



## The Holy See

---

**POPE FRANCIS**MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE  
*DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE***Christians who are afraid to grow**

*Tuesday, 8 October 2019*

**[Multimedia]**

---

During his homily for Holy Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, 8 October, Pope Francis underlined that one cannot be a conditional Christian. Speaking about the Christians who judge everything starting from “the smallness of their heart”, he reminded the faithful that the Lord approaches mercifully all human situations because he came to save the world, not to condemn it.

The Holy Father reflected on the the first Reading from the Book of the prophet Jonah who described the conflicted relationship between God and himself. God wanted to send Jonah to Nineveh as a prophet to urge the city to conversion. But disobeying God’s command because he thought it was too difficult, Jonah headed to Tarshish instead, was thrown overboard by the storm the Lord had started in the sea and then was swallowed by a whale. After three days the whale threw him out on the shore, an image which the Holy Father said recalls the Resurrection of Christ. In today’s Reading God speaks to Jonah again and Jonah obeys, goes to Nineveh and the people believe his word and convert. “This is the story of a stubborn man, the stubborn Jonah did his job well and left”, Pope Francis said.

In the following day’s Reading, he continued, Jonah becomes angry with the Lord for being too merciful and for doing the opposite of what he had threatened to do and says that he would rather die than continue to be a prophet. The exchange between the Lord and Jonah is between two hardheads, Pope Francis explained: “Jonah, stubborn in his convictions of faith and the Lord stubborn in his mercy”, knocking on the doors of our hearts until the end. Jonah saw faith as based on conditions. He was like those Christians who say “I am Christian but on the condition that things are done this way”. This, Pope Francis stressed, is heresy: “Christians who place conditions on God, the faith and God’s actions”, leading them down a path that goes from faith to

ideology. “There are many people like this today”, he continued. “Christians who are afraid to grow, of life’s challenges, of the Lord’s challenges, of history’s challenges”. They prefer ideology to faith; “they are afraid of putting themselves in God’s hands and they prefer to judge everything, but from the smallness of their hearts”.