



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

God's surname

Tuesday, 17 December 2013

(by L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 1, 3 January 2014)

At Holy Mass on Tuesday morning Pope Francis commented on the Readings of the day, taken from the Book of Genesis (49:2, 8-10) and from the Gospel of St Matthew (1:1-17). On this, the Pontiff's seventy seventh birthday, he presided at his customary morning Mass in the Chapel of Santa Marta. Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, was present to concelebrate the Mass and expressed his best wishes to the Pope on behalf of the entire College.

The Pope centred his homily around the theme of God's presence in the history of mankind. Within this context, the Pontiff identified two key themes — inheritance and genealogy. He said they are keys to interpreting the first Reading from Genesis regarding the prophecy of Jacob, who gathers together his sons and foretells a glorious line of descendants for Judah, and the Gospel passage which recounts the genealogy of Jesus. Reflecting especially on the latter, Pope Francis said that “we are not dealing with a list in a telephone book” but with “pure history”, for “God sent his Son among men. Jesus is consubstantial with God, the Father, but also consubstantial with his mother, a woman. And this is his consubstantiality with his mother: God entered history, God wanted to become history. He is with us. He has journeyed with us”.

It was a journey that began long ago, in Paradise, immediately after the original sin. God “had this

idea: to make the journey with us". Therefore, "he called Abraham, the first person indicated on this list, and he invited him to walk. Abraham began the journey: he begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah". And so it went, over the course of history. "God journeys with his people", the Pope said, because he did not want to come and save us apart from history; he wanted to make history with us".

It is a history wrought of holiness and sin, the Pope said. The list of the genealogy of Jesus is filled with saints and sinners: from Abraham and David who converted after his sin to "high caliber sinners, who sinned gravely". But God made history with them all. The latter were sinners who did not know how to respond to the design God had in mind for them. "Soloman, so great and intelligent, ended like a poor man who didn't even know his name". And yet God was also with him. "And this is beautiful: God makes history with us".

The Pope continued: "when God wants to say who he is, he says: I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob". "What is God's surname?" the Pope asked. "We are, each one of us. He takes the name of each of us and makes it his surname: 'I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Pedro, of Marietta, of Armony, of Marisa, of Simon, of everyone. He takes his surname from us. God's surname is each one of us'".

The Pope then said, as Christmas approaches, "it is natural to think: if he made history with us, if he took his surname from us, if he has left it to us to write his history, then we for our part should allow God to write our history".

Pope Francis concluded by extending to all those present an invitation to an open heart, and a Christmas wish: "May the Lord write your history, and may you allow him to write it".