



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

His Holiness Pope Francis I

SPEECH

Monday, 18 March 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Husic, Ed, MP

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Mr HUSIC (Chifley—Government Whip) (16:03): I also rise to pay my respects and congratulate the new pontiff, Pope Francis I. It is a particularly special day when any pontiff is elected. It is a special day for many in our community. On behalf of the parishioners of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Greystanes; Holy Spirit, St Clair; Our Lady of the Rosary, Fairfield; Mary Immaculate, Mosely Park; and Our Lady of Victories, Horsley Park, and as their representative in this House, I want to congratulate Pope Francis on his election and commemorate this very significant day in the life of the Catholic Church. I also make this statement as a representative of many Australians of South American heritage—Argentinians and those from other nations of South America, many of whom have made their home in my electorate. It is an extraordinarily proud day for them.

Pope Francis is also the first pope from the Southern Hemisphere. As a Southern Hemisphere nation, that is something that we can take some pride in. Australia and Argentina may be a long way from each other, but nevertheless, we share much in common, including being significant nations of the Southern Cross. I am sure that other members would join with me in saying that it is a significant moment that we have a pope from the Southern Hemisphere.

Pope Francis is also the first Jesuit pope. The Jesuits have of course played such a vital role in the life of the church in Australia when it comes to education and spreading the word of the church. The Jesuits have been a very significant part of the Australian church, and I am sure there are many Australian Catholics and followers of the Jesuit tradition who are very excited by the fact that we now have the first Jesuit pontiff.

Pope Francis is, as has been much noted, a man of the people, taking the name of St Francis of Assisi—the saint who was born of nobility yet renounced his inheritance to minister to the poor and the sick and founded the Franciscan order of the Poor Clare nuns. Franciscans take a vow of poverty, seeking to live life as Christ did. Pope Francis has made that very, very clear by his words and his actions in his first days as pontiff. In those first days he has spread the message of the approach that he intends to take as Pope, never forgetting the poor—as was said to him by the Cardinal of Brazil, who, in the moments after he was elected to the position of pope, said not to forget the poor. That was reflected in the taking of the name of St Francis and in the words and actions of His Holiness since his election as Pope.

I am sure that, at the appropriate time, we will welcome the new Pope to Australia. We will welcome him as a man of great faith, as a leader of one of the world's great faiths, as a man much loved and respected throughout the world—a pope of firsts and a pope of the people. On behalf of my community, I congratulate His Holiness on his elevation to the papacy.