



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Two wonders

Monday, 6 February 2017

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

With the certainty that “God always labours”, there is no need to fear living the gift of love and of liberty, setting aside once and for all the false assurances that come from rigidity. Pope Francis’ shared this reflection during Mass at Santa Marta on Monday morning, 6 February.

Francis’ meditation was inspired by Psalm 104[103], in which, he noted, “we praised the Lord”, saying: “You are very great, O Lord, my God! You are great indeed!”. This Psalm, he said, is “a song of praise: we praise the Lord for the things we heard in both readings, for creation, so great; and in the second reading, for the re-creation, the even more wondrous creation that Jesus makes”. The Pope was, of course, referring to the texts proposed by the Liturgy of the Word, taken from the Book of Genesis (1:1-19) and from the Gospel of Mark (6:53-56). The Pontiff explained that “the Father labours” and thus, “Jesus says: ‘My Father labours and I too labour’”. It is a way of saying ‘labour’, *ad instar laborantis*, as one who labours, as Saint Ignatius defines in the Exercises (cf. Spiritual Exercises, n. 236).

In this way, “the Father labours to make this wonder of creation”, Francis continued, “and with the Son to make this wonder of re-creation; to make that passing from chaos to cosmos, from disorder to order, from sin to grace”. And, he explained, “this is the Father’s labour and for this reason we

praised the Father, the Father who labours”.

But, Francis asked, “why did God want to create the world?”. This is one of the “difficult questions”, the Pope recognized. He also shared that “once, a boy put me in difficulty because he asked me this question: ‘tell me, Father, what did God do before he created the world; FFF was he bored?’. Surely, “children know how to ask questions”, the Pope added, “and they ask the right questions that put you in difficulty”.

To answer that child, Francis shared, “the Lord helped me and I told the truth: God loved; in his fullness, he loved, among the three Persons, he loved and needed nothing more”. The answer, the Pontiff continued, gave rise to another question: if God “needed nothing more, why did he create the world?”. This is a question, Francis said, not posed in a childlike manner but as “the first theologians did, the great theologians, the first”. Thus, why did God “create the world?”. The response to give is this: “Simply to share his fullness, to have someone whom to give and with whom to share his fullness”. In a word, “to give”.

We can ask “the same question”, the Pope said again, in regard to re-creation: “why did he send his Son for this work of re-creation?”. He did so “in order to share, to re-organize”. And “in the first creation, as in the second, he makes out of chaos a cosmos, out of ugliness something beautiful, out of a mistake a truth, out of bad something good”. This is precisely “the labour of creation that is God, and one he does by hand”. And, the Pope continued, “in Jesus we clearly see: with his body he gives life completely”. Thus, “when Jesus says: ‘The Father labours always, and I too labour always’”, the doctors of the law were scandalized and wanted to kill him because they did not know how to receive the things of God as a gift”, but “only as justice”; and so they even came to think: the commandments “are few: let’s make more!”.

Thus, Francis explained, “instead of opening their heart to the gift, they hid; they sought refuge in the rigidity of the commandments, which they had increased up to 500 or more: they did not know how to receive the gift”. The gift, the Pontiff continued, “is only received with freedom”, but “these rigid men were afraid of God-given freedom; they were afraid of love”. For this reason, they wanted to kill Jesus, “because He said the Father had done this wonder as a gift: receive the gift of the Father!”.

“You are great, Lord, I love you, because you have given me this gift, you have saved me, you created me”: this, the Pope affirmed, “is the prayer of praise, the prayer of joy, the prayer that gives us the cheerfulness of Christian life”. It is not “that closed, sad prayer of people who are never able to receive a gift because they are afraid of the freedom that a gift always brings”. Thus, in the end, “they know only duty, but a closed duty: slaves to duty, but not to love”. But, “when you become a slave to love you are free: it is a beautiful slavery, but they did not understand this”.

Therefore, Francis noted, these are the “two wonders of the Lord: the wonder of creation and the

wonder of redemption, of re-creation; that of the beginning of the world and that, after the fall of man, of restoring the world and this is why he sent the Son: it is beautiful". Of course, "we can ask ourselves how I receive these wonders, how I receive this creation God has given me as a gift". And, the Pope said, "if I receive it as a gift, I love creation, I safeguard creation because it was a gift".

In this light, Francis recommended that we ask ourselves: "how I receive redemption, the forgiveness that God has given me, making me a son or daughter with his Son, with love, with tenderness, with freedom". We must never hide "in the rigidity of closed commandments that are always, always more 'certain' — in quotation marks — but which give you no joy because they do not make you free". Each one of us, the Pope suggested, "can ask ourselves how we can live these two wonders: the wonder of creation and the even greater wonder of re-creation". We must do so with the hope "that the Lord will help us understand this great thing and help us understand what he did before creating the world: he loved. May he help us understand his love for us and may we say — as we have said today — 'You are very great, O Lord. Thank you, thank you!'". And "let us go forth in this way".