



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAEHOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

“We all have one Shepherd: Jesus”

Monday, 4 May 2020

[[Multimedia](#)]

Introduction

Let us pray today for families. In this time of quarantine, families, cooped up at home, are trying to do many new things; there is a lot of creativity with children, with everything, just to keep going. And there is also another thing: at times there is domestic violence. Let us pray for families, that they may continue in peace creatively and patiently, during this quarantine.

Homily

When Peter goes up to Jerusalem, the faithful reproach him (see *Acts 11:1-8*). They reproach him because he had entered the house of uncircumcised men and had eaten with them, with the Gentiles: this was not allowed, it was a sin. The purity of the law did not permit it. But Peter had done it because it was the Spirit that led him there. There is always, in the Church - and often in the early Church, because matters were not clear - this spirit of “We are the righteous ones, the others are sinners”. This “us” and “them”, “us” and “them”, divisions: “We have the correct position before God”, whereas the others... Sometimes it is said that “they are already condemned”. This is a *disorder* of the Church, a disorder that is born of ideologies or out of different religious parties... To think that, in Jesus’s time, there were at least four religious parties: the party of the Pharisees, and the parties of the Sadducees, the Zealots, and the Essenes, and each one interpreted the law according to their *idea* of it. And this idea is “beyond the law” when it becomes a way of thinking, a worldly spirit that then interprets the law. They even rebuked Jesus for entering the house of tax

collectors - who were sinners in their opinion - and for eating with them, with the sinners, as the purity of the law did not permit it (see *Mt* 15:2,20). Always that reproach that causes division: this is the important thing that I would like to emphasise.

There are ideas, positions that cause division, to the point that division becomes more important than unity. My idea is more important than the Holy Spirit that guides us. There is a cardinal “emeritus” who lives here in the Vatican, a good pastor, who used to say to his faithful: “The Church is like a river, you know? Some are closer to one bank, some closer to the other, but the important thing is that everyone is in the river”. This is the unity of the Church. No one outside, everyone inside. With their peculiarities: this does not divide, it is not ideology, it is licit. But why does the Church have such a broad river? It is because the Lord wants it that way.

The Lord, in the Gospel, says: “There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one Shepherd” (*Jn* 10:16). The Lord says: “I have sheep everywhere and I am the shepherd of all of them”. This “all of them” is very important. Let us think of the parable of the wedding feast (see *Mt* 22:1-10), when the guests did not want to go: one because he had bought a field, one had got married. Each one gave his own reason for not going. And the master became angry and said, “Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find” (v. 9). Everyone. Old and young, rich and poor, good and bad. Everyone. This “everyone” has something of the view of the Lord who came for all and died for all. “But did He die even for that wretch who made my life impossible?” He died for him too. “And for that rascal?” He died for him. For everyone. And even for the people who do not believe in Him, or who are of other religions. He died for everyone. This does not mean that one must proselytise, no. But He died for everyone, He justified everyone.

Here in Rome there is a woman, a good woman, a professor, Professor [Maria Grazia] Mara, who when there were difficulties for various things, among the different parties, used to say, “But Christ died for everyone: let us go forward!”. That constructive capacity. We have just one Redeemer, one unity: Christ died for everyone. Instead there is the temptation to say, and even Paul suffered from this: “I am Paul’s, I am Apollo’s, I belong to this one, I belong to the other...” (see *I Cor* 3:1-9). And think of us, fifty years ago, after the Council: the divisions that the Church suffered. “I am on this side, I think this way, you that way...”. Yes, it is right to think in this way but *in the unity of the Church*, under the Shepherd, Jesus.

Two things. The apostles’ rebuke to Peter because he had entered the house of the Gentiles. And Jesus who says: “I am everyone’s shepherd”, I am the shepherd to everyone, and who says, “There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one Shepherd” (see *Jn* 10:16). And the prayer for the unity of all humanity, so that everyone, men and women, we all have one Shepherd: Jesus.

May the Lord free us from that psychology of division, of dividing, and help us to see this aspect of Jesus, this great reality of Jesus: that in Him we are all brothers and sisters, and He is the Shepherd of *all*. That word, today: *everyone, everyone*. May it accompany us throughout the day.

Spiritual Communion

Those who cannot receive Communion may make a 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.