



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

One Word is Enough

Friday, 25 November 2016

(by: www.osservatoreromano.va)

Like a father, God is always ready to save us, and he is only waiting for us to say “Lord”: it is enough that we say this, because “He will do the rest”, helping us to avoid the arrogant fall of “eternal damnation” due to the pride of wanting to “manage on our own”. During Mass celebrated Friday morning, 25 November, in the Santa Martha Chapel, Pope Francis cautioned us to be attentive to the “temptations of Satan” and reminded us that “eternal damnation is not a place of torture” but rather, the desire to “distance yourself” from God, and listen to the “lies” of the Devil.

“The Kingdom of God is near. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is among us, but develops and progresses towards its maturity, towards its end”, the Pope said. He noted that “the Church, in these last two liturgical days of the last liturgical year, today and tomorrow, causes us to reflect on the final day of the world, before the end, or what the end of the last day will be like”.

The apostle John, in the first letter in the Book of Revelation (20, 1-4.11-21,2), “speaks of Final Judgement: everyone will be judged”. Moreover, “the devil will be the first to be judged”. There is an angel”, Pope Francis continued, “who will come and take the dragon, the ancient serpent, that is the devil Satan - clearly, as you can understand well with whom you are speaking — and will enchain and throw into the abyss”. There “the devil, the ancient serpent, will be shackled so that he no longer might lure nations away, because he is the seducer”.

“From the beginning” the devil is the seducer, the Pontiff said: “we think of Adam and Eve, how he began by speaking with a sweet voice”, and claimed that the fruit “is good” to eat. With his way of speaking, this “temptation”, the Pope said, “he is a liar; moreover he is the father of lies. He creates lies and is a fraud”. The devil, he said, “makes you believe that if you eat this apple, you will be like a god; he sells you something, you buy it, and in the end he defrauds you; he deceives you, and he ruins your life”.

However, at this point, we must ask ourselves “what we can do to not be deceived by the Devil”. Jesus himself taught us the correct approach: “never speak with the Devil”. And in fact, Pope Francis explained, “what did Jesus do with the devil? He chased him away, he asked his name” but he did not stop to “converse” with him. One can argue that “in the desert, in temptation, there was a conversation”. However, Pope Francis added: “make no mistake, Jesus never exactly spoke a word, because he was well aware of the danger”. Thus, “the three responses he gave to the devil were taken from the words of the Bible, the word of God: he defended himself with the word of God”. In this way, “Jesus gave us an example: never communicate with him, you may not speak with this liar, with this fraud that seeks our damnation”. Because of this, “the tempter will be thrown in to the abyss”.

Returning to the Book of Revelation, the Pontiff said “the reading from John continues” with the appearance of “the souls of martyrs, those who gave witness to Jesus Christ, and did not worship the beast (namely, the devil and his followers); they did not worship money, nor did they worship vanity, and they were not influenced by pride”. They are “the humble” ones who “gave their lives for this, in order that they might appear in front”. Then there was “the throne, where the Lord will be, to judge us: the living and the dead, the great and the little, standing in front of the throne”. Thus, John said, “the books were opened”, because “the judgment had begun: ‘The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books’”. Therefore, the Pope stressed, “every one of us will be judged according to what we have done”.

“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire”, John writes, in reference to “these condemned” souls. The Pope focused in particular on the line: “The lake of fire is the second death”. He explained that “eternal damnation is not a house of torture; it is a description of the second death. It is a death”. Thus, “those who will not be received in the kingdom of God,” he explained, “because they did not approach the Lord: they are those who are always going down their own path, far away from the Lord, and passing by the Lord, moving away from him, alone”. For this reason “eternal damnation is the continual distancing of oneself from God, and it is the greatest suffering: that of an unsatisfied heart, a heart that was made to find God but, due to pride and over-confidence, became distanced from God”.

Instead, Jesus sought to attract the prideful “with words of mildness”. He says: “come”, and you will be forgiven. “But pride”, Pope Francis said, “keeps them at a distance. They go down their own path, and this is eternal damnation: eternal distance from the God who gives happiness, from the

God who loves us". In reality, "we don't know" if "there are many", but "we only know that this is the path to eternal damnation". This distancing of oneself, therefore, is "the fire of not being able to come close to God because I do not want to". It is the attitude of those who "every time the Lord comes close, they say: 'go away, leave me alone'. And they continue to manage on their own for eternity: this is tragic".

The passage from the Book of Revelation concludes: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem". These words, the Pope said, mark "the true end, the final joy, where we all will be saved if we open our hearts to the salvation of Jesus". The Lord, in fact, "asks only this: to open our heart".

Perhaps some people will be able to have hope in this: "if You, Father, know what I have done...". However, "Jesus knows them", Pope Francis said. For this reason, he said to "open your hearts and He will forgive you"; but "do not go on your own, do not go down your own path; let Jesus touch you, let yourself be forgiven". It is enough to say "just one word, 'Lord'; he will do the rest, he will do everything else". On the other hand, there is "arrogance, pride, going down our own path and being unable to say this word: and the only word that they say is: 'leave me alone'". In this way they have their end, "in pride, and they do many bad things in the life". For them, Pope Francis said, it all started when they listened to and followed "the temptations of the ancient serpent, the devil, the liar, the father of lies".

In conclusion, Pope Francis cited the reading from the following day's liturgy on Saturday Luke (21: 34-36). "Tomorrow, the last day of the liturgical year, Jesus will warn us", he said. "But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life".

Essentially, Jesus is saying: "Contemplate what you are waiting for, that your heart is not overcome with troubles and worries of life; look ahead and have hope": contemplate this "hope which opens your heart to meeting Jesus". Indeed, "What we are waiting for, the encounter with Jesus: it is beautiful, it is very beautiful!". Finally, the Pope said: "He only asks us to be humble and to say: 'Lord'. This word alone is enough, and he will do the rest".