



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

**MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ**

An infinite horizon

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Paul's "mystical experience" with Jesus reminds us that alone we cannot be Christians, loving God and our neighbour "without the power and grace of the Holy Spirit". In his homily on Thursday during Mass at Santa Marta, Pope Francis offered the experience of Paul the Apostle as an example of prayers of adoration and praise.

"Paul has an experience with Jesus, an experience with the Lord, which leads him to leave everything", to the point of saying that he "has given up everything and considers everything rubbish, in order to receive Christ and to be found in Him". In fact, he "saw Christ, he met Christ, and fell in love with Christ". And he "goes forth in this mystery". Thus, from the day's First Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians (3:14-21), the Pontiff pointed out: "we listened to that act of adoration that Paul makes before God: Brethren, 'I kneel before the Father'". This is his act of adoration to the Father, and "then he explains the reason to us".

The passage from the day's liturgy, Francis stated, "is original in the language that Paul uses". It is, in fact, "a timeless language, a grandiose, expansive language: he speaks of the riches of his glory; he speaks of comprehending the breadth, the length, the height, the depth; to know the Christ who surpasses, the Christ who causes us to be filled with all fullness". And it is indeed

“timeless language, incapable of being understood in the sense of comprehending”, because it is “almost without a horizon”.

Paul “adores this God who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, according to that power the He has even in time, for all generations, for ever and ever”. It is an outright “act of adoration, an experience before this God who is as a sea without shores, without limits, an immense ocean”. And “Paul’s heart, his soul, kneel before God”.

“In this act of adoration”, the Pope affirmed, “Paul tells us of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. And “what does Paul ask, for himself, for the Church — in this case the Church of Ephesia — and for all of us?”. Turning to “the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named”, Paul asks first “to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self”. Beyond this he asks “the Father that the Spirit come and strengthen us, give us might”. He knows well that “one cannot go forward without the Spirit’s might. Our might is weak. One cannot be a Christian without the grace of the Spirit”. Indeed, “it is precisely the Spirit who changes our heart, who enables us to go forward in virtue in order to fulfil the Commandments”.

Then, Paul “asks for another grace of God, but through Christ: that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”, and thus be “rooted and grounded in love”. He basically “asks for the presence of Christ, that he may make us grow in charity, but rooted in love, grounded in love”. And also, he asks the Father for the ability “to comprehend ... the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge”, which is beyond comprehension. But then, “how can I understand what is beyond comprehension?”. Paul’s answer is clear: “Through this act of adoration of that great immensity”.

In the passage from the Letter to the Ephesians, Paul continues, speaking “to the faithful about the Father: he began with the Father and ended with the Father”. Thus, he speaks directly to the faithful about “Him who in all things has the power to do”. The Apostle affirms that the Father is able to do “far more than all we ask or imagine”. Even miracles, of course. “But we cannot imagine what the Father can do by the power at work within us”. Paul then ends this adoration with praise: “to Him be Glory forever and ever”.

Before us, Francis explained, is the “mystical experience of Paul, who teaches us the prayer of praise and the prayer of adoration”. Thus, “before our smallness, our selfish interests — so many! — Paul bursts out in this praise, in this act of adoration”. And he “asks the Father to send us the Spirit to give us the strength and power to go forward; that He enable us to comprehend the love of Christ and that Christ strengthen us in love”. And he says to the Father: “Thank you, because You are able to do what we do not even dare to imagine”.

This “is a beautiful prayer” of Paul’s, the Pope commented. And “with this interior life one can understand that Paul has given up everything and considers everything rubbish, in order to receive Christ and to be found in Christ”. His words also apply to us today because “it’s good for us to

think this way, it's good for us, too, to praise God". Yes, "it does us good to praise God, to enter into this expansive world of grandiosity, of generosity and of love". And, Francis concluded, "it does us good because in this way we are able to go forward in the great Commandment — the one Commandment that is the basis of all the others — which is love: love God and love your neighbour".