



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Small and holy

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God is “the Lord of history” and also of “patience”. He “walks with us”: for this reason the Christian is called not to fear great things and to pay attention also to small things. Referencing St Thomas Aquinas, this was Pope Francis’ exhortation to the faithful attending Mass at Santa Marta.

The Pontiff’s first observation was that “when we read in Genesis the story of Creation”, we risk “thinking that God was a magician”, complete with a “magic wand”, able to do all things. But “that is not how it was”. In fact, the Pope explained, “God made things — each one — and he let them go with the interior, inward laws which he gave to each one, so that they would develop, so they would reach fullness. Thus “the Lord gave autonomy to the things of the universe”, but “not independence”. And this way, “Creation went on for centuries and centuries and centuries, until it got to how it is today”. Precisely “because God is not a magician, He is Creator”.

Instead for man the question differs, the Bishop of Rome explained. “When on the sixth day of that narrative, comes the creation of man”, God “gives another kind of autonomy, a bit different, but not independence: an autonomy which is freedom”. And “He tells man to go on in history: God puts man in charge of Creation so that he can exercise stewardship over Creation and bring it to the fullness of time”. The Pope explained that the “fullness of time” is “what God had at heart: the

coming of his Son”.

In this respect the Pontiff referred to the Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans (8:28-30) in the day’s liturgy. Making the Apostle’s words his own, Pope Francis said that “God predestined us, everyone, to be conformed to the image of his Son. And this is the path of humanity, it is the path of man: God wanted us to be like his Son and for his Son to be like us”.

“And this is how history continued”, as is also seen in the passage of the Gospel according to Matthew (1:1-16, 18-23), which lists the genealogy of Jesus: “This one was the father of this one; this one fathered this one, this one fathered this one.... But it is history” the Pope affirmed. And, he noted, “in this list there are saints and also sinners; but history goes on because God wanted men to be free”. However, “the day that man misused his freedom, God drove him out of Paradise”. The Bible tells us that “he made him a promise and man left Paradise with hope: a sinner, but with hope”.

The Pontiff continued, indicating that “this historical list led to problems, war, hostility, sin, but also hope. They did not make their journey alone: God walked with them. Because God created an option: he created an option for time, not for the moment”. He is “the God of time, He is the God of history, He is the God who walks with his children” until the “fullness of time”, that is, when his Son is made man.

Now, here, the narrative is a bit repetitive, “it contains this treasure: God walks with the just and with sinners”. And if the Christian recognizes himself as a sinner, he knows that God also walks with him, “with all, to reach man’s final encounter with Him”. After all, “the Gospel, which constructs this history for centuries, ends in a tiny thing, in a small village, with this story of Joseph and Mary: she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit”. Therefore “the God of the great history is also in the little story, there, because he wants to walk with each one”. The Pope recalled “such a beautiful phrase about this” in the *Summa Theologica* of St Thomas’, who says: “Not to fear great things, but also to acknowledge the small ones, this is divine”. Because God “is in the great things, but also in the small ones, in our small things”. Moreover, he added, “the Lord who walks with God is also the Lord of Patience”: the patience “which he had with all these generations, with all these people who lived their history of grace and sin”. God, the Pope affirmed, “is patient, God walks with us, because he wants all of us to come to be conformed to the image of his Son”. And “from that moment in Creation in which he gave us freedom — not independence — until today, he continues to journey”.

Francis then turned his thoughts to Mary, on the day of Feast of her Nativity. “Today we are in the antechamber of this story: the birth of Our Lady”. And let us thus ask the Lord “in prayer to grant us unity to walk together, and peace in the heart. It is today’s grace: it is how we arrive here, because our God is patient, He loves us, He accompanies us.

Thus today, the Pontiff continued, “we can look to Our Lady, small, holy, without sin, pure, chosen to become the mother of God, and also to look at this history behind her, so long, for centuries”. Then he asked several fundamental questions: “How do I journey in my story? Do I let God walk with me? do I let Him walk with me or do I want to walk alone? Do I let him caress me, help me, forgive me, lead me forward to reach the encounter with Jesus Christ?”. Because precisely this, the Holy Father emphasized, “will be the end of our journey: to encounter the Lord”.

Thus, the Pope continued, there is one question which “will do us good today” to answer: “Do I let God have patience with me?”. Only “by looking at this great history and also at this small village”, he asserted in conclusion, “can we praise the Lord and humbly ask that he grant us peace, that peace of heart which He alone can give us, which He gives us only when we let him walk with us”.