



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

The three moments of prayer

Thursday, 5 September 2013

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When the Lord passes in our life he always says a word to us and makes us a promise. But he also asks us to renounce something and entrusts us with a mission. Pope Francis spoke about this at Mass on Thursday morning, 5 September, in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Commenting on the episode of the “miraculous catch” told by Luke (5:1-11) — the Gospel that day — the Pope mentioned St Augustine who “used to say something that always struck me. He said: ‘I am afraid when the Lord passes by’. Why? ‘Because I am afraid that he will pass and that I might not notice him’. And the Lord passes in our life as happened here, in the life of Peter, of James, of John”.

In this case the Lord passed with a miracle in the life of his disciples. However, the Pope clarified, “Jesus does not always pass in our life with a miracle”. Even though, he added, “he always makes himself heard. Always. And when the Lord passes what happened here always occurs. He tells us something, he makes us understand something, then he says a word to us which is a promise; he asks something of us in our way of life, he asks us to give up something, to renounce something. And he then gives us a mission”.

He asks of us “a word that is a promise”, he asks us “renounce something”, and he “entrusts us with a mission”. These three aspects of Jesus’ passing in our life are clearly conveyed by Luke. The Holy Father mentioned in particular Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ miracle: “Simon, who was so hot-tempered, went to him: ‘but Lord depart from me for I am a sinful man’. He really felt like a sinner. And what did Jesus say to him? ‘Do not be afraid’.

“This is a beautiful phrase, so often repeated: ‘Do not be afraid, do not fear’”, the Pontiff commented, adding: “And then, and here comes the promise, ‘henceforth you will be catching men’. When the Lord enters our life, when he passes in our heart he always says a word to us and makes us a promise: ‘go ahead, take heart, do not be afraid: you will do this!’”. It is “an invitation to follow him”. And “when we hear this invitation and see that there is something wrong in our life, we must correct it”, and we must be ready to renounce anything generously. Even if “in our life”, the Pope explained, “there is something good, Jesus asks us to leave it in order to follow him more closely. This is what happened to the Apostles who left everything and followed him”.

Then, there is the mission that Jesus entrusts to us. Indeed, he never says: “Follow me!” without then telling us the mission. He always says: ‘leave it, and follow me for such and such’”. Therefore if “we take the path of Jesus, it is in order to do something. This is the mission”.

It is a “sequence that happens every time we pray. In fact our prayer”, the Pope said, “must always have these three moments”. First, listening to the word of Jesus, a word through which he gives us peace and assures us of his closeness. Then, the moment of our renunciation: we must be ready to “leave something: ‘Lord, what do you want me to leave in order to be closer to you?’. Perhaps at that moment he does not tell you. But let us ask him with a generous spirit. Lastly, the moment of mission: prayer always helps us to understand what ‘we must do’”.