



# The Holy See

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**POPE FRANCIS**

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE*

*The grace of being ashamed*

*Friday, 25 October 2013*

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

Pope Francis preached about the sacrament of confession. Commenting on the first Reading of the day taken from St Paul's Letter to the Romans (7:18-25), he began by noting that although Paul had experienced the freedom and recreation in Christ's blood, yet he acknowledges that sin still dwells in him, seeking to pull him back into slavery.

Quoting St Paul, he continued: "I know that nothing good dwells within me, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells in me".

Pope Francis called this "the Christian battle". Paul speaks of it in this way: "when I want to do the good, evil is right beside me. In fact, I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of the mind, making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members". However, the Pope noted, "we do not always have the courage to speak about this battle as Paul does. We always seek to justify ourselves".

It is against this attitude that we must battle.. "If we fail to recognize this, we cannot obtain God's forgiveness; if being a sinner is only a word or a way of speaking, then we do not need God's

forgiveness. But if it is a reality that enslaves us then we truly need the interior freedom and strength of the Lord”.

Paul shows us the way out, the Pope said. “Confess your sin and your tendency to sin to the community, do not hide it. This is the disposition which the Church asks of all of us, which Jesus asks of all of us: humbly to confess our sins”.

The Church in her wisdom points to the sacrament of confession. “Let us go to our brother the priest and let us make this interior confession, the same confession that Paul himself makes”.

The Pontiff then commented on those who refuse to speak with a priest under the pretence that they confess directly to God. “It’s easy”, he said. “It’s like confessing by email... God is there, far away; I say things and there is no face to face, there is not a face to face encounter”. But Paul “confessed his weakness to his brothers face to face”.

Citing the Gospel canticle, Pope Francis confided that he admires the way children make their confession. “During the Alleluia we said: ‘I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden the mysteries of the kingdom from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes’”. He then added, “Little ones have a certain wisdom. When a child comes to make his confession, he never speaks in generalities. He says: ‘Father, I did this, and I did this to my aunt, I did this to someone else, and to someone else I said this word’, and they say the word. They are real, they possess the simplicity of truth. And we always tend to hide the reality of our weakness and poverty”.

He then added: “But if there is one thing that is beautiful, it is when we confess our sins in the presence of God just as they are. We always feel the grace of being ashamed. To feel ashamed before God is a grace. It is a grace to say: ‘I am ashamed’. Let us think about St Peter after Jesus’ miracle on the lake: “Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinner”. He was ashamed of his sin.

Going to confession, the Pope said, is “going to an encounter with the Lord who forgives us, who loves us. And our shame is what we offer him: ‘Lord, I am a sinner, but I am not so bad, I am capable of feeling ashamed’”.

The Holy Father concluded: “let us ask for the grace to live in the truth without hiding anything from the Lord and without hiding anything from ourselves”.