



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Signs of giving freely

Tuesday, 11 June 2013

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 25, 19 June 2013)

Poverty and praising God are the two main indicators of the Church's mission; they are "signs" that reveal to the People of God whether "an apostle practises gratuitousness". Pope Francis pointed these signs out at Mass on Tuesday morning, 11 June, in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae. Concelebrating with the Pope among others were Archbishop Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and personnel of the former Holy Office were taking part.

Gratuitousness was the main theme of the Pope's reflection, inspired by the readings from the Acts of the Apostles (11:21-26; 13:1-3) and from the Gospel of Matthew (10:7-13). For, he explained, "Gospel preaching is born from from giving freely, from wonder of salvation which comes; and what I have received freely I must give freely".

This is evident when Jesus sends out his Apostles with instructions for their mission. "His orders are very simple", the Holy Father emphasized. "Do not provide yourselves with gold, or silver, or copper in your belts...". It was a mission of salvation that consisted in healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers and chasing out demons. And Pope Francis specified that it was to bring people close to the kingdom of God, to give them the good news that the kingdom of God is at

hand, indeed it is already here.

The key phrase in Christ's instructions to his disciples is: "you received without pay, give without pay". These words contain the full gratuitousness of salvation, because: "we cannot preach or proclaim the kingdom of God, without this inner certainty that it is all freely given, it is all grace". And when we act without leaving room for grace, the Pope said, "the Gospel has no effectiveness".

Moreover various episodes in the life of the first Apostles testify that Gospel preaching is born from what is given freely. St Peter, the Holy Father said, "had no bank account and when he had to pay taxes, the Lord sent him to fish in the sea to find money in the fish to pay them.

Pope Francis made it clear that when an apostle does not give freely he also loses the ability to praise the Lord, for "praising the Lord is essentially gratuitous. It is prayer freely prayed... We do not only ask, we praise"; but when disciples "want to make a rich Church, a Church without freely given praise, she "ages, she becomes an NGO, she is lifeless".