



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

God's weakness for the prayers of his people

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God has a weakness for the prayers of his people. Indeed, prayer is man's greatest power. Therefore, we must never tire of knocking at the door of God's heart and asking for help. For God is a relentless warrior when he is called upon to defend his people.

This was the heart of the homily Pope Francis delivered during the Holy Mass he celebrated at the Chapel of Santa Marta. Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Archpriest of St Peter's Basilica, and Bishop Vittorio Lanzani, Canon of the same Vatican Basilica, concelebrated the Mass.

The Pope commented on the Readings of the day taken from the Book of Wisdom and the Gospel of St Luke (18:1-8). In the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples a parable about the necessity of praying without losing heart, like the widow who insistently petitioned a dishonest judge for justice, until she eventually obtained it. God "will secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night", Pope Francis said, "as he did when he called Moses and told him, 'I have heard the cries and laments of my people'; for the Lord is listening".

In the first Reading from the Book of Wisdom, the Pope then observed, the omnipotent God is portrayed as a mighty warrior leaping from heaven. "When the Lord takes to the defence of his

people,” he said, “he is a mighty warrior who saves his people. He saves, he renews all things: the whole of creation was fashioned anew, according to its own nature as it had been before. He then cited the Book of Wisdom (18:14-16; 19:6-9): “the Red Sea became an unhindered way and the raging waves became a grassy plain; those whom thy hand protected passed through as one nation, after gazing on marvellous wonders”. He noted the poetic tone of the description of their salvation: “for they ranged like horses, and leaped like lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who didst deliver them”. And he added that the Lord’s power is mighty when he wills to save his people. “He is the Lord. He heard the prayer of his people; He knew in his heart that his people were suffering”.

The Readings, Pope Francis said, provide us with an opportunity to meditate on God’s mighty power. He noted that the Church draws her children’s attention to this mystery especially during the liturgical season of Christmas, since “the climax of God’s power, of God’s salvation, happened with the Incarnation of the Word”. Citing again the Book of Wisdom, he continued: “For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, thy all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from thy royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed, a stern warrior carrying the sharp sword of the authentic command” (18:15).

To those in attendance, he then said: “It is a pleasure to listen to these readings with the Canons of St Peter’s, since your chief work is to knock on the door of God’s heart ... to pray to the Lord for God’s people. And you, who reside in the basilica closest to the Pope, where prayers of petition are gathered from around the world, you receive these petitions and present them to the Lord by your prayer”. “You are like the widow,” Pope Francis said. “You must pray, ask, knock at the heart of God every day. The widow never tired, she was always courageous”.

Addressing the Canons, the Pope concluded: “The Lord listens to the prayers of his people. You are privileged representatives of God’s people who exercise the role of praying to the Lord for the many needs of the Church, of all humanity, of everyone. I thank you for this work. Let us always remember that God has the power to change everything — all creation was fashioned anew — he is able to fashion everything anew. However, he also has a weakness, our prayer, our universal prayer, close to the Pope in St Peter’s. Thank you for your service; and continue on for the good of the Church”.