



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

Two Advocates

Monday, 22 May 2017

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“Lord open my heart so I may be able to understand what you have taught us; so I may be able to remember your words; so I may be able to follow your words; so I may come to the whole truth”. This is the prayer “to make in these days”, which the Pontiff recommended during Mass on Monday morning, 22 May. Pope Francis offered this prayer during the Liturgy of the Word which, he explained, “in these days has us listen at length to Jesus’ discourse at the Last Supper”, in which he announces “to his own” the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Here we are dealing with “a discourse in which Jesus admonishes, teaches, consoles” the disciples and “gives them hope”, reassuring them: “remain calm, I will not leave you orphans”. I am going, but you will not remain orphans, because I will send to you another ‘advocate’ to defend you before the Father”. In this way the Pope noted that while “he was the first advocate”, Christ himself, “the great advocate who forgave us all sins, who defends us”, at the Last Supper speaks of another “counselor”. In fact, he says, “I will send another who will accompany you”, explaining that “when the Paraclete comes” — that is, the counselor, who is the Holy Spirit — “whom I will send from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me”.

According to Pope Francis, this means that it is “the Holy Spirit alone who gives us the confidence

to be saved by Jesus”; and that it is “the Holy Spirit alone who teaches us to say ‘Jesus is Lord’”. Whereas, “without the Spirit, none of us has the capacity to say, feel or live this”. The Pope added that, “in other parts of this long discourse, Jesus said” that the Spirit ““will lead you to the whole truth’, will accompany us towards the full truth. ‘He will remind you of all the things I have said; he will teach you everything’”. For this reason, the Holy Father assured us, “the Holy Spirit is the travelling companion of every Christian” and “also the travelling companion of the Church. And this is the gift which Jesus gives us”.

Reflecting on his own experience as a bishop, Pope Francis recalled that “when we celebrate confirmations and anoint the candidates on their forehead, we say: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit which is given to you as a gift’”. In fact, the Paraclete “is a gift, the great gift of Jesus; it is the Spirit. It is what helps us avoid making mistakes”.

It is natural then to ask: “Where does the Spirit reside?”. The Pope identified a possible response to this question in the first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (16:11-15), which recounts “the Apostles’ adventure” as they went “towards Macedonia, where they had been called”. Paraphrasing the biblical account, the Holy Father added that “they arrived at Philippi, in the city, on the Sabbath, and they went along the river where people prayed, and there was a group of women praying there”. Thus the Apostles “began to preach to the women about Jesus”. And it is written in the Book of Acts that “there, listening, was also a lady by the name of Lydia, a seller of purple goods”. Pope Francis noted that “she was no fool”, but rather, “a businesswoman; she knew how to do things”. Indeed, “she was from the city of Thyatira” and was “a believer in God. And the Lord opened her heart to accept the Word of God”. Or rather, insisted the Pope, “he opened her heart so that the Holy Spirit might enter”, so that she might become “a disciple”. In fact, “it is precisely in the heart”, that “we carry the Holy Spirit”. So much so that “the Church calls him ‘the sweet guest of the heart’”. Nevertheless, the Holy Father observed, “he cannot enter a closed heart” nor is it possible to buy “the keys to open the heart”, since “it too is a gift. It is a gift of God”. Thus Pope Francis prayed: “Lord, open my heart so the Spirit may enter and make me understand that Jesus is Lord”. In practice, he advised, we should keep our “heart open so the Spirit may enter, and so we may listen to the Spirit”.

From this twofold observation, then, the Pope indicated that “it will do us good” to reflect on “two questions that we can take from these readings”. The first is: “Do I ask the Lord for the grace of an open heart?”. And the second: “Do I seek to listen to the Holy Spirit, his inspiration, the things he wants to say to my heart so that I may continue along the Christian way and be able to testify that Jesus is Lord?”. Thus, Pope Francis came to his concluding advice: “Think about these two points today: is my heart open, and do I make the effort to listen to the Holy Spirit, to what he is telling me? And in this way we will continue in the Christian life and we too will give witness to Jesus Christ”.

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