



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

The humility and strength of the Gospel

Tuesday, 1 October 2013

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“The Council of Cardinals is beginning its meeting in the Vatican today. They are present here to concelebrate Mass. Let us ask the Lord that our work today might make us all humble, gentle and patient, and more confident in God. This is how the Church can be a beautiful witness to people. And seeing the People of God, seeing the Church, may they feel the desire to come with us”. These were Pope Francis’ words as he concluded his homily at the Mass celebrated by the members of the Council of Cardinals on Tuesday, 1 October, in the Santa Marta Chapel. On the feast day of St Therese of the Child Jesus, Patroness of the missions, the Pope spoke of the witness of faith and humility.

Commenting on the Gospel of Luke (9:51-56), Pope Francis said: “Jesus reprimands these two Apostles”, James and John, because in a Samaritan village “they wanted fire to come down from heaven upon those who did not want to receive him”. The two apostles, the Pope explained, “felt that to close the door on Jesus was a great offense, and that these people needed to be punished”. But “the Lord turned and rebuked them: this is not our spirit”. In fact, he added, “The Lord always goes ahead, making the way of a Christian known to us. It is not... a path of revenge. The Christian spirit is something else, the Lord says. It is the spirit that he showed us in the most important moment of his life, in his passion: a spirit of humility, a spirit of meekness”.

“And today, on the anniversary of St Therese of the Child Jesus”, the Pope said, “it is good for us to think about this spirit of humility, tenderness and goodness. We all desire to share in the Lord’s spirit of meekness. Where is the strength that brings us to this spirit? It is truly in love, in charity, in the awareness that we are in the hands of the Father. As we read at the beginning of Mass: the Lord carries us, he carries us on, he keeps us going. He is with us and he guides us”.

Pope Francis recalled the strength of St Therese of the Child Jesus and her importance to the present day: “The Church has made this Saint — who was humble, small, confident in God, and meek — the Patroness of the missions. You don’t understand this. The power of the Gospel is right there, because the Gospel reaches its highest point in the humiliation of Jesus... the strength of the Gospel is humility. The humility of a child who is guided by the love and tenderness of the Father”.

“The Church, as Benedict XVI has told us, grows by attraction, by witness. And when people, when peoples see this witness of humility, meekness and docility, they feel the need” which the prophet Zechariah spoke of, saying: ‘Let us go with you’. Faced with the witness of charity, people feel this need.... Charity is simple: worshiping God and serving others. This is the witness that makes the Church grow. “Precisely for this reason”, Pope Francis concluded, St Therese of the Child Jesus, who was “so humble and so trusting in God, has been named Patroness of the missions, because her example makes people say: we want to come with you”.