



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

The cornerstone

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(by <http://www.osservatoreromano.va>)

Jesus continues to pray for every man and women, Pope Francis said in his homily during morning Mass on Friday, 28 October at the Casa Santa Marta; this is “the foundation of the Church”, he said, and the key for understanding its mission and ministry.

“What is the Church?”: this question is answered in “the two letters from today’s Liturgy of the Word”, which “are a proclamation, and also a catechesis on the Church”, the Pope explained, in reference to the day’s readings taken from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians (2:19-22) and Luke’s Gospel (6: 12-19). Indeed, “Paul makes us understand that we are the compatriots of the saints – the Church gives us this citizenship – and that we make up this well-defined construction so as to be the sacred temple of the Lord: built together on the foundation of the Apostles, of the prophets; and the cornerstone is Jesus himself”. And he “is the foundation of the Church”, Paul says.

“In the Gospel of Luke”, the Pontiff continued” we have seen the Church in activity, in action: Jesus who prays, who chooses the Apostles, who gives a name to each one, who heals body and soul and who was among the disciples, and even among the crowds which sought to touch him, because from him came the strength that healed everyone”. Precisely “this is the Church that which Paul taught us is this in action”. The Apostle confirms that “the cornerstone is Jesus himself”; and indeed, “without Jesus there is no Church: he is the foundation of the Church”.

Francis noted that “the Gospel begins with something that causes us to reflect: ‘[Jesus] went out into the hills to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God’”. And “then comes all the rest: the people, the selection of the disciples, the healings, the casting out of demons”. Therefore, “the cornerstone is Jesus, yes: but, it is a Jesus who prays”. And “Jesus prays: he prayed and continues to pray for the Church”. Thus, “the cornerstone of the Church is the Lord standing before the Father who intercedes for us, who prays for us: we pray to him, but the foundation is him who prays for us”.

“Jesus always prayed for his disciples”, the Pontiff said. Especially “during the Last Supper”, he asked that the Father might “protect them in the truth, accompanying them”: he prayed not only for “these disciples, but also those to come”. Moreover, the Pope explained, “Jesus prays before doing a miracle: we are reminded of the resurrection of Lazarus”, when he “prayed to the Father: ‘Father, I thank thee’”.

Even “on the mount of Olives, Jesus prayed; on the Cross, he died praying: his life ended in prayer”. And “this is our security, this is our foundation, this is our cornerstone: Jesus who prays for us, Jesus who prays for me”. For this reason “each of us can say: ‘I am certain that Jesus prays for me, that he is before the Father and gives me a name’”. Therefore, the cornerstone of the Church is Jesus in prayer”.

Speaking along these lines, Francis highlighted the Gospel passage from “before the Passion, when Jesus turned to Peter with that warning which echoes the first chapter of the book of Job: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail”.

It “is lovely” to consider how the words which Jesus says to Peter are also said “to you, to me, and to everyone: ‘I prayed for you, I pray for you, I am now praying for you’”. And “when he comes upon the altar, he comes to intercede, to pray for us, just like on the Cross”. This “gives us great confidence: I belong to this community, which is steadfast because it has Jesus as its cornerstone, a Jesus who prays for me, who prays for us”.

Finally, Francis invited the faithful to “reflect on this mystery of the Church: we are all like a building, but the foundation is Jesus, it is Jesus who prays for us. It is Jesus who prays for me”.