



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

A matter of DNA

Tuesday, 7 February 2017

(by <http://www.osservatoreromano.va>)

We must return to our origin to understand who man is and , above all, who man is in the eyes of God. Following the day's Liturgy of the Word during Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, 7 February, Pope Francis reflected on creation and on the Lord's great love for mankind.

The Pontiff began by reciting a verse of the responsorial Psalm, "O Lord, how wonderful your name in all the earth!", to recall that the Church in these days "leads us to give much praise to the Lord". Continuing with Psalm 8 — "Lord, what is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?" — he emphasized that it expresses "admiration" in response to "the tenderness, the love of God", asking: "Why do you act this way toward us? We are nothing, but you are great...?".

The answer to this question is found in the first reading which recounts the creation narrative in Genesis (1:20 - 2:4). There, we read, at the end of the fifth day: "God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air...'. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea'". In other

words, said the Pope, “God gives everything to mankind. And the creation of man and woman is the crowning of the entire creation of the world, it is the end”. But, Francis asked, “what does God give us” to make us say in the Psalm: “what is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?”.

“First of all”, he responded, “he gave us his dna, that is, he made us his children; he created us in his image, in his image and likeness, like him”. And, the Pope added, those “who resembles him a lot or a little are his children: they have received this identity”. It is a matter of a lasting bond. Thus, “if a child becomes good, the father is proud of that child”, and says, “look how good!”. Likewise, if the child is “rather plain”, the father says he or she “is beautiful”, because “fathers are always this way”. Moreover, if the child “is bad, the father justifies him, waits for him...”. Indeed, Jesus himself “taught us that a father is able to wait for his children”. For God “gave us this identity as his children”. We could actually say: “We are ‘as gods’, because we are God’s children”. And God “is content, because he has a child on earth, as he has another in heaven. The Lord is happy: ‘It is very good’, he said to himself”. Therefore, this is the first thing that God gave to mankind in creation.

The second is a combination of “gift” and “duty”. Francis explained: “He gave us all the earth”. In fact we read in Scripture: “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, over every beast of the earth, over every wild animal and reptile that creeps on the earth”. In other words, God “gave royalty: man is king. It is he who commands. This is how the Lord wants him: he does not want as slave, he wants him as lord”. What does this lordship entail? “The task of fostering Creation”, namely, “work”.

The Pontiff focused on this aspect: “how he worked in creation, gave us work, gave the job of fostering creation. Not to destroy it; but to make it grow, to care for it, to safeguard it and make it bear fruit”. Among other things, Francis added, is a ‘curious’ fact: God “gave everything”, but “did not give us money”. It is no accident, “grandmothers say, that the devil enters through the pocket”.

The last gift that the Pontiff pointed out is also found in the reading of Genesis: “God created man in his image, male and female he created them”. Thus, “the third thing he gave is love”. God says: “It is not good that man should be alone. And he made a companion”. In this regard, Pope Francis shared that sometimes, when listening to certain “music that tries to say this”, he “likes to think” of how “that first dialogue” must have been, “when the two of them looked at each other; the dialogue between man and woman, the dialogue of love”.

Returning to the text, God said to man: “You are my son, you must do this: safeguard the earth, work, go forth. And love. Because I am love and I give this to you”. In light of this comes the exclamation: “You are great, O Lord, you are great! What is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your

hands, putting all things under his feet. O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!”.

Indeed, Pope Francis said, God “gave us an identity: we have the same identity as God, we are God’s children. We were created in his image and likeness. He gave us the gift of the earth, of creation: ‘Everything is yours, but to foster, to safeguard, not to destroy it!’”. And, the Pope continued, “this is done with work: work is a gift of God and when a person has no work, he feels a loss of dignity, he is missing something that comes from God”. Last of all, God “gave us love: the love that begins here, in man and in woman”.

Therefore, the Pontiff concluded, “let us thank the Lord for these three gifts he has given us: identity, the gift/duty and love. And let us ask for the grace to safeguard this identity of children, to work on the gift he has given us and foster this gift by working, and for the grace to learn each day to love more”.