



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

He who intercedes on our behalf

Thursday, 22 January 2015

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 5, 30 January 2015)

Jesus saves and *Jesus intercedes*: these are the two key words to understanding the essential point that is most important for our life. This is the truth of faith that Pope Francis reaffirmed in the Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday morning.

Present at the celebration were representatives of Rome's Slovak community. Welcoming them at the beginning of Mass, the Pontiff expressed closeness to the "courageous Slovak Church, which at this moment, at this time, is fighting to defend the family. Continue with courage!".

Meditating on the ministry of Jesus, the Pope turned to the day's Gospel passage (Mk 3:1-12), noting the repetition of the word "multitude". The passage tells us, he explained, that "the People of God find hope in Jesus because his way of acting, of teaching, touches the heart, reaches the heart because it has the power of the Word of God". And that "the people feel this and see that promises are fulfilled in Jesus, that in Jesus there is hope".

After all, Francis added, the "people were rather bored with the way of teaching the faith by the doctors of the law of that time, who loaded them down with many commandments, many precepts, but did not reach the people's heart". This is why, "when they see and hear Jesus, his proposals, the Beatitudes, they feel something moving inside — it's the Holy Spirit that causes this — and they go to look for Jesus".

But Mark the Evangelist, according to Francis, “wants to explain why so many people come to Jesus”. The Gospel tells us that “He speaks with authority, He doesn’t speak like the scribes, the Pharisees, the doctors of the law”. Then “Jesus heals people” who, in any case, are “in search of self goodness”. After all, the Pontiff acknowledged, “we are never able to follow God with purity of intention from the start”, as they are instead “partly for us, partly for God, and the path is for purifying this intention”. Thus, “the people go, seeking God, but also seeking health, healing”. And for this reason “they threw themselves at Him, to touch Him, so that power would come out and heal them”.

“Jesus is like this”, Francis explained. “And this is a moment which recurs in Jesus’ life”. However, “there is something more important behind this”. In fact, what is truly “most important is not that Jesus heals”, which is also “a sign of another healing”. Nor that “Jesus utters words that reach the heart”, even though “this helps us to go on God’s path”.

To better comprehend “what is most important in Jesus’ ministry”, Francis returned to the message of the First Reading (Heb 7:25; 8:6), where, he indicated two fundamental words: “Brothers, Christ ‘is able for all time to save’, in a perfect way, ‘those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them”. Thus, he said, “Jesus saves and Jesus intercedes. These are the two key words”.

Yes, the Pope repeated, “Jesus saves!” And “these healings, these words that reach the heart are the sign and the beginning of salvation”. They are “the way to salvation for many who begin to go to hear Jesus or to ask for healing and then turn to Him and feel salvation. See then, Francis said, the more important thing is not that Jesus heals and teaches, but that He saves. For “He is the Saviour and we are saved through Him”. This is “more important” and it “is the strength of our faith”.

The second key word is “intercede”. Indeed, the Pope recalled, “Jesus has gone to the Father and from there He still intercedes, every day, at all times for us”. And “this is something current: Jesus before the Father, who offers his life, the redemption, showing the Father his wounds, the price of salvation”. And like this, “every day Jesus intercedes”. This is why “when we, for one reason or another,” feel “a little down, let’s remember that it is He who prays for us, intercedes for us continuously”. However, he noted, “we often forget this”. But Jesus did not “go to heaven, send us the Holy Spirit, end of story! No! Presently, every moment, Jesus intercedes”.

In this regard, Francis suggested that we pray with these simple words: “‘Lord Jesus, have mercy on me’. Intercede for me”. It’s important, he continued, “to turn to the Lord asking for this intercession”. The crucial point is what the author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes, reminding us that we have “such a grand high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven”. This is “the crucial point: that there, we have an intercessor”. And the Pope said not to forget “that the Lord is the intercessor: the saviour and the intercessor”, adding that “it

will do us good to remember this”.

In conclusion, the Pontiff continued, “the multitude seek Jesus”, trailing “that scent of hope of the People of God who await the Messiah, and they try to find in Him health, truth, salvation, for He is the saviour and as saviour He still today, at this moment, intercedes for us”. Francis ended with the hope “that our Christian life may be ever more confident that we have been saved, that we have a saviour, Jesus, at the right hand of the Father, who intercedes. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, enable us to understand these things.