



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Everything and nothing

Tuesday, 28 February 2017

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 10, 10 March 2017)

In his homily on Tuesday, 28 February, Pope Francis spoke about the joy of sacrifice in responding to Jesus' call to follow him. He used as examples the contrasting images of the smiling face of the contemporary Chilean Saint, Alberto Hurtado, and the "saddened" one of the rich young man described in the Gospel. Indeed, Saint Alberto, even through difficulty and suffering, reassured the Lord of his gladness.

The Holy Father's homily was inspired by a reflection on the liturgies of the "last three days before Lent", which focused on the "relationship between God and riches". In Sunday's Gospel, he recalled, "the Lord was clear when he said: 'No one can serve two masters.... You cannot serve God and mammon'. Either you serve God or you serve wealth". (Mt 6:24) On Monday, instead, we had heard the "story of the rich young man who wanted to follow the Lord, but who was so rich that in the end he chose wealth", the Holy Father continued. This Gospel passage highlights Jesus' warning: "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Mk 10:17-27). The disciples were "somewhat frightened", the Pope observed, and they asked, "then who can be saved?".

On Tuesday, the liturgy continued to offer the same theme as Mark's Gospel, addressing Peter's reaction (Mk 10:28-31) as he asks Jesus: "Okay, what about us?". The Holy Father said it almost seemed that, with his question, "we have left everything and followed you; what about us?", Peter was presenting Jesus with "the bill", as in a "business transaction". In reality, the Pope explained, this was probably not "the intention of Peter, who, apparently, "did not know what to say: 'Yes, this man went away, but what about us?'" . In any case, Francis continued, "Jesus' answer is clear: 'I say to you, there is no one who has left everything who has not also received everything'". In other words, there is no middle ground: "We have left everything" — "You will receive everything". There is however, "that overflowing measure" with which God gives his gifts: "You will receive everything: 'there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life'". Thus, "everything", Pope Francis added.

This is the answer, the Pontiff continued: "The Lord does not know how to give less than everything; when he gives something, he gives himself, which is everything". This answer, however, contains a word that calls us to reflect, Pope Francis said. In fact, Jesus confirms that "in our times, we already receive one hundred times more houses and brothers, together with persecution". Hence, "everything and nothing. All with the Cross, all with persecution". It is a case of "entering into a new way of thinking, a different way of behaving". In fact, "Jesus gives all of himself, because the fullness, God's fullness is a fullness which is forsaken with the Cross". Here then is "God's gift: a fullness that is forsaken", and here too is also "the Christian way: to seek fullness, to receive this forsaken fullness, and to follow that path", which, the Pontiff stressed, is a commitment that is "not easy".

Continuing his reflection, Pope Francis went further and asked: "What is the sign, the signal that I am moving forward in this 'giving everything' and 'receiving everything'?" . In other words, what shows us that we are on the right path? The answer, he continued, can be found in the day's first reading (Sir 35:1-15, which reads: "Glorify the Lord generously, and do not stint the first fruits of your hands. With every gift show a cheerful face, and dedicate your tithe with gladness. Give to the Most High as he has given, and as generously as your hand has found". Therefore, a "generous outlook, a cheerful face, joy...". The Pontiff pointed out that "the sign that we are on the 'everything and nothing' path, of the forsaken fullness, is joy". It is no surprise that "the rich young man's countenance darkened and he went away saddened". He had not been "able to receive this forsaken fullness". Instead, the Pope observed, "the Saints, Peter himself, did receive this. And amid the trials and difficulties, they had a cheerful face, a generous outlook and joy in their heart. This is the sign".

Pope Francis then gave an example from contemporary Church life: "I am reminded of a short phrase from a saint, Saint Alberto Hurtado of Chile. He worked all the time, difficulty after difficulty, after difficulty.... He worked for the poor". He was "persecuted" and had to face "a great deal of

suffering”. But “when he was there, forsaken with the cross”, he would say “*Contento Señor, contento*’, ‘Glad, Lord, glad”.

May Saint Alberto “teach us to follow this path, may he give us the grace to follow this difficult path of everything and nothing, of the forsaken fullness of Jesus Christ and to always say, especially in times of difficulty: glad, Lord, glad”, the Holy Father concluded.