



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Meeting Jesus with our defences down

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In his homily at Mass Pope Francis reflected on the meaning of Advent. The season of Advent, he said, is a time when “the Church and the People of God journey anew toward Christmas; we journey to an encounter with the Lord”. Christmas, he said, is not merely “a commemoration in time nor simply a memory of something beautiful. Christmas is something more. We travel down this path to meet the Lord”. During the season of Advent, then, “we journey to meet him, to encounter him with our hearts and our lives, to meet him, the living One, as he is; to meet him in faith”.

Commenting on the faith of the centurion in the day’s Gospel taken from St Matthew (8:5-11), Pope Francis observed: “The Lord marvelled at the centurion. He marvelled at his faith. The centurion made a journey to meet the Lord, but he made it in faith. He not only encountered the Lord, but he came to know the joy of being encountered by him. And this is precisely the sort of encounter we desire, the encounter of faith. To encounter the Lord, but also to allow ourselves to be encountered by him. This is very important”.

When we go out to meet the Lord, the Pontiff added, we in some sense are “masters of the moment”. However, “when we allow ourselves to be encountered by him, he enters into us” and

renews us from within. “This is what it means for Christ to come: to renew all things, to renew hearts, souls, lives, hope and the journey”.

Advent is a time truly to open our minds and hearts to him, “because when he comes to me, he may tell me what he wants me to do, which is not always what I want him to tell me”. It is important, therefore, that we never forget that “he is the Lord and he will tell me what he intends for me”. “The Lord,” he said, “does not look upon us all at once, as a mass of people: no, no! He looks at us one by one, in the face, in the eyes, for true love is not something abstract but rather something very concrete. Person to person. The Lord, who is a Person, looking at me, a person. That is why allowing the Lord to come and meet me also means allowing him to love me”.

Pope Francis concluded: “in the prayer at the beginning of Mass we asked for the grace to make this journey with several dispositions that will aid us. Perseverance in prayer: to pray more. Diligence in fraternal charity: to draw closer to those in need. And joy in praising the Lord. Let us begin this journey in prayer, charity and praise, so that the Lord might come to meet us, but let us allow him to meet us with our defences down, in openness!”