



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

God does not like to lose

Thursday, 7 November 2013

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 45, 8 November 2013)

In his homily at Holy Mass on Thursday, 7 November, Pope Francis commented on the Gospel passage of the day taken from St Luke (15:1-10), in which Jesus tells the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin.

Pope Francis began his reflection by describing the attitude of the scribes and the Pharisees who studied Jesus' actions. They were scandalised by the things that Jesus did and murmured against him: "This man is dangerous!" What scandalised them most was the fact that "Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, that he talked with them". Hence their reaction: "this man offends God, he desecrates the ministry of the prophet which is a sacred ministry" and "he desecrates it in order to draw close to these people".

"The music of their murmuring is the music of hypocrisy," the Pope said, and "Jesus responds to this murmuring hypocrisy with a parable" in which the words "joy and rejoicing" recur four times.

Practically speaking, the Pope said, it is as though Jesus were saying to the scribes and Pharisees: "you are scandalised, but my Father rejoices". In fact, he added "this is the deepest message of the parable: God's joy". He is a God "who does not like to lose what is his, and in

order not to lose it, he goes out from himself, and seeks out” the lost. He is a God “who searches for all those who are far from him,” like the shepherd recounted in St Luke's Gospel who “goes in search of the lost sheep”.

“Our God is a God who searches,” Pope Francis continued. “His work is to search: to search and seek out the lost in order to invite them back”. For “God cannot abide losing what is his; thus on Holy Thursday Jesus would pray ‘that none of those whom thou hast given me may be lost’”.

Indeed, the Holy Father said, God “has a certain weakness of love for those who are furthest away, who are lost. He goes in search of them. And how does he search? He searches to the very end. Like the shepherd who journeys into the darkness looking for his lost sheep until he finds it” or “like the woman who, when she loses her coin, lights a lamp, sweeps the house and seeks diligently until she finds it”. God, seeks out the lost because he thinks: “I will not lose this son, he is mine! And I don't want to lose him!”.

However, God's work does not consist only in seeking out the lost, Pope Francis then added. “When he finds us, when he has found the lost sheep” he neither sets it aside nor does he ask us: “Why did you get lost? Why did you fall?”. Rather, he restores what was lost to its proper place. And when this happens “it is God who rejoices. God rejoices not in the death of the sinner but rather that he be restored to life”.