



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

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

A story of love

Wednesday, 24 April 2013

(by L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 18, 1 May 2013)

The Church is a story of love and we are the part of it. That is why when institutions take over, when offices and bureaucracy assume the dominant role, the Church loses her true substance and risks reducing herself to a mere non-government organization. That story of love, which Pope Francis referred to during morning Mass on Wednesday, 24 April, in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, is the story of Church's motherhood. A motherhood, he said, that grows and diffuses in time "and is not yet finished" or driven by human force but "by the power of the Holy Spirit". Present at the altar with the Pope were, among others, Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, Bishop Dominique Rey of Fréjus-Toulon and Bishop Luigi Renzo of Mileto-Nicotera-Tropea. Participating in the Mass were members of the staff of the Institute for Religious Works.

"The First Reading," he commented, "starts with the words: 'The word of God continued to spread and grow'. It is a fact that, he explained, some could measure [growth] in purely quantitative terms". They want "more proselytes", "more members" for the enterprise. In deed, some even "stoop to making deals just for growth".

Instead, "the path that Jesus wanted for his Church", said the Pontiff, "is another one: it is the hard way, the way of the cross, the way of persecution". And this too makes us think: "but what is this Church?". The answer is in the Gospel: Jesus says, "Who believes in me, believes not in me but in

the One who sent me”.

And thus, the Church is not an organization, but “a mother”. Noting many mothers present at the mass, Pope Francis spoke turned to them and asked: “what do you feel when someone says: But are you the house coordinator?”, anticipating their obvious response: “No, I am the mama! And the Church is the mother”. And we, by the power of the Holy Spirit, “all together, we are one family in the Church who is our mother. This is how you can explain the First Reading: The Word of God continued to spread and grow. That is how she grows. Jesus' words explain this: 'Who believes in me, believes not me but in the One who sent me'. It was the Father who started this history of love”.

“Let us ask the Madonna, who is our Mother,” he finished, “to give us the grace of joy, of spiritual joy to journey through this story of love”.