



The Holy See

POPE FRANCISMORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA***The culture of hope**

Monday, 30 September 2019

[Multimedia]

Even after they had betrayed and abandoned him, God loved his people with an ardour as a burning flame from which his promise of salvation for each of us springs forth, Pope Francis said in his homily at Santa Marta on Monday 30, September. The Pope's comment arose from a reflection on the reading from the eighth chapter of Zechariah, in which God says: "I am intensely jealous for Zion ... I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem".

In the first reading there were already "signs of the Lord's presence" among his people, the Pope said; signs of abundance of life in families and in society. "The sign of life, the sign of respect for life, of love for life, the sign of making life grow" is the "sign of the presence of God in our communities", which makes a people mature when they are enriched by the presence of the elderly, he explained. Indeed, when "a people care for the old and for the young and keep them as treasures, there is the presence of God; it is the promise of a future".

The Pope then turned to the prophesy of Joel: "your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions", and highlighted the mutual exchange therein, an exchange which does not occur when a culture of waste prevails, children are "returned to sender", and the elderly are closed up in retirement homes because "they do not produce, because they encumber normal life". When children and the elderly are neglected as occurs in many modern societies, Francis added, the demographic winter sets in. It is a tragedy, he stressed, because when the elderly are neglected, then so is tradition, and the result is "a society barren on both sides".

The elderly and the young represent a "culture of hope" as they are "the certainty of the survival of a country and of the Church", the Pope explained. Concluding his homily, the Holy Father

addressed parish priests and recommended that during their evening examination of conscience they ask themselves how they behaved with children and the elderly that day because, he added, “it will help us”.

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