



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Logic of before and after

Thursday, 24 October 2013

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 44, 1 November 2013)

Pope Francis commented on the First Reading of the day, a continuation of St Paul's Letter to the Romans (6:19-23). He began again by noting that even the Apostle acknowledged how difficult it is to understand the mystery of redemption. Paul, he said, therefore employed "the logic of the before and after: before Jesus and after Jesus". In the Gospel canticle for the day St Paul sums up this logic in this way: "I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him" (Phil 3:8). For Paul the only thing that counted was Christ. He left behind the man "of before" and became a new man whose sole objective was "to gain Christ".

What inspired Paul's passion? It was the fire of love with which Christ shed his blood in his own Passion, and the desire he has to recreate us in his blood. "What Christ accomplished in us is a recreation. The blood of Christ has recreated us, it is a second creation. And if, before, our lives, our bodies, our souls and our habits followed the way of sin and iniquity, after this recreation, we must make every effort to walk along the way of justice and sanctification".

"When we were baptised", the Holy Father continued, "our parents made the act of faith on our behalf: I believe in Jesus Christ who has forgiven our sins. We must make this faith our own and

carry it forward by our way of life. And living as a Christian means carrying forward this faith in Christ, this recreation. Carrying forward the works that are born of faith... Here we are then: the first sanctification accomplished by Christ, the first sanctification we received in baptism, must grow, it must advance”.

Yet we are weak and we often fall. Does this mean that we are not on the road of sanctification, Pope Francis asked? “Yes and no... If you grow accustomed to a life that is mediocre, and you say: ‘I believe in Jesus Christ, but I live as I want’, then this does not sanctify you, it is not all right, it is absurd”. But if you say ‘yes, I am a sinner; I am weak’ and you continually turn to the Lord and say to him: ‘Lord, you have the power, increase my faith; you can heal me’, then through the sacrament of reconciliation even our imperfections are taken up into this way of sanctification”.

Leaving everything behind for Christ was Paul’s passion, and it should be the passion of every Christian: “to suffer the loss of everything that draws us away from Christ, the Lord; to suffer the loss of all that draws us away from our act of faith in him, from our act of faith in the recreation he has accomplished by his blood. He makes all things new. Everything is made new in Christ. Everything is new”.

“Paul did it. So many Christians have done it and are doing it, not only the saints whom we know but also the anonymous saints, those who seriously live out their Christian lives”. He then added: “perhaps the question we can ask ourselves today is: do I want to live out my Christian life in a serious way? Do I believe that I have been recreated through the blood of Christ and do I want to pursue this recreation until that day when we shall see the new city, the new creation?”.

The Pope concluded: “Let us ask St Paul, who speaks to us today about the logic of the before and after, to grant us the grace to live seriously as Christians and truly to believe that we have been sanctified in the blood of Jesus Christ”.