

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Press Conference Aboard Plane Returning From South Korea

Pope Francis

Pope Francis said the use of force can be justified to stop “unjust aggressors” such as Islamic State militants in northern Iraq, but he declined to endorse U.S. military airstrikes against the militants and said such humanitarian interventions should not be decided by any single country. The pope also said he was willing to travel to the war zone if necessary to stop the violence. Pope Francis made his remarks Aug. 18 during an hour-long inflight news conference on his way back from South Korea. In response to other questions, the pope acknowledged a need to

*“We need to stop and think a bit about the degree of cruelty at which we have arrived. This should frighten us.”*

lighten his work schedule for the sake of his health; said he might make a combined visit to the U.S. and Mexico in 2015; and explained why the Vatican is still studying whether the late Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero should be beatified as a martyr. When a reporter on the plane asked Pope Francis whether he approved of the airstrikes, he replied: “In these cases where there is an unjust aggression, I can only say that it is licit to stop the unjust aggressor. I emphasize the word ‘stop.’ I’m not saying drop bombs, make war, but stop the aggressor. The means used to stop him would have to be evaluated. Stopping an unjust aggressor is licit. But we also need to remember: How many times, with this excuse of stopping an unjust aggressor, have the powers taken over peoples and carried on an actual war of conquest?” A Vatican translation of its transcript of the news conference, which was conducted in many languages, follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

**f**ather Lombardi: Your Holiness, welcome among us for this last appointment of a journey that has been very intense, but we think has been very successful. You at least seem to be satisfied; you give the impression of being happy, and we have been pleased about it.

For this meeting, which I believe will have the same format as the two earlier meetings we have had with you, we have organized ourselves by linguistic groups, and then in each group a few colleagues

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