

# The church's finest face

At the papal Mass in Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., the most unique moments for me were when the Holy Father bent down and kissed the babe a mother had in her arms as she received Holy Communion; I was also deeply touched when the Holy Father got up from his seat and went to Placido Domingo instead of waiting for the singer to come up to him for his blessing.

After the Mass, as we moved out into the street by the thousands, we were met by a group of fundamentalists bearing banners denigrating the pope and bashing Catholics. A man beside me who had traveled across the globe said to me that in some other countries this kind of confrontational situation would have turned into a scene of bloodshed. Instead of reacting angrily, the Catholics spontaneously started singing Christian hymns.

During the four decades of my priestly life I have seen many expressions on the face of our church. What I saw during the papal Mass and immediately following were among the best.