor-Leste's President Jose Ramos Horta said at his passing: "I know we are losing yet another great world leader in a time of great turmoil, in a time of huge deficit in world leadership, leadership of wisdom. We have lost a great moral voice, a voice of compassion." (Pacific Beat, 2025)

Francis was indeed a leader, but his mode of leadership was in contrast to the dominant mode of leadership in political circles. Francis practiced a leadership of service, and a leadership with a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. He invited not only Catholics but also other people of goodwill to live as people of compassion. His grounding we find in his view of the Heart of Jesus. (Francis, 2024, para 163)

方济各与天主的爱

尽管方济各以文字和言说的方式向我们传达了许多话语，但他仅四次使用了宗座通谕这一最高级别的文献形式。他关于耶稣基督圣心之人爱与神爱的通谕，是第四道通谕，而它的发布时间距他离世如此之近，或许可以（借用一个古典意象）被视为他的"天鹅之歌"（译者注：西方古典传统，喻指临终前或职业生涯的最后一部作品，带有"最后的绝唱"之意。）。（Francis，2024）也许正因为其发布时间，这道通谕并未像此前的几道那样引起广泛关注。但它值得重新审视，尤其是结合教宗方济各个人"心系亚洲"的情怀来看。在撰写这道通谕时，教宗方济各曾说："我相信，默想主之爱的各个层面，对我们大有裨益——它既能照亮教会革新的道路，也能向一个似乎已经失去心灵的世界传递某种深具意义的声音。"（Bordoni，2024）

方济各的亚洲之行：七次访问

就任教宗后，方济各多次出访亚洲。他所到之处，不仅有强国，也有那些体量较小、较为贫困、在世界舞台上影响力有限的国家。他最后一次亚洲之行是在2024年，先后访问了东帝汶、印度尼西亚、巴布亚新几内亚和新加坡。这次行程历时十二天有余，是他就任教宗以来历时最久的一次出访。东帝汶总统若泽·拉莫斯·奥尔塔在方济各离世后说道："在这个动荡不安的时代，在这个世界领导力——尤其是智慧型领导力——严重匮乏的时代，我知道我们又失去了一位伟大的世界领袖。我们失去了一个伟大的道德之声，一个充满慈悲的声音。"（Pacific Beat/太平洋节拍，2025）

Francis practiced a leadership of service, and a leadership with a preferential option for the poor and marginalized.

方济各践行了一种服务型的领导，一种优先关怀贫困者与边缘群体的领导。

In August 2015, Francis made his first visit to Asia. As usual, he followed a number of themes during his visit. As with all his visits to Asia, there are many examples of his impulse to compassion, to respond to the promptings of the heart. Shortly after his arrival, he held a private meeting with the families of victims of the Sewol ferry disaster. And in an early speech he said that he came to Korea "thinking of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula".

In January 2016, Francis returned to Asia, this time to visit Sri Lanka and the Philippines. About 80% of the population of the Philippines is Catholic, and Francis was most welcome there. This included the largest Papal event in history, with about 6 to 7 million people attending his final Mass. The theme for his visit was "Mercy and Compassion". His itinerary included visits to the victims of devastating typhoons. A song composed for the visit emphasised solidarity with the poor and mercy to the weak.

In late 2017, Francis visited two of the poorest countries in Asia, Myanmar and Bangladesh. In both countries, Catholics form only a small percentage of the population.

It was in 2019 that Francis was able to visit Japan, in a trip which included Thailand. In Japan he visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki (as well as Tokyo). These two cities were the scene of the atomic bombings of World War II, and his visit resonated with his earliest application to be a missionary in Japan. By the time he reached Japan, he was already over 80 years of age. His weakened lungs, which had led to his application being refused, continued to support him until his death in 2025.

