



The Holy See

PAPA FRANCESCO

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Authority is not in commanding but in consistent witness

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During his homily Pope Francis explained the difference between “having authority”, or the “inner authority” like Jesus and the authority of the scribes. As he commented on the day’s Gospel passage from Mark in which Jesus preaches in the synagogue, he said that the authority of the Lord is one of “lordship”, with which he taught, healed and heard the people. This lordship that came from within reveals the consistency between his teaching and his actions which, the Pope said, gives authority. Hence authority in constancy and witness.

The scribes, however, were not consistent which is why Jesus admonished the people “to do what they say but not what they do”. With their attitude, the Pope said, they had fallen into a “pastoral schizophrenia” which Jesus described as hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, the Pope continued, “is the way of acting of those who have responsibility over the people, hence pastoral responsibility, but are not consistent”.

The People of God, who are very tolerant can recognize the power of grace, the Pope said, as shown in the First Reading from the Book of Samuel in which the elderly priest, Eli had lost all authority except for the grace of anointing with which he blessed and performed the miracle for Anna who wished to be a mother. The People of God, the Pope said can distinguish well between a person’s authority and the grace of anointing, and can make out a confessor after the heart of

Christ. “This is the wisdom of our people, who many times tolerate many inconsistent pastors like the scribes”. Pope Francis concluded with prayers for the authority that “does not consist in commanding and making oneself heard, but in being consistent, being a witness and for this reason, being companions on the way of the Lord”.

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