



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Only the humble understand

Tuesday, 2 December 2014

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 49, 5 December 2014)

The grandeur of the mystery of Jesus can be known only by humbling and abasing oneself like Jesus, who went so far as to be “marginalized” and who certainly did not present himself as “a general or a ruler”. Thus, theologians who do not “do theology on their knees” might have a lot to say, but “can’t understand a word”. Thus, Francis proposed humility and meekness during Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning.

“The liturgical texts that the Church offers us today bring us closer to the mystery of Jesus, to the mystery of his person”, the Pontiff noted. And in fact, he explained, the passage from the Gospel of Luke (10:21-24) “says that Jesus exalted in the joy of the Holy Spirit and praised the Father”. After all, “this is the interior life of Jesus: his relationship with the Father, the relationship of praise, in the Spirit, the very Holy Spirit who unites that relationship”. This is “the mystery of the interiority of Jesus, what He felt”.

Jesus “declares that those who see Him see the Father”, Francis continued. He says, to be precise: “yea, Father for such was thy gracious will”. And “no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him”.

The Father, the Pope emphasized, “is known only by Jesus: Jesus knows the Father”. And therefore, “when Philip went to Jesus and said: show us the Father”, the Lord answered him: “Philip, he who has seen me has seen the Father”. In fact “the union between them is great: He is the image of the Father; He is the closeness and the tenderness of the Father to us”. And, “the Father draws close to us in Jesus”.

Francis then indicated that “in the farewell speech after the Last Supper”, Jesus repeats several times: “Father, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me”. And Jesus “promises the Holy Spirit, because it is the Holy Spirit who creates this unity, as he does between the Father and the Son”. And “Jesus joyfully exalts in the Holy Spirit”.

This leads toward the “mystery of Jesus”, the Pontiff explained. However, “this mystery does not remain just between them. It has been revealed to us”. Thus, the Father “was revealed by Jesus: He makes the Father known to us; He introduces us to this interior life that He has”. The Pope then asked, who does Jesus reveal the Father to? “To whom does He give this grace?”. Jesus himself gives the answer, as read in the Gospel of Luke: “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes”.

For this reason, “only those with the heart of babes are capable of receiving this revelation”. Only those with a “humble, meek heart, which feels the need to pray, to open up to God, to feel poor” have this capacity. In a word, “only those who go forth with the first beatitude: the poor in spirit”.

Of course, the Pope acknowledged, “so many can learn science, even theology”. However, “if they don’t do this theology on their knees, humbly, that is, like babes, they can’t understand a word”. Perhaps “they may tell us many things, but they won’t understand a word”. For “only this poverty is capable of receiving the revelation that the Father gives through Jesus”. What’s more, “Jesus comes not as an army general”, not as “a powerful ruler”. He will instead sprout, “as a shoot”, like in the First Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (11:1-10): “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse”. Thus, Pope Francis said, “He is a shoot, He is humble, He is meek, and He has come for the humble, for the meek, to bring salvation to the sick, to the poor, to the oppressed, as He himself says in the Fourth Chapter of Luke, when He is in the Synagogue in Nazareth”. And Jesus has come “for the marginalized: He marginalized himself; He does not have a nonnegotiable value, being equal to God”. Indeed, the Pope indicated, “He humbled himself, He debased himself”. He “became an outcast, He humiliated himself” in order to “give us the mystery of the Father and his own”.

The Pope remarked that “we cannot receive this revelation outside, outside of the world into which Jesus brings it: in humility, debasing himself”. We can never forget that “the Word was made flesh, He marginalized himself in order to bring salvation to the marginalized”. And “when the great John the Baptist, in prison, did not understand how things were there with Jesus, because he was

somewhat perplexed, he sent his disciples to ask: ‘John asks you: is it you or must we wait for another?’”.

Jesus doesn’t answer John’s question: “I am the Son”. He says instead: “Look, you have seen all of this; tell John what you have seen”: in other words, that “lepers are healed, the poor receive the good news, and the outcast are found”.

According to Francis, it is obvious that “the grandeur of the mystery of God is known only in the mystery of Jesus, and the mystery of Jesus is really a mystery of lowering oneself, abasing oneself, humiliating oneself, and bringing salvation to the poor, to those who are destroyed” by sickness, sins and difficult situations.

“Outside of this framework, we cannot understand the mystery of Jesus”, the Pope emphasized. “We can’t understand this anointing of the Holy Spirit which makes us rejoice, as we heard in the Gospel, praising the Father, and which leads to bring the Good News to the poor and the marginalized”.

From this perspective, in the season of Advent, Francis encouraged us to pray and ask the Lord to lead us ever closer “to his mystery, and to do so on the path that He wants us to take: the path of humility, the path of meekness, the path of poverty, the path of feeling ourselves sinners”. For this is how, the Pope concluded, “He comes to save us, to free us”.