方济各确实是一位领袖，但他的领导方式与政界主流的领导模式截然不同。方济各践行的是服务型的领导，是优先选择穷人和边缘群体的领导。他不仅邀请天主教徒，也邀请所有善意之人，共同活出慈悲的生命。而他的这一切，根植于他对耶稣圣心的理解。（Francis，2024，第163段）

2015年8月，方济各首次出访亚洲。与往常一样，他此行围绕多个主题展开。正如他历次亚洲之行一样，处处可见他内心慈悲冲动的流露，以及对心灵感召的回应。抵达后不久，他便与世越号沉船事故遇难者家属举行了私人会面。在一次早期讲话中，他表示自己来到韩国，“心系朝鲜半岛的和平与和解”。

2016年1月，方济各再度出访亚洲，此次前往斯里兰卡和菲律宾。菲律宾约80%的人口信奉天主教，方济各在那里受到了极为热烈的欢迎。其间举行了教宗出访史上规模最大的一场活动——约六百万至七百万人参加了他的闭幕弥撒。他此行的主题是“慈悲与怜悯”。行程中包括探访遭受毁灭性台风袭击的灾民。一首专为此次访问谱写的歌曲，强调了对穷人的团结关怀和对弱者的慈悲怜悯。

2017年末，方济各出访了亚洲两个最贫困的国家——缅甸和孟加拉国。在这两个国家，天主教徒仅占人口的很小比例。

In 2022, Francis visited Kazakhstan, to take part in the 7th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. Kazakhstan has a small population of Catholics, some of whose roots lie in deportation from other homelands. The population of Catholics has actually decreased as some of these deportees have been able to return to their lands of origin.

Then in 2023, Francis visited Mongolia, a land where there are very few Catholics, and the majority faith is Buddhism. This provided an opportunity to talk about the particular role of the Catholic Church: "The Lord Jesus, in sending his disciples into the world - Francis underlined in an important passage of his speech - did not send them to spread political theories, but to bear witness by their lives to the newness of his relationship with his Father, now "our Father", which is the source of concrete fraternity with every individual and people". For this reason, "the Church that is born from this mandate is a poor Church, sustained only by genuine faith and by the unarmed and disarming power of the Risen Lord, and capable of alleviating the sufferings of wounded humanity". And for this reason also "governments and secular institutions have nothing to fear from the Church's work of evangelization, for she has no political agenda to advance, but is sustained by the quiet power of God's grace and a message of mercy and truth, which is meant to promote the good of all".

His final visit to Asia, in 2024, has been mentioned at the beginning of this section.

2019年，方济各终于得以出访日本，此行还包括泰国。在日本，他先后访问了广岛和长崎（以及东京）。这两座城市是二战原子弹爆炸的发生地，而这次访问也与他早年申请赴日传教的夙愿遥相呼应。抵达日本时，他已年过八旬。那双曾导致他申请被拒的虚弱肺叶，却一直支撑着他，直到2025年离世。

2022年，方济各出访哈萨克斯坦，出席第七届世界和传统宗教领袖大会。哈萨克斯坦的天主教徒人数不多，其中一些人的祖辈是从其他故土被驱逐至此的。而天主教徒的人数实际上还在减少，因为部分被驱逐者的后裔已经得以返回祖籍地。

2023年，方济各出访蒙古——一个天主教徒寥寥无几、以佛教为主要信仰的国度。这为他提供了一个阐述天主教会独特使命的契机："主耶稣派遣门徒进入世界——方济各在讲话的一段重要论述中强调——不是要他们去传播政治理论，而是要他们以生命为见证，活出他与天父之间那种崭新的关系——如今这关系也属于我们，成为'我们的天父'——而这份关系，正是与每一个人、每一个民族建立真实兄弟情谊的源泉。"正因如此，"由这一使命而诞生的教会，是一个贫穷的教会，仅凭真诚的信仰和复活之主那不带武器却能化解敌意的力量而维系，并有能力抚慰受伤人类的苦难。"也正因如此，"各国政府和世俗机构无需对教会的福传工作心存戒备，因为教会没有要推行的政治议程，它所依凭的，是天主恩宠的宁静力量，以及慈悲与真理的讯息——这一切，旨在促进所有人的福祉。"

他最后一次亚洲之行是在2024年，本章开头已经提及。

FRANCIS IN ASIA: THEMES OF THE HEART

While it is possible to discern many themes in Francis' visits in Asia, we can select the themes of the heart. We will not include his care for the environment or his care for human dignity and fraternity, because these important themes are to be covered by other writers.

