



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Look in the mirror

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Jesus proposes clear rules to help us avoid falling into hypocrisy: to not judge others so that we, in turn, will not be judged by the same measure; and when the temptation to do so arises, it is best to first look in the mirror, not to hide behind makeup, but to clearly see how we really are. Pointing out that the only true judgment is that of God with his mercy, Pope Francis — in the Mass he celebrated on Monday morning — urged that we not give in to the temptation of taking God's place, of doubting his word.

“Jesus speaks to the people and teaches them many things about prayer, riches, many vain worries, and how his disciples should conduct themselves”, the Pope said. “This passage from the Gospel concerning judgment”, proposed in the Liturgy of the day (Mt 7:1-15), is a passage in which “the Lord is very concrete”. Sometimes “the Lord uses parables to make us understand. He is direct, because judgment is something that only he can do”.

“The fact begins” with a clear word from Jesus: “Judge not, that you be not judged”. Therefore, “if you do not want to be judged, do not judge others: it is clear”. And the Lord “goes one step further”, precisely indicating the criterion of this measure: “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get”.

“We all desire that, on the day of judgment, the Lord will look upon us with kindness, that the Lord will forget the many bad things we have done in life”, Pope Francis said. “This is right, because we are children, and a child of the father expects this, always”. However, “if you constantly judge others, you will be judged by the same measure: that is clear”.

“First, the commandment, the fact: Judge not, that you be not judged”, the Pope repeated.

“Second, the measure will be the same as that which you use with your brothers”. Then “the third step: look in the mirror, do not put on makeup in order to cover your wrinkles; no, no, no, that is not my advice!”. Rather, Pope Francis suggested, “look in the mirror to see yourself as you are”. Jesus’ words are clear: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye’, when there is the log in your own eye?”.

“How does the Lord characterize us when we do this?”, the Pope asked. With one word: “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye”. Indeed, it should not surprise us that the Lord “gets angry; he is very strong, and it also seems that he insults us: he says ‘hypocrite’ to those who judge others”.

The reason is that “those who judge put themselves in the place of God”, the Pope said. “They make themselves God and doubt the word of God”. This is precisely “what the serpent persuaded our fathers to do, saying: ‘No, no, God is a liar, if you eat this you will be like Him’. And they wanted to take God’s place”.

This is why, the Pope insisted, “judgment is so wrong: judgment is only for God to do, him alone!”. Our responsibility is instead to “love, understand, and pray for others when we see things that are not good”, and if need be, to “even speak to them”, to warn them if something does not seem to be going in the right direction. In every case, “never judge, never”, because “if we judge that is hypocrisy”.

Moreover, Pope Francis said, “when we judge we put ourselves in God’s place. This is true, but our judgment is a poor judgment: it can never, never be a true judgment”, precisely because “true judgment is what God gives”. Why “can’t our judgment be like that of God?”. Is it “because God is omnipotent and we are not? No, because our judgement lacks mercy”. And “when God judges, he judges with mercy”.

In conclusion, the Pope suggested that today we think about “what the Lord says to us: not to judge, so that we will not be judged; the measure by which we judge will be the measure we are judged by. And, thirdly, let us look in the mirror before we judge”. Therefore, when we want to say: “he does this, or she does that”, it is better to look in the mirror before we speak. Otherwise, “I am being a hypocrite because I put myself in God’s place”, Pope Francis repeated, and “my judgment is a poor judgment: it lacks a very important thing that we find in God’s judgment: mercy”. May the

Lord “allow us to understand this well”, the Pope said.

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