



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

The food of Jesus

Tuesday, 27 January 2015

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Pray for the desire to follow God's will, to know God's will and, once you know it, to go forth with God's will. Pope Francis recommended this threefold prayer during Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning.

The Pontiff began his reflection from the day's Collect prayer which asked that the Lord: "Guide us to act according to Your will, so that we may bear the fruit of good works". He placed particular emphasis on the phrase "according to Your will", he explained, because today "this word, 'will', the will of God, permeates both of the Readings and even the Responsorial Psalm of the liturgy".

It is first seen in the First Reading, taken from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:1-10), which "explains the ancient sacrifices and shows that they are not capable of absolving us. They don't have the power to give us justice, to forgive sins. They are only a prayer that the people offer year after year, a request for forgiveness. But they do not absolve, they have no power".

It returns a second time with "the prophecy" of Psalm 40, in which St Paul refers to Christ in order to explain "how the path of justice began". Indeed, the Pope highlighted, "Jesus said, when he entered the world: 'Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired' (Heb 10:5), because they are temporary...". Not useless, but temporary. He continued: "but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, Lo, I have come to do

thy will, O God” (Heb 10:5-7). And “this act of Christ, of coming into the world to do the will of God, is what absolves us, He is the sacrifice: the true sacrifice that, once and for all time, has absolved us”.

Thus, “Jesus comes to do God’s will and begins in a powerful manner, as He ends, on the cross”. Indeed, He began his earthly journey by “humbling himself”, as Paul writes to the Philippians (2:8): He “emptied himself. He humbled himself, taking the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death on the cross” (cf. 2:7-8). As a result, the Pontiff continued, “obedience to God’s will is the way of Jesus, who says: “I come to do the will of God”. And it is also “the path of holiness, of the Christian, for it was the very path of our absolution: that God, God’s plan be realized, that the salvation of God be done”. It is the contrary of what happened in the earthly paradise, “with Adam’s disobedience”. It was that disobedience, Francis specified, which “brought evil to all mankind”.

In essence, “sins are also acts of not obeying God, of not doing God’s will. However, the Lord teaches us that this is the path, there is no other”. A path which “begins with Jesus, in heaven, in the will of obeying the Father” and on “the earth, it begins with Our Lady”, at the moment in which she says to the angel: “let it be done to me as you say (cf. Lk 1:38). And with that ‘yes’ to God, the Lord began his journey among us”.

The Pope continued to highlight the importance for Jesus of “doing God’s will”. It is evidenced in the encounter with the Samaritan woman, when “in that southern region, in the heat of that desert zone”, when the disciples said to Him: “Rabbi, eat”, he answered: “No: ‘My food is to do the will of the Father’” (cf. Jn 4:31-34). In this manner He made them understand that for Him, God’s will “was like food, that which gave Him strength, that which enabled Him to go on”. He later explained to the disciples: “I have come into the world to do the will of him who sent me, to fulfil a work of obedience” (cf. Jn 6:38).

Yet, the Bishop of Rome observed, even for Jesus, it wasn’t easy. “The devil, in the temptation in the wilderness, showed Him other paths”, but they were not the will of the Father and thus, “He rejected them”. The same thing happens “when Jesus is not understood and they leave Him; many disciples leave because they do not understand what God’s will is”, but Jesus continues to do his will. It is a fidelity which also returns in the words: “Father, Thy will be done”, which He spoke “before the judgement”, when He was praying that evening in the garden, asking God to take away “this cup, this cross. He suffers”, the Pope said. “Jesus suffers so much. Yet, He says: Thy will be done”.

This “is the food of Jesus, and is also the Christian path. He who has led us on the path of our life, and doing God’s will is not easy, for every day so many options are presented to us on a platter: do this, it’s good, it’s not bad”. We should instead ask ourselves: “Is it God’s will? How am I doing in fulfilling God’s will?”. Thus, he offered some practical advice: “First of all ask for grace, pray and

ask for the grace of the desire to do God's will. This is a grace".

Next, we must ask ourselves: "Do I pray that the Lord give me the desire to do his will? Or do I look for compromises, because I'm afraid of God's will?". Additionally, he added, we must "pray to know God's will about me and about my life, about the decision that I have to make now, about how to manage things". Thus, in summary, "a prayer to want to do God's will and a prayer to know God's will. And when I know God's will", then there is a third prayer: "to fulfil it. To fulfil that will, which is not mine but his".

Francis knows that all this "isn't easy" and recalled the narrative of the wealthy youth in the Gospels of Matthew (19:16-22) and Mark (10:17-22): "that really good boy, whom the Gospel says that Jesus loved because he was just. Jesus proposed something else to him but he didn't have the courage". This is why, "when the Father, when Jesus asks something of us" we need to ask ourselves: "Is this his will?". Of course "they are difficult things, and we are not capable, with our strength, of accepting what the Lord tells us". But we can find help by praying: "Lord, give me the courage to go forth according to the Father's will".

The Pope concluded by quoting a passage from the Gospel of Mark (3:34-35), asking the Lord to "give all of us the grace that one day He may say of us what He said of that group, of that crowd who followed Him, those who were seated around Him: 'Here are my mother and my brethren! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother'. Doing God's will makes us part of Jesus' family. It makes us mother, father, sister, brother". He then asked that "the Lord give us the grace of this familiarity" with Him; a familiarity which "means actually doing God's will".