



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS "Jesus prays for us
before the Father, showing His wounds"

Thursday, 23 April 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

In many places, one of the effects of this pandemic is being felt: many families are in need, they are hungry, and unfortunately usurers are profiting from them. This is another pandemic, another virus. A social pandemic: families who have a precarious job, who work day to day, or do not have a regular job, and do not have food to put on the table, and have children to feed. And then usurers come along and take what little they have. Let us pray. Let us pray for these families, for those many children of these families, for the dignity of these families, and let us pray also for the usurers, that the Lord might touch their hearts and convert them.

Homily

The first Reading continues the story that began with the healing of the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The Apostles were taken before the Sanhedrin, and then they were sent to jail, then an angel freed them. And this morning, that same morning, they were supposed to be brought out of jail in order to be judged, but the angel freed them, and they went into the Temple and began to preach (see *Acts* 5:17-25). And that day the commander and the soldiers took the Apostles and presented them before the Sanhedrin (see v. 27); they went to take them from the Temple and took them before the Sanhedrin. And there, the high priest rebukes them. "We gave you a formal warning not to preach in this name", that is, in Jesus's name, and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and seem determined to fix the guilt of this man's death on us" (v. 28). The Apostles, Peter above all, reproved the leaders for having

killed Jesus. And Peter and the Apostles replied with the same story. "Obedience to God comes before obedience to men... and you are guilty" (see *Acts* 5:29-31). His accusation is so courageous and bold that one might ask: Is this the same Peter who denied Jesus? That Peter who was so fearful, that Peter who was even a coward? How in the world did he arrive at this point? And they even finish saying, "We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (see v. 32). What was the journey this Peter took to arrive at this point, at this courage, at this boldness, to expose himself in this way? Because he could have arrived at a compromise with the priests, saying, "Calm down, we will take on a softer tone, we won't accuse you in public, we will leave you in peace", so as to arrive at a compromise.

The Church, throughout her history, has often had to do this in order to save the people of God. And at times, the Church has done this to save herself - not the Holy Church, but the Church's leaders. Compromises can be good and they can be bad. But the Apostles could have got out of this through a compromise. No! Peter said, "No compromise, you are guilty" (see v. 30), and he said it courageously.

How did Peter reach this point? Because he was an enthusiastic man, a man who loved passionately, but he was also fearful. He was a man who was open to God to the point that God reveals to him that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, but shortly afterwards - straight away - he gives in to the temptation of denying Jesus, he reaches the point of saying to Jesus, "No, Lord, that is not the way: let us take another", redemption without the Cross. And Jesus says to him, "Satan" (see *Mk* 8:31-33). A Peter who passed from temptation to grace, a Peter who is capable of kneeling before Jesus and saying, "Leave me for I am a sinful man", and then we see a Peter who tries to get by without being seen, and denies Jesus so as not to end up in jail (see *Lk* 22:54-62). Peter who is unstable, as he is very generous and also very weak. What is the secret, what is the strength that Peter received in order to get here? There is a verse that will help us understand this. Before the Passion, Jesus said to the Apostles, "Satan has desired to sift you like wheat" (*Lk* 22:31). This is the moment of temptation. You are going to be sifted like wheat. And to Peter He says, "but I have prayed for you so that your faith may not fail" (v. 32). This is Peter's secret: Jesus's prayer. Jesus prays for Peter, so that his faith will not fail him and that he may - Jesus says - confirm his brothers in faith. Jesus prays for Peter.

And what Jesus did for Peter, He does for all of us. Jesus prays for us all. He prays before the Father. We are used to praying to Jesus so that He might give us one grace or another, that He might help us, but we are not accustomed to contemplating Jesus who shows the Father His wounds, Jesus the intercessor, the mediator, Jesus who prays for us. And Peter was able to progress on this path from a coward to a courageous person with the gift of the Holy Spirit, thanks to Jesus's prayer.

Let us think about this a little, and let us turn to Jesus, grateful that He prays for us. Jesus prays for every one of us. Jesus is the intercessor. Jesus wanted to take His wounds with Him to show

His Father the price of our salvation. We need to have more confidence; more than in our own prayers, in Jesus's prayer. "Lord, pray for me" - "But I am God, I can give you...", "Yes, but pray for me, because You are the intercessor". This is Peter's secret. "Peter, I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail" (*Lk 22:32*). May the Lord teach us how to ask Him for the grace to pray for each one of us.

Spiritual Communion

At Your feet, O my Jesus, I prostrate myself and I offer You repentance of my contrite heart, which is humbled in its nothingness and in Your holy presence. I adore You in the Sacrament of Your love, the ineffable Eucharist. I desire to receive You into the poor dwelling that my heart offers you. While waiting for the happiness of sacramental communion, I wish to possess You in spirit. Come to me, O Jesus, since I, for my part, am coming to You! May Your love embrace my whole being in life and in death. I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You. Amen.