



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 2 July 2017

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today's liturgy presents to us the last lines of the missionary discourse in Chapter 10 of the Gospel of Matthew (cf. 10:37-42), by which Jesus instructs the 12 Apostles at the moment in which, for the first time, he sends them on mission to the villages of Galilee and Judea. In this final part, Jesus underscores two essential aspects for the life of a missionary disciple: the first, that his *bond with Jesus is stronger* than any other bond; the second, that the *missionary brings not himself, but Jesus*, and through Him the love of the heavenly Father. These two aspects are connected, because the more Jesus is at the centre of the heart and of the life of a disciple, the more this disciple is "transparent" to His presence. The two go hand in hand.

"He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." (v. 37), Jesus says. A father's affection, a mother's tenderness, the gentle friendship among brothers and sisters, all this, even while being very good and valid, cannot be placed before Christ. Not because he wants us to be heartless and ungrateful, but rather, on the contrary, because the condition of a disciple demands a priority relationship with the teacher. Any disciple, whether a layman or laywoman, a priest or a bishop: an all-absorbing relationship. Perhaps the first question that we must ask a Christian is: "Do you meet with Jesus? Do you pray to Jesus?". The relationship. One could almost paraphrase the Book of Genesis: Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave to Jesus and the two shall become one (cf. Gen 2:24).

Those who allow themselves to be drawn into this bond of love and of life with the Lord Jesus become his representatives, his "ambassadors", above all in the way of being, of living. To the

point that Jesus himself, in sending his disciples on mission, says to them: “He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me” (Mt 10:40). It is important that the people be able to perceive that for that disciple Jesus is truly “the Lord”; He is truly the centre of his or her life, the everything of life.

It does not matter then if, as for every human being, he or she has limitations and even makes mistakes — as long as he or she has the humility to recognize them; the important thing is that they not have a duplicitous heart — and this is dangerous. I am a Christian; I am a disciple of Jesus; I am a priest; I am a bishop, but I have a duplicitous heart. No, this is not okay. One must not have a duplicitous heart, but a simple, cohesive heart; [one must] not keep one foot in two shoes, but be honest with oneself and with others. Duplicity is not Christian. This is why Jesus prays to the Father so that the disciples may not fall prey to the worldly spirit. You are either with Jesus, with the spirit of Jesus, or you are with the spirit of the world.

Here our experience as priests teaches us something very beautiful, something very important: it is precisely this welcoming of the holy, faithful People of God; it is precisely that “cup of cold water” (v. 42) that the Lord speaks of today in the Gospel, given with affectionate faith, which helps you to be a good priest! There is a reciprocity in mission too: if you leave everything for Jesus, the people recognize the Lord in you; but at the same time it helps you to convert each day to him, so as to renew and purify yourself from compromises and to overcome temptations. The closer a priest is to the People of God, the closer will he feel to Jesus, and the closer a priest is to Jesus, the closer will he feel to the People of God.

The Virgin Mary felt in the first person what it means to love Jesus by separating herself from him, giving new meaning to family ties, beginning with faith in him. With her maternal intercession, may she help us to be free and happy missionaries of the Gospel.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, Venezuela’s Independence Day falls on 5 July. I assure my prayers for this beloved nation and I express my closeness to the families who have lost their children in the street protests. I make this appeal that the violence be ended and a peaceful and democratic solution to the crisis be found. May our Lady of Coromoto intercede for Venezuela! Let us all pray to Our Lady of Coromoto for Venezuela: “Hail Mary ...”.

I address my greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims!

I greet in particular the faithful from Belfast and the young people from Schattdorf, Switzerland, who have recently received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

I greet the various parish groups and the associations, as well as participants in the motorcycle pilgrimage from Cardito, Naples.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!