



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Celebrate the 'yes'

Monday, 4 April 2016

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 14, 8 April 2016)

“Yes”. For a Christian there is no other response to God’s call. Above all we must never turn away, pretending not to understand. On Monday, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Lord, the Pope invited a “celebration of the ‘yes’” during Mass at Santa Marta.

Concelebrating with Francis were priests who, commemorating the 50th anniversary of their ordination, renewed their vows with a definitive “yes”. Vincentian nuns who work at Santa Marta also renewed their vows. “It is all a history that ends and begins in this solemnity that we are celebrating today: the history of mankind, when he leaves paradise”, the Pope noted at the beginning of the homily. After man sins, the Lord commands him to walk and fill the earth: “Be fruitful and go forth”. However, “the Lord was paying attention to what man was doing”. Thus, “several times when man made mistakes, God punished man: let us think of Babel or of the flood”.

In this way, God was always “watching what man was doing: at a certain point, this God who was watching and protecting man, decided to create a people and he called our father Abraham: ‘Go forth from your land, from your home’”. And Abraham “obeyed, he said ‘yes’” to the Lord, “and he left his land without knowing where he was to go”. This is “the people’s first ‘yes’ to God”. It is here, that “with Abraham, God — who watched his people — began to ‘walk with’. He walked with

Abraham: 'Walk before me', God said to him".

The Pope explained that God "then did the same with Moses, to whom at 80 years, God said: 'Do this'. And Moses at 80 — he was elderly — said 'yes!'. And he went to set the people free".

Then, the Pope said, God "did the same with the prophets": let us consider Isaiah, for example, when the Lord told him to go and tell things to the people", Isaiah responded that he was a man of "unclean lips". But the Lord "purified Isaiah's lips and Isaiah said 'yes!'".

The same thing also happened with Jeremiah, the Pope recalled. The prophet's first response was: "Lord, I don't know how to speak, I am a boy!". But God commanded him to go and he responded "yes!". There are really so many of those "who said 'yes'". There is truly a "humanity of elderly men and women who said 'yes' to the Lord's hope". Francis also added Simeon and Hannah to the homily.

"Today the Gospel tells us", the Pope explained, that "at the end of this chain of 'yesses' is the beginning of another 'yes' which is starting to grow: the 'yes' of Mary". It is with "this 'yes' that God", the Pontiff affirmed, "not only watches how man is doing, He not only walks with his people, but becomes one of us and takes on our flesh". In fact "Mary's 'yes' opens the door to the 'yes' of Jesus: 'I come to do your will'". And it is "this 'yes' that goes with Jesus throughout his life, up to the Cross: 'Father, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done'". It is "in Jesus Christ that, as Paul says to the Corinthians, there is this 'yes' of God: He is the 'yes'".

"It is a beautiful day", the Pope remarked, "to thank the Lord for teaching us this way of 'yes', but also for caring about our life". Indeed, "some of us", he said, as he turned toward the priests attending the Mass, "are celebrating the 50th anniversary of priesthood: a beautiful day to think about the 'yes' of your life". But "all of us, every day, must say 'yes' or 'no', and think about whether we always say the 'yes' or if we often hide ourselves, lowering our head, like Adam and Eve, to avoid saying 'no'", pretending not to understand "what God is asking".

"Today is the celebration of the 'yes', Francis said. Indeed, "in Mary's 'yes' there is the 'yes' of all of salvation history and there begins the ultimate 'yes' of man and of God: there God re-creates, as at the beginning, with a 'yes', God made the earth and man, that beautiful creation: with this 'yes' I come to do your will and more wonderfully he re-creates the world, he re-creates us all". It is "God's 'yes' that sanctifies us, that lets us go forth in Jesus Christ". This is why today is the right day "to thank the Lord and to ask ourselves: am I a man or woman of 'yes' or a man or woman of 'no'? Or am I a man or woman who looks away, so as not to respond?".

The Pope then expressed hope "that the Lord grant us the grace to take this path of men and women who knew how to say 'yes'". After sharing a thought with the priests, Francis turned to the community of Sisters of Santa Marta: "At this time, the Sisters who are in this *Casa* will silently

renew their vows. They do so every year because St Vincent was intelligent and knew that the mission he entrusted to them is very difficult, and for this reason he wanted them to renew their vows each year. In silence, let us accompany their renewal”.