



The Holy See

VISIT TO THE ROMAN PARISH OF STS ELIZABETH AND ZACHARIAH

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Sunday, 26 May 2013

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At the start of the Eucharistic Celebration, the Holy Father, after the greeting of the parish priest, said:

Dear First Watchman, dear Second Watchman, dear Watchmen,

I like what you said: that the word “outskirts” has a negative connotation but also a positive one. Do you know why? Because we understand reality better from the outskirts not the centre. We understand it better. Also, what you said: about becoming watchmen, wasn’t it?

Thank you for this office, for your work as watchmen. I thank you too for your welcome on this day of the Feast of the Trinity. There are priests here whom you know well, the two secretaries of the Pope, the Pope who is in the Vatican, isn’t he? Today the Bishop of Rome has come here. And these two work hard. But today one of them, Fr Alfred, is celebrating the anniversary of his priestly ordination: 29 years. Give him a round of applause! Let us pray for him and ask for at least another 29 years for him. Shall we? Let us begin Mass like this, with a spirit of devotion, in silence, all praying together for all of us.

Later the Holy Father gave a homily in the form of a dialogue with the children who are First Communicants this year.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In his greeting the Parish Priest reminded me of something beautiful about Our Lady. Our Lady, as soon as she had heard the news that she was to be the Mother of Jesus and the announcement that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a child — the Gospel says — she went to her in haste, she did not wait. She did not say: “But now I am with child I must take care of my health. My cousin is bound to have friends who can care for her”. Something stirred her and she “went with haste” to Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1:39). It is beautiful to think this of Our Lady, of our Mother, that she hastens, because she intends to help. She goes to help, she doesn't go to boast and tell her cousin: “listen, I'm in charge now, because I am the Mother of God!”. No, she did not do that. She went to help! And Our Lady is always like this. She is our Mother who always hurries to us whenever we are in need.

It would be beautiful to add to the Litany of Our Lady something like this: “O Lady who goes in haste, pray for us!”. It is lovely, isn't? For she always goes in haste, she does not forget her children. And when her children are in difficulty, when they need something and call on her, she hurries to them. This gives us a security, the security of always having our Mother next to us, beside us. We move forward, we journey more easily in life when our mother is near. Let us think of this grace of Our Lady, this grace that she gives us: of being close to us, but without making us wait for her. Always! She — lets us trust in this — she lives to help us. Our Lady who always hastens, for our sake.

Our Lady also helps us to understand God and Jesus well, to understand Jesus' life well and God's life, and to understand properly what the Lord is, what the Lord is like and, God is. I ask you children: “Who knows who God is?”. Raise your hand. Tell me? There! Creator of the earth. And how many Gods are there? One? But I have been told that there are three: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! How can this be explained? Is there one or are there three? One? One? And how is it possible to explain that one is the Father, another the Son and the other the Holy Spirit? Louder, Louder! That girl is right. They are three in one, three Persons in one.

And what does the Father do? The Father is the beginning, the Father who created all things, who created us. What does the Son do? What does Jesus do? Who can tell me what Jesus does? Does he love us? And then? He brings the word of God! Jesus comes to teach us the word of God. This is excellent! And what then? What did Jesus do on earth? He saved us! And Jesus came to give his life for us. The Father creates the world; Jesus saves us.

And what does the Holy Spirit do? He loves us! He gives you love! All the children together: the Father creates all, he creates the world; Jesus saves us; and the Holy Spirit? He loves us! And

this is Christian life: talking to the Father, talking to the Son and talking to the Holy Spirit. Jesus has saved us, but he also walks beside us in life. Is this true? And how does he walk? What does he do when he walks beside us in life? This is hard. Anyone who knows this wins the Derby! What does Jesus do when he walks with us? Louder! First: he helps us. He leads us! Very good. He walks with us, he helps us, he leads us and he teaches us to journey on.

And Jesus also gives us the strength to work. Doesn't he? He sustains us! Good! In difficulty, doesn't he? And also in our school tasks! He supports us, he helps us, he leads us, he sustains us. That's it! Jesus always goes with us. Good. But listen, Jesus gives us strength. How does Jesus give us strength? You know this, you know that he gives us strength! Louder, I can't hear you! In Communion he gives us strength, he really helps us with strength. He comes to us. But when you say, "he gives us Communion", does a piece of bread make you so strong? Isn't it bread? Is it bread? This is bread, but is what is on the altar bread? Or isn't it bread? It seems to be bread. It is not really bread. What is it? It is the Body of Jesus. Jesus comes into our heart.

So let us all think about this: the Father has given us life; Jesus has given us salvation, he accompanies us, he leads us, he supports us, he teaches us; and the Holy Spirit? What does he give us? He loves us! He gives us love. Let us think of God in this way and ask Our Lady, Our Lady our Mother, who always hurries to our aid, to teach us to understand properly what God is like: what the Father is like, what the Son is like, and what the Holy Spirit is like. So be it.