



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Why we go to the temple

Friday, 22 November 2013

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 48, 29 November 2013)

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the Readings of the day taken from 1 Maccabees (4:36-37, 52-59), which recounts Judas Maccabeus' rebuilding of the temple and the Gospel of Luke, which recounts Jesus' cleansing of the temple (19:45-48).

"The temple is a place of reference for the community, for the People of God", the Pope said. "It began with the ark, then Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, and then it became a living temple: Jesus Christ, the Temple. And it shall end in glory in the heavenly Jerusalem".

Turning to the first Reading, the Pope noted that the essential meaning of Judas Maccabeus' act was "to reconsecrate the temple so that there glory might be offered to God". The Pope said: "The temple is the place where the community goes to pray, to praise the Lord, to give thanks, but above all to adore: the Lord is adored in the temple. And this is the most important point. This is also true for liturgical ceremonies: in this liturgical ceremony, what is most important? The songs, the rites, they are all beautiful... but what is most important is adoration: the whole community together looks at the altar where the sacrifice is celebrated and adores".

He then asked: "Are our temples places of adoration? Do they foster adoration? Do our liturgical

celebrations foster adoration?”. Judas Maccabeus and the people “were zealous for God’s temple because it was the house of God, God’s dwelling place, and they went as a community to find God there, they went to adore”.

Turning then to the Gospel of Luke, the Pope said: “Jesus also cleanses the temple, but he does it with whip in hand. He drives out pagan attitudes, in this case of the merchants who bought and sold and had transformed the temple into a series of little shops where they changed money. Jesus cleanses the temple, admonishing: It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer’. He said nothing else. The temple was a sacred place. And we should enter there, in the sacredness that leads us to prayer”.

The Pope continued: “St Paul tells us that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. I am a temple. The Spirit of God is within me. And he tells us: ‘Do not sadden the Spirit of the Lord that is within you!’ And perhaps also here we cannot speak of adoration, but of a type of adoration that takes place in the heart of a person who seeks the Spirit of the Lord within himself and knows that God is within him, that the Holy Spirit is within him. He listens and follows”.

“We too need to be continually purified through prayer, penance, and through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist,” the Holy Father added. Thus “in these two temples — the physical temple which is a place of adoration, and the spiritual temple within me where the Holy Spirit dwells — our disposition should be one of true piety that adores and listens, that prays and asks pardon, that praises the Lord”. The Pope then added: “when we speak of the joy of the temple, what we are speaking about is this: the whole community in adoration, in prayer and thanksgiving, in praise. In prayer with the Lord who is within me, since I am a temple; while I stand listening, ready and available”.

Pope Francis concluded his homily by inviting those present to pray that the Lord “might grant us true understanding of the meaning of the temple, so that we might grow in lives of adoration and listening to God’s Word”.