



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

The parrots creed

Friday, 10 January 2014

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 3, 17 January 2014)

At Holy Mass Pope Francis took up the thread of his reflection the previous day, as he continued to comment on the first Letter of St John. The Apostle insists and greatly emphasizes the word which, for him, sums up the Christian life: to abide, to abide in the Lord, he said. Over the last days, we have seen how he envisions this abiding: we in the Lord and the Lord in us. This means abiding in love, for the two main commandments are love of God and neighbour.

For John, then, the heart of the Christian life is to abide in the Lord, and for the Lord to abide in us, to abide in love. And that is why the Spirit has been given to us. It is the Holy Spirit who carries out this work of abiding. In the passage of St John's Letter (4:19-5:4) proclaimed in the liturgy, the Apostle answers a question that comes quite naturally to us: for our part, what do we have to do in order to live out this abiding? Taking up the words of the Apostle, Pope Francis replied: whoever abides in God, whoever has been born of God, whoever abides in love overcomes the world, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Faith enables us to live out this abiding, while on God's part the Holy Spirit carries out this work of grace.

It is powerful, the Pope exclaimed. The victory that overcomes the world is our faith. Our faith can do all things: it is the victory!. It would be beautiful to repeat this truth often, he said, because so

many times we are defeated Christians. The Church is full of defeated Christians, who do not believe that faith is a victory, who do not live this faith. Defeat comes if we do not live out this faith. Yet it overcomes the world, the prince of the world.

The fundamental question we need to ask ourselves is this: What is this faith?. Pope Francis recalled how Jesus spoke about this faith and revealed its power in passages such as those which tell of the woman with the haemorrhage, or the Canaanite woman, or the man who drew near to him asking for a healing in faith great is your faith or of the man born blind. The Pope also recalled the Lords words that the man who has faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains.

This faith, the Pope added, demands two attitudes from us: confession and trust. First, faith means confessing God; but the God who has revealed himself to us from the time of our fathers until now: the God of history. That is what we profess in the Creed. Yet as he noted, it is one thing to recite the Creed from the heart and quite another to recite it like a parrot: I believe in God, I believe in Jesus Christ, I believe.... The Pope then suggested an examination of conscience: Do I believe what I say? Is this confession of faith true or I am saying it from memory because I have to say it? Or do I believe by halves?.

Therefore, we must confess the faith all of it, not only a part. All of it! However, he added, we must also guard it as it has come down to us through the Tradition. All the faith!. The Pope then indicated the sign for recognizing if we confess the faith well: adoration. Whoever confesses the faith well, he said, all of the faith, is capable of adoring God. It is a sign that may appear somewhat strange, because we know how to petition God, how to thank God. But to adore God, to praise God is more. Only someone with a strong faith is able to adore.

The Pope then added: I dare say the thermometer of the Churchs life is a bit low: we Christians do not have a great ability to adore, because we are not convinced about the profession of faith. Or we are convinced only halfway. We need to recover the ability to praise and to adore, he said.

Regarding the second attitude, Pope Francis recalled how the man or woman with faith trusts God. They trust. Paul, in the dark moments of his life, said: I know well in whom I have trusted. In God. In the Lord Jesus. And trusting leads us to hope. As the confession of faith leads us to the adoration and praise of God, trust in God leads us to an attitude of hope.

There are many Christians with a watered down hope that is not strong. What is the reason for this weak hope? A lack of strength and courage to trust in the Lord. To be Christian victors, Pope Francis said, we must believe by confessing the faith, and also keeping watch over our faith, and trusting in God, in the Lord. And this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith.

To abide in the Lord, to abide in love, he repeated, on Gods part we need the Holy Spirit. But on

our part, we need to confess the faith which is a gift, and to trust in the Lord Jesus in order to adore, praise and be people of hope.

Pope Francis concluded his homily, praying that the Lord might enable us to understand and live this beautiful word of the Apostle John proposed in the day' liturgy: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.