



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Dreamt of and named

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On the identity card of every Christian, there is the name which God has chosen with the same tenderness of an expectant mother and father who “dream of their baby”. There are three fundamental characteristics of a Christian: they are “blessed because they are chosen, because they are forgiven, and because they journey”. Pope Francis addressed these signs pointing to the Christian identity during his homily for Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday, 13 October.

In the day’s “Collect prayer” during the Mass, Francis said, “we asked the Lord that his grace might ‘go before us and follow after’ in order that we do not tire of going forward on the Christian journey”. Therefore, he explained, “there is need for grace in order to not tire”, because “we cannot do it alone”.

The Pope said it is time to understand what “this journey, this Christian identity” is. He cited the day’s first reading, taken from the letter to the Ephesians (1:1-10), in which Saint Paul the Apostle “explains what the Christian identity is, and first and foremost says: ‘We were blessed’. A Christian is blessed: blessed by the Father, by God”.

Paul divides this theme of blessing into three points, the Holy Father said. The first is: “a Christian

is a chosen person; we are chosen. God chose us one by one, not like an oceanic multitude, or a mass of people". Instead, God "has given us a name; he knows each one of us by name". Thus, everyone can say: "I am blessed, because I am known by the Father, I was chosen by the Father, I was anticipated by the Father".

In order to understand this truth, the Pope called to mind the image of "a couple when they are expecting a baby". The parents ask themselves: "What will she be like? And what will her smile be like? And how will she speak?". At the same time, he said, "I dare say that even we, each one of us, was dreamt of by the Father, just as a father and mother dream of the child they are expecting", and "this gives you great security", the Pope said. "The Father wanted you, specifically: you, you, you. Each one of us". This awareness "is essential. It is the foundation of our relationship with God: we speak of a Father who loves us, who has chosen us, who has given us a name".

"A Christian is a choice; he or she is a dream of God", Francis continued. He spoke of the need to feel like part of a community, comparing it to a fan who chooses to be part of a football team. When we think of ourselves as being chosen and dreamt of, the Pope explained, "we feel great consolation in our heart: we are not abandoned, nor are we on the path of life 'to make do as one can'; we have a name, dreamt of by God". The first point in the theme of blessing, the Holy Father reiterated, is that "we are chosen".

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes: "the Father has compensated us in the beloved Son. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace". Expounding on the second point, Pope Francis said: "a Christian is to be a 'forgiven' person". Indeed, a man or woman who does not feel forgiven is not fully Christian, resembling instead "that man who stood before the altar and said: 'I thank you Lord, because I have no need of forgiveness; I have not sinned like everyone else!'". However, "only one", the Pontiff said, "was not forgiven, because he had so much pride he did not make way for forgiveness: the devil". Instead, all of us "were forgiven with the cost of Christ's Blood".

Francis went on to stress the importance of remembering "what was forgiven of me," bearing in mind "the terrible things you have done, not what your friend or neighbour has done; you!". Everything is done with the certainty that the Lord "has forgiven these things" which we have done in life. Thus, the Pope said, "I am blessed; I am Christian", which is "the first point," he said: that "I am chosen, dreamt of by God, with a name which God has given me; beloved by God". And the "second point" is that I have been "forgiven by God".

Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians: "The Father has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his benevolent plan for the fullness of time: leading all things back to Christ, the sole head". Thus, Francis said, "a Christian is a man or woman who is on a journey towards fullness, towards an encounter with Christ who has redeemed us". Therefore, "one cannot

comprehend an idle Christian”, the Pope continued. “A Christian must always go forward, must progress”. On the other hand, “an idle Christian is that man who, having received a talent and, out of fear for his life, fear of losing it, fear of the master – out of fear or convenience – buried the talent and left it there; and he is relaxed and passes through life without going” forward. This is because “a Christian is a man on a journey, a woman on a journey, who always does good, who seeks to do good, to go forward”.

This “is the Christian identity”, the Pontiff concluded: “blessed, because we are chosen, forgiven, and progressing”. The Pope observed that it is “beautiful to live thus: we are not anonymous, we are not proud to think we have no need of forgiveness; we are not standing idle”. Francis prayed that “the Lord may preserve this grace in us, that the Lord may accompany us with this grace of blessing which he has given us – that is, the blessing of our Christian identity”.