



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"Faithfulness is our response to God's fidelity"

Wednesday, 15 April 2020

[Multimedia]

Introduction

Let us pray today for the elderly, especially those who are isolated or in nursing homes. They are afraid, afraid of dying alone. They are experiencing this pandemic. They see this pandemic as aggressive to them. They are our roots, our story, our history. They have given us the faith, our traditions, our sense of homeland. Let us pray for them, that the Lord might be close to them in this moment.

Homily

Yesterday we reflected on Mary Magdalene as the icon of fidelity: fidelity to God. But how is this fidelity to God? To what God? Precisely to God who is faithful.

Our fidelity is nothing more than a response to God's fidelity. God who is faithful to His word, who is faithful to His promise, who walks with His people carrying out the promise close to His people. Faithful to the promise: God, who continually reveals Himself as a Saviour of His people because He is faithful to His promise. God, who is capable of re-doing things, of re-creating, as He did with this man crippled from birth whose feet he recreated, He healed him (see *Acts 3:6-8*), the God

who heals, the God who always brings consolation to His people. The God who recreates. A new recreation: this is His faithfulness to us. A recreation that is more wonderful than creation.

A God who goes forward and does not tire of working - we say "working", "*ad instar laborantis*" (see Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 236), as the theologians say - to lead His people forward, He is not afraid of getting "tired", let us put it that way... like that Shepherd who, when he goes back home realises that a sheep is missing and he leaves, he returns seek the sheep that got lost there (see *Mt* 18:12-14). A shepherd who does the extraordinary, but out of love, out of fidelity... And our God is a God who does the extraordinary but not for pay: gratuitously. It is the fidelity of gratuitousness, of abundance. It is the fidelity of that father who is capable of going up onto the terrace many times to see if his son is returning, and who never grows tired of going up there: he waits to throw a party (see *Lk* 15:21-24). God's faithfulness is a feast, it is joy, it is such a joy that it makes us behave like this crippled man: he entered the temple walking, jumping, praising God (see *Acts* 3:8-9). God's faithfulness is a feast, a free feast. A feast for all of us.

God's fidelity is a patient fidelity: he is patient with His people, He listens to them, He guides them, He explains slowly to them and He warms their hearts, as He did with these two disciples who were going far away from Jerusalem: He warms their heart so that they might return home (see *Lk* 24:32-33). God's faithfulness is what we do not know: what happened in that dialogue, but it is the generous God who sought after Peter who had denied him. We only know that the Lord rose and appeared to Simon: we do not know what happened in that dialogue (see *Lk* 24:34). But we do know that it was God's faithfulness that sought Peter out. God's fidelity always precedes us, and our faithfulness is always a response to that faithfulness that precedes us. It is God who always precedes us. It is like the flower of the almond tree, in spring: it flowers first.

To be faithful is to praise this fidelity, to be faithful to this fidelity. It is a response to this fidelity.

Spiritual Communion

Those who cannot receive communion can now make a spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.