

## **Excommunicating Mafia: Pope Bergoglio's Latest Deed**

Bianca Sorminis (June 22, 2014)



On Saturday, during his visit in the southern Italian region of Calabria, Pope Bergoglio did what no other Pope had done before: in a land infested by 'ndrangheta, the local mafia crime organization, speaking during the mass he publicly and unequivocally declared that all 'mafiosi' are excommunicated from the Catholic Church

On Saturday, during his visit in the southern Italian region of Calabria, Pope Bergoglio did what no other Pope had done before: in a land infested by 'ndrangheta, the local mafia crime organization, speaking during the mass he publicly and unequivocally declared that all 'mafiosi' are excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

It's highly significant that the Pope harsh words were spoken in Calabria, a land plagued by 'ndrangheta. Here, only a few months ago, mafia claimed the life of its youngest victim, a 3 year old boy killed in a car bombing. While personally delivering words of hope and encouragement to the relatives of the little 'Coco' Campolongo, the Pope's mission this time was one meant to go beyond prayers and forgiveness.



Once again differentiating himself from his predecessors, including Pope John Paul II, Pope Francis did not ask the members of the mafia to convert, to ask for forgiveness in the hope for redemption. There was no ambiguity in his words.

"Those who in their lives have taken this evil road, this road of evil, such as the mafiosi, are not in communion with God - they are excommunicated!" he said.

His words were directed to the mafiosi themselves, in the attempt to isolate them in their own communities while showing that the Church clearly distances itself from them.

It was also a concrete action to inspire young people and give them hope.

"Our children are asking for it, our young people are asking for it. They are in need of hope and faith can help respond to this need," he said.

But above all his explosive words were meant to awaken the public conscience to organized crime 'because crime feeds on sleeping consciences'.

It was a message addressed to all, believers and not, to those fighting for change as well as to those 'sleeping consciences' whose inaction renders them involuntary complicity.

**Source URL:** <http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/facts-stories/article/excommunicating-mafia-pope-bergoglios-latest-deed>

### Links

[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/papafrancesco1403476908jpg>