



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

In the Kingdom of God with 50 cents in their pocket

Thursday, 13 November 2014

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 47, 21 November 2014)

The Kingdom of God is already there in the everyday holiness lived unseen by those families who have only 50 cents in their pocket by month's end. But they don't give in to the temptation of thinking that the Kingdom of God is merely a spectacle, like those who make a pageant of their wedding, turning it into a showplace for vanity and an opportunity to be seen. Pope Francis thus returned to the discussion of the commitment to living the faith with perseverance, from one day to the next, leaving room for the Holy Spirit in silence, in humility and in adoration. He did so during Mass on Thursday morning in the chapel at Santa Marta, proposing the true characteristics of the Kingdom of God.

The very fact that Jesus spoke so much about the Kingdom of God made even the Pharisees "curious". Such that, as seen in the day's Reading from the Gospel of Luke (17:20-25), they ask him: "when is the kingdom of God coming?". To this question, "Jesus responds quickly and clearly: the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you".

Indeed, Francis pointed out, "when Jesus explained in the parables what the Kingdom of God was like, He used calm, peaceful words" and He also used imagery to show "that the the Kingdom of

God was hidden". Thus, Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to "a merchant who looked here and there for fine pearls" or "another who searched for a treasure hidden in a field". Or He said that it is "like a net that gathers everyone or like a tiny mustard seed, which would later become a large tree". Similarly, He also said, "the Kingdom of God is like wheat: it is sown and you don't know how it grows" because "God grants the growth".

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God is "always in silence, but also in struggle", explaining further that "the Kingdom of God, will grow like wheat, not surrounded by things of beauty but in the midst of weeds". But, Francis indicated, the Kingdom is there, it doesn't attract attention, it is silent, quiet.

In other words, the Pope said, "the Kingdom of God is not a spectacle". So often, "the spectacle is a caricature of the Kingdom of God