



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Awaiting the birth

Monday, 23 December 2013

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In his homily at Holy Mass on Monday, 23 December, Pope Francis commented on the simple yet profound prayer found on the Church's lips in these days leading up to Christmas: "Come, Lord!". "In this final week before Christmas", the Pope said, "the Church repeats the prayer, 'Come, Lord!' and she calls out to the Lord with various and different names: O Wisdom, O Root of Jesse, O Dayspring, O King of the Nations, and today, O Emmanuel".

The Church calls out to the Lord in this way, the Pope explained, because "she is awaiting a birth". "This week the Church is like Mary: she is awaiting a birth". The Virgin, he said, "sensed within herself, in body and in soul", that the birth of her child was near. And he added: "surely in her heart she said to the baby she was carrying in her womb: 'Come, I want to see your face, for they have told me you will be great!'".

This Church lives this spiritually, Pope Francis continued, for "we accompany Our Lady in this journey of waiting" and "we too wish to hasten the Lord's birth". This, the Pontiff said, is the reason for the Church's prayer: "Come, O Key of David, O Dayspring, O Wisdom, O Emmanuel". This invocation, he said, recalls the final words in the Sacred Scripture; in the last lines of the Book of Revelation, the Church cries out: "Come, Lord Jesus", Maranatha, which "may indicate a desire or

a certainty: the Lord is coming”.

In fact, Pope Francis continued, “the Lord comes twice”. His first coming is “what we are about to commemorate, his physical birth”. Then, “he will come at the end of time, at the close of history”. However, the Pontiff added, “St Bernard tells us that there is a third coming of the Lord: his coming to us each day: each day, the Lord visits his Church. He visits each one of us. And our soul also enters into this likeness: our soul comes to resemble the Church; our soul comes to resemble Mary”. Here Pope Francis recalled that “the Desert Fathers say that Mary, the Church and the soul are all feminine”. Hence what is said of one may analogously be said of the others.

Therefore, the Pope continued, “our souls are waiting in anticipation for the coming of the Lord, open souls calling out: Come, Lord!”. Over the course of these days, he said, the Holy Spirit moves in the heart of each one of us, forming this prayer within us: “come, come!”. Throughout the Advent Season the Church keeps watch like Mary. And “watching is the virtue, the attitude, of pilgrims. We are pilgrims. Are we watching or are we closed? Are we vigilant or are we safe and secure in an inn, no longer wanting to continue on? Are we pilgrims or are we wandering?”.

That is why the Church invites us to pray “come!” and to “open our souls in watchfulness”. We are invited to perceive and understand “what is happening within us”, to ask “if the Lord comes or does not come; if there is room for the Lord, or if there is room for celebration, for shopping, for making noise”. This examination of conscience, he said, should lead us to ask ourselves: “Are our souls open, as the soul of Holy Mother Church is open, and as Mary’s soul was open? Or have we closed our souls and put a highly erudite note on the door saying: please do not disturb?”

“The world does not end with us” and “we are not more important than the world”. Therefore, “with Our Lady and the Church we would do well today to call out: O Wisdom, O Key of David, O King of the Nations, Come, Come!” and, he added, “we would do well to repeat it many times”. It is a prayer, he said, that allows us to examine if our soul communicates to others that it does not wish to be disturbed, or if instead it is “an open soul, a great soul ready to receive the Lord”. A soul, the Pope concluded, “that already feels what the Church will tell us tomorrow in the Antiphon: Know that today the Lord comes and tomorrow you shall behold his glory”.