For Francis, true religion is not a matter of philosophy – where philosophy cannot progress, there the heart moves on. (Francis, 2024, para 25) After Francis' death, Bishop Rozario Menezes of the diocese of Lae said: "It is very sad news especially for us here in Papua New Guinea, having visited us and encouraged us to keep strong in faith. We thank God for the gift of Pope Francis to the church especially as a leader and shepherd of the Catholic Church – a true inspiration for everyone in every walk of life". (Asia Pacific Newsroom, 2025)

Francis had great compassion for each individual. Although he is a world leader, confronted by complex international issues, yet Francis has the capacity to see into the eyes of the person who suffers. In his younger years in Argentina, he had to face many cases of individual suffering caused by the oppression of the military regime. In a few cases he could help, in most cases his only option was to be with the victims. In his visits to Asia, he continued to meet individuals who had suffered, both from human oppression and from natural disasters. In the Philippines he said to the victims of typhoons: "I do not know what to tell you. But surely He knows what to tell you! So many of you have lost members of your family. I can only be silent; I accompany you silently, with my heart." (Francis, 2015)

方济各的亚洲之行：心灵的主题

尽管方济各的亚洲之行中可以辨识出诸多主题，但我们在此选取的是心灵的主题。我们将不涉及他对环境的关怀，也不涉及他对人的尊严与兄弟情谊的关怀，因为这些重要主题将由其他作者另行论述。

对方济各而言，真正的宗教并非哲学之事——哲学止步之处，正是心灵继续前行之地。（Francis，2024，第25段）方济各离世后，莱城教区主教罗萨里奥·梅内塞斯说道："这是一个令人万分悲痛的消息，尤其对我们巴布亚新几内亚而言——他曾亲临此地，鼓励我们在信仰中坚定不移。我们感谢天主将方济各教宗赐予教会，他是一位真正的领袖和牧者——各行各业中每一个人的真正精神启迪。"（Asia Pacific Newsroom/亚太新闻室，2025）

方济各对每一个个体都怀有深切的慈悲。尽管他是一位世界领袖，面对的是错综复杂的国际议题，但他始终有能力直视受苦者的双眼。在阿根廷的早年岁月里，他不得不面对军政府压迫所造成的无数个体苦难。少数情况下他能够提供帮助，但在大多数情况下，他唯一能做的，就是陪伴在受害者身边。在他的亚洲之行中，他依然延续着与受苦者面对面的传统——无论他们的苦难来自人祸还是天灾。在菲律宾，他对台风灾民说道："我不知道该对你们说什么。但他一定知道该对你们说什么！你们中有太多人失去了亲人。我只能沉默；我以沉默陪伴你们，以我的心陪伴你们。"（Francis，2015）

In an interview early as Pope, he said "I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars. You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else." These images shaped his views of the Church as a community, and particularly of those who exercise leadership in the Church. That kind of community will not emerge where we are self-centred, and heartless. (Francis, 2024, para 17, 168) After Francis' death, Indonesian President Prabawo Subianto commented" The Pope's message of simplicity, pluralism, favouring the poor, and caring for others will always be an example for all of us." (Asia Pacific Newsroom, 2025)

Francis was always a person of great hope. We recognise that this is not just facile optimism, but a deep faith-filled conviction. His recent autobiography was entitled "Hope, the Autobiography". This conviction of hope overcoming despair, overcoming lethargy, overcoming withdrawal, has empowered him through many years. Towards the end of his autobiography, he wrte: "Be sure of it. The deepest, happiest, the most beautiful reality for us, for those we love, has yet to come." And in a concrete image, which harks back to the Gospel, "The best wine has yet to be served". (Francis, 2025, 283-284) It is the heart through which Jesus gives the courage to hope, to persevere, and to look forward without fear. Francis wrote: "Never forget that Jesus is at your side at every step of the way. He will not cast you into the abyss, or leave you to your own devices. He will always be there to encourage and accompany you. He has promised, and he will do it: "For I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20)." (Francis, 2024, para 215)

在他就任教宗后不久的一次访谈中，他说道："我把教会看作战场上的野战医院。你不可能去问一个重伤的人胆固醇高不高、血糖水平怎么样。你必须先医治他的伤口。然后我们才能谈其他一切。"这些意象塑造了他对教会作为共同体的理解，尤其是对教会中担任领导职务之人的理解。这样的共同体，不会诞生于一个自我中心、冷漠无情的群体之中。（Francis，2024，第17、168段）方济各离世后，印度尼西亚总统普拉博沃·苏比安托评论道："教宗所传递的简朴、多元包容、扶助穷人、关怀他人的讯息，将永远是我们所有人的楷模。"（Asia Pacific Newsroom/亚太新闻室，2025）

