



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

I will cure you

Thursday, 5 February 2015

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 7, 13 February 2015)

The Church's true mission is not to develop an efficient aid mechanism, modelled after an NGO. The profile of an apostle — who in simplicity and poverty proclaims the Gospel with the one true power that comes from God — is recognized instead in the plain words that Jesus recommends to the disciples returning with joy from their mission: “we are unworthy servants”. And thus, at Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday the Pope reaffirmed that the true mission of the Church is “healing the wounds of the heart, opening doors, forgiving all, liberating, and saying that God is good, forgives all, is Father, God is gentle and always waits for us”.

In the passage from the Gospel according to Mark (6:7-13) offered in today's liturgy, the Pontiff began, “we heard that Jesus called his disciples” and sent them “to take the Gospel: it is He who calls”. The Gospel recounts that He called them to Him, sent them and gave them power. In the vocation of the disciples, the Lord gives power: the power to cast out impure spirits, to liberate, to heal. This is the power that Jesus gives”. Indeed, He “does not give the power to manoeuvre or to build large companies”; but “the power, the same power that He had, the power that He received from the Father, he conveys to them”. And He does so with “plain advice: go into the community, but do not take anything for the journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money... in poverty!”.

The Gospel, Francis stated, “is so very rich and so powerful that it does not need to create large firms, big companies, in order to be proclaimed”. For the Gospel “should be proclaimed in poverty, and a real pastor is one who goes like Jesus: poor, to proclaim the Gospel, with that power”. And “when the Gospel is safeguarded with this simplicity, with this poverty, one clearly sees that salvation is not a theology of prosperity” but rather “a gift, the same gift that Jesus had received in order to give”.

Francis again proposed “that most beautiful scene in the Synagogue, when Jesus introduces Himself: ‘I was sent to bring salvation, to bring glad tidings to the poor, liberation to the incarcerated, to the blind the gift of sight. Liberation to all those who are oppressed and to proclaim the year of grace, the year of joy’. This”, the Pope said, is precisely “the aim of the Gospel message, without many curious, worldly things”. This is how Jesus conveys it.

And what, the Pope asked, does Jesus “command” the disciples to do, “what is his pastoral plan?”. It is simply to “cure, heal, raise, liberate, cast out demons: this is the simple plan”. It coincides, Francis pointed out, with “the mission of the Church: the Church which heals, which cures”. Such that, he recalled, “a few times I have spoken of the Church as a field hospital: it’s true! How many wounded there are, how many wounded! How many people who need their wounds to be healed!”.

Thus, the Pope continued, “this is the Church’s mission: healing the wounds of the heart, opening doors, liberating, and saying that God is good, that God forgives all, that God is Father, that God is gentle, that God always waits for us”.

Referring to the Gospel of Luke (10:17-20), the Pontiff remarked that “the disciples returned with joy” from their mission, because “they didn’t believe they would have succeeded”. And “they said to the Lord: ‘Lord, even the demons left!’”. They were “joyful because this power of Jesus, employed with simplicity, with poverty, with love, produced a good result”.

The very phrase that Jesus addressed to the joyful disciples, according to the Gospel, “explains everything”. They recounted: “We did this, and this, and this, and this...”. Thus, after listening to them, Jesus closes his eyes and says: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”. The words reveal “the struggle of the Church: it’s true, we should get help and create aid organizations, for the Lord gives us gifts for this”; but, the Pope warned, “when we forget this mission, forget about poverty, forget apostolic zeal and put our hope in these means, the Church slowly lapses into anangoand becomes a fine organization: powerful but not evangelical, because that spirit is lacking, that poverty, that healing power”.

There is more: on their return, Jesus brings the disciples with Him “to rest a little, to have a day in the country, to have sandwiches and soft drinks”. The Lord wants “to spend a little time together to celebrate”. And together they talk about the mission they have just done. But Jesus doesn’t tell

them: 'You're great, eh! Now let's plan things better for the next excursion!'. He limits Himself to recommending: 'When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unworthy servants'" (Lk 17:10).

In these words, Francis remarked, the Lord described the profile of an apostle. Indeed, "what would be the greatest praise for an apostle?". The answer: "He was a labourer for the Kingdom, he was a worker for the Kingdom". Indeed, "this is the highest praise, because he goes on Jesus' path of proclamation, he goes to heal, to safeguard, to proclaim these glad tidings and this year of grace. To enable the people to find the Father once again, to make peace in the peoples' hearts".

The Pope concluded with an invitation to read this Gospel passage, emphasizing "the most important things to Jesus, in proclaiming the Gospel: they are these, these small virtues". And "then it is He, it is the Holy Spirit who does it all".