



Homeless Jesus finds a home at King's - statue admired by Pope Francis installed in London

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London, On - A replica of a controversial statue depicting Jesus as a homeless person asleep on a park bench has been installed at King's University College as a gift to the community from Christ the King University Parish.

Wednesday, in Rome, Pope Francis prayed over and blessed the original statue, and met with the Ontario artist, Timothy Schmalz.

http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/11/28/homeless_jesus_statue_gets_audience_with_an_admiring_pope_francis.html

Jesus the Homeless, along with another statue depicting Jesus washing feet, were donated to King's as part of the Student Life Campaign. They were recently installed outside the new Darryl J. King Student Life Centre, which opens in January 2014.

"Members of the parish community were looking to support the King's building campaign in a way that would speak to their identity and mission," said Father Michael Bechard, King's Chaplain. "The image of Christ the Servant – Christ washing feet – is a wonderful embodiment of how we see the need to put our faith into action."

King's Principal, Dr. David Sylvester, welcomes the statues onto campus. "King's has a long history of social justice and service to the most vulnerable in our community. These gifts reflect that mission, and it is my hope that they will be more than a reminder of our call to serve each other. I expect that they will be a catalyst of discomfort and generate some interesting and challenging conversations among faculty, students and visitors to campus. That Pope Francis chose to single out Schmalz's Homeless Jesus speaks volumes about his vision for the Church. He is challenging all people, especially Catholics, to break down the social and economic barriers that separate us, and to seek first the humanity in each other, with an urgent need to reach out to our vulnerable brothers and sisters. This is a message that resonates across the King's campus."

Jesus the Homeless was turned away from St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City as some people were uncomfortable seeing Jesus depicted in this manner.

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