方济各始终是一个满怀希望的人。我们深知，这并非轻浅的乐观，而是一种深植于信仰的坚定信念。他晚年的自传便以"希望"为名，题为《希望：自传》。这种信念——希望能够战胜绝望、战胜倦怠、战胜退缩——支撑他走过了漫长的岁月。在自传的尾声，他写道："请坚信这一点。对于我们、对于我们深爱的人而言，最深沉、最幸福、最美好的现实，尚未到来。"他又以一个呼应福音的具体意象说道："最好的酒，还没有端上来。"（方济各，2025，第283-284页）正是这颗心，让耶稣赐予我们希望的勇气、坚持的勇气、无所畏惧地展望未来的勇气。方济各写道："永远不要忘记，耶稣在你脚下的每一步都与你同在。他不会将你推入深渊，也不会将你弃之不顾。他永远在那里，鼓励你、陪伴你。他曾许诺，也必将践行：'看，我同你们天天在一起，直到今世的终结。'（马太福音28:20）" (Francis, 2024, para 215)

The heart, too, enables us to have a bridge of understanding with other religions which might not be possible at simply an intellectual level.

心灵同样使我们得以与其他宗教之间架起理解的桥梁，而这在纯粹的理智层面或许是无法实现的。

DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF JESUS IN ASIA

Pope Francis has written his encyclical in an unusual way. The quotations from saints and sages are more often from letters, from informal talks, from notebooks turned autobiographies, than from formal treatises. Francis knows the treatises, but he also knows that poetry and song are the products of the heart. He also refers to the power of popular devotion in maintaining a true sense of the heart of Jesus. This devotion is especially strong in Asia. Nearly every diocese would have a church dedicated to the Sacred Heart, perhaps the most famous being the Cathedral of Guangzhou. The late French missionary Jean Charbonnier (1932-2023), estimated that more than 200 parishes, churches, and chapels in mainland China are dedicated to the Sacred Heart. In India, the Sacred Heart Cathedral in New Delhi is central among many other churches, schools, and chapels which exemplify this devotion. But more important are the large number of religious orders, communities, and lay associations which carry this title. The heart, too, enables us to have a bridge of understanding with other religions which might not be possible at simply an intellectual level. (Kannadipara, 2011, 391)

亚洲对耶稣圣心的虔诚敬礼

方济各教宗撰写最后这道通谕的方式颇为独特。他所引用的圣人与贤者的语录，更多出自书信、非正式谈话、由笔记演变而成的自传，而非正式的学术论著。方济各熟知那些神学论著，但他同样深知，诗歌与歌谣是心灵的产物。他也提到了民间虔诚敬礼在维系对耶稣圣心的真切感知方面所发挥的力量。这种敬礼在亚洲尤为深厚：几乎每一个教区都会有一座奉献给耶稣圣心的教堂，其中最为著名的或许当属广州的圣心大教堂。已故的法国传教士让·沙博尼耶（1932–2023）曾估计，中国大陆有超过两百座堂区、教堂和小堂奉献于耶稣圣心。在印度，新德里的圣心主教座堂在众多体现这一敬礼的教堂、学校和礼拜堂中居于核心地位。但更为重要的，是数量庞大的、以圣心为名的修会、团体和教友善会。心灵，也使我们得以与其他宗教之间搭建起理解的桥梁——这种桥梁仅凭理智层面的交流或许无法建成。（Kannadipara，2011，第391页）

Shortly after the encyclical was published, Cardinal Stephen Chow sj of Hong Kong spoke of Francis' teaching. "The cardinal highlighted its relevance in today's world, where relationships are often superficial and driven by consumerism. He called on the faithful to embrace the encyclical's message by fostering genuine relationships and using human love as a vessel for divine love." (Anon, 2024) The encyclical of the Heart is a poignant message for Asia and for the world.

这道通谕发表后不久，香港教区主教周守仁枢机便就方济各的教导发表了讲话。"这位枢机着重强调了通谕在当今世界的现实意义——在这个人际关系往往流于表面、被消费主义所裹挟的时代。他呼吁信友们拥抱通谕的讯息，培育真实的人际关系，以人间的爱作为承载天主之爱的器皿。"（Anon，2024）这道关于心灵的通谕，是献给亚洲、也是献给整个世界的一则深切动人的讯息。

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