



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Journey and remembrance

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Along the path of life we never walk alone. To remind us of this, God helps us understand that salvation is not a momentary event but a history that unfolds day by day, amid successes and failures, until the final encounter. The parallel between the history of the people of Israel and that of the individual Christian guided Pope Francis' meditation during Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday morning.

We should appreciate this history, because "remembrance brings us closer to God", the Pontiff said. Thus, he recalled, referring to the day's reading from The Acts of the Apostles (13:13-25), the first preaching by Jesus' Apostles "was historic". In preaching the Gospel, "they arrived at Jesus, but by retelling the whole history of the People of Israel", starting with "father Abraham", moving on through "Moses, the deliverance from Egypt, the Promised Land", until, concluding with King David: "From this man's descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus". In this way they gave an historical account of the journey that God "had made with his people".

All this, Francis said, "makes us think that Christ's message, Christ's salvation, this gift that God has given us, is not a momentary event and nothing more: it is a journey!". It is the journey "that

God wanted to make with his people” and which must not be forgotten. This is why remembrance is repeatedly advised throughout Scripture. For example, in the Book of Deuteronomy, which is actually “the book of the memory of Israel”, we read: “Remember, remember! Remember this!”. Therefore, it is important, the Pontiff explained, “to turn back to see how God saved us, by following — with the heart and mind — the path of these memories and in this way to arrive at Jesus”.

Jesus himself had emphasized remembrance and “in the greatest moment of his life”, he gave us his body and blood “and said: ‘Do this in memory of me’”. Hence, we must “remember how God saved us”.

This is an invitation that the Church accepts each day in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In this regard the Pope pointed out that in the prayer at the beginning of the day’s Mass there was an invocation to “God who had redeemed man and lifted him beyond the ancient splendour”. The Pope then added: “the people must remember” that God did all of this “on the journey” with his people.

In every Eucharist we celebrate “the memory of this salvation; the memorial of Jesus who is present on the altar to give his life to us”. But, Francis added, “we too, in our own personal life, must do the same: remember our journey”, because “each of us has made our way, accompanied by God, close to God, close to the Lord”, at times even “distancing ourselves from the Lord”. In any case, the Pontiff advised, “it does the heart good” for every Christian to remember “his own path” and understand how God “led him or her here”, how God led us by the hand.

In retracing the journey made, we should also be cognizant of the times we have said to the Lord: “No! Go away! I don’t want...!” — and “the Lord”, the Pope emphasized, “is respectful” of this too — but it is important to remember “our own life and our own journey”.

It is helpful to repeat this practice often and to remember: “At that moment God gave me this grace and I responded in this way...”, to tell ourselves: “I did this, this, and that”, and to realize that God has always accompanied us. In this way, the Pope said, “we arrive at a new encounter”, one which could be called the “encounter of gratitude”, in which we could pray in this way: “Thank you Lord for the company you have given me, for this journey you have made with me!”. We could also ask forgiveness for the sins and mistakes we are aware of, knowing that God “walks with us and is not afraid of our malevolence”; he is “always there!”.

In this regard, the Pontiff added: “How often have we closed the door in his face; how often have we pretended not to see him, not to believe he was there with us; how often have we denied his salvation.... But he was there!”. It is important “to remember all of this”, as it is to remember “our good deeds”. How often, for example, “have we helped others, cared for a sick person”.

The Pope then advised us to “remember the whole journey” because “remembrance brings us

closer to God". It is, Francis explained, a sort of "re-creation", of "regeneration, which leads us beyond the ancient splendour that Adam had in the first creation". To end his homily the Pope repeated several times this simple advice: "Remember!". Whether remembering the entire course of one's life, remembering the course of today's events or those of the past year, it always good to ask: "How has my relationship with the Lord been?", and to remember, the Pontiff concluded, "the great and beautiful things the Lord has done in each of our lives".