



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Love of God and neighbour conquers idolatry and hypocrisy

Tuesday 15 October 2013

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 42, 18 October 2013)

On Tuesday morning, 15 October, Pope Francis commented on the liturgical readings of the day taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (1:16-25) and from the Gospel of St Luke (11:37-41).

Pope Francis began: "The Lord has told us that the first commandment is to adore God, to love God. The second is to love our neighbour as ourselves. The liturgy today speaks to us about two vices that oppose them ... idolatry and hypocrisy".

Commenting on the first Reading he said, "St Paul doesn't mince words when he describes the sin of idolatry. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all impiety, for idolatry is a form of impiety, it is a lack of *pietas*. What is lacking is the sense we all have within us to adore God ... we all need to adore, because we have God's very imprint within us" and "when we do not adore God, we adore creatures".

Lest we think idolatry to be a thing of the past, Pope Francis reminds us: "today there are many idols and many idolaters ... today, too, the streets are lined with idols". And he added: "we all have an idol hidden within us. We might ask ourselves before God: 'what is my hidden idol, what occupies the Lord's place in my heart?'" He continued, "There was a French writer, a very religious

man, who got angry very easily and often; it was his great shortcoming. He said: whoever does not pray to God prays to the devil. If you do not adore God, you adore idols, always!" The Pope suggested that we all ask ourselves: "what is my idol?"

Pope Francis commented on the sin of hypocrisy, by turning to the evangelist's account of Jesus going to dine with one of the Pharisees. The Pope observed: "The man who invited Jesus to dine with him was scandalized that he did not wash his hands", yet "just as Paul did not mince words when speaking of idolatry, so Jesus does not mince words with hypocrites: "You Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. It could not be clearer! You are greedy and wicked. You fools!". What does Jesus counsel? he asked. "Give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything will be clean for you".

Pope Francis concluded: "This is the way of the Lord: to adore God, to love God above everything and to love one's neighbour as oneself. It is so simple and yet so difficult. It is only possible with grace. Let us ask, then, for this grace".