



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Three-dimensional Christians

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(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 17, 29 April 2016)

A Christian is a person of hope, who knows and witnesses that Jesus lives, that he is among us, that he prays to the Father for each of us and that he will come again. This is how Pope Francis summed up the relationship between every Christian and the Risen Jesus, during Mass at Santa Marta on Friday morning.

From the liturgy of the day, the Pontiff brought out three fundamental words for Christian life: message, intercession and hope.

First of all, the message. In the day's reading from The Acts of the Apostles (13:26-33), the message is essentially "the Apostles' testimony to the resurrection of Jesus". Thus Paul affirms in the synagogue: "when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people". Indeed, the Pontiff summarized, "the message is: Jesus died and rose for us, for our salvation. Jesus lives!". This is what the first disciples conveyed "to the Jews and the pagans of their time", and they "also bore witness with their lives, with their blood".

When John and Peter were forbidden to proclaim Jesus' name or speak of his resurrection, the Pope continued, "they said, with all their courage and in total simplicity: 'we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard'". Indeed, "we Christians, through faith, have within us the Holy Spirit, who lets us see and hear the truth about Jesus, who died for our sins and is risen". This, therefore, "is the message of Christian life: Christ lives! Christ is risen! Christ is among us in the community, he accompanies us on the path". Despite the effort we sometimes make to understand, "one of the dimensions of Christian life" is precisely this: the message. We clearly understand from the passage of Scripture wherein John affirmed: "That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have heard, which we have touched with our hands...", as if to say: "the Risen Christ is a reality and I bear witness to this".

The second key word proposed by the Pontiff is "intercession", this time inspired by the Gospel of John (14:1-6). During the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, in fact, the Apostles were despondent, and Jesus said: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe. In my Father's house are many rooms. I will go and prepare a place for you". Francis paused to reflect on this passage and asked: "What does this mean? How does Jesus prepare a place?". The response: "With his prayer for each of us: Jesus prays for us, and this is the intercession". It is important to know that "Jesus works at this moment with his prayer for us". The Pope explained: just as before the Passion, Jesus said: "Peter I have prayed for you", likewise, "now Jesus is the intercessor between us and the Father".

At this point, though, we must ask ourselves: "How does Jesus pray?". Francis offered a "personal" response, an answer all his own, and "not a dogma of the Church", he specified. "I believe that Jesus shows his wounds to the Father, because the wounds went with him after the resurrection. He shows the wounds to the Father and names each of us". According to the Pontiff, we can imagine Jesus' prayer in this way. A Christian is enlivened by this awareness: "at this moment Jesus intercedes for us".

Last, the third dimension: that of hope. Again this word was sparked by the Gospel of the day. Jesus says: "I will go and prepare a place for you". He then adds: "when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also". This is a Christian's hope. Jesus tells us: "I will come!". The Pope then explained: "Christians are women and men of hope" precisely because "they hope for the Lord to come again". In this regard, the Pontiff added, it is beautiful to notice "how the Bible begins and ends". At the beginning it reads: "In the beginning", in other words, "when things began". And Revelation ends "with the prayer: 'Come, Lord Jesus'". Indeed, all the Church "awaits the coming of Jesus: Jesus will come again". This, the Pontiff said, "is Christian hope".

Thus, the Pope concluded, summarizing his meditation, we can ask ourselves: "How is the message in my life? How is my relationship with Jesus who intercedes for me? How is my hope? Do I truly believe that the Lord is risen? Do I believe that he prays to the Father for me?". Moreover, "Do I truly believe that the Lord will come again?". In other words: "Do I believe in the

message? Do I believe in the intercession? Am I a man or woman of hope?”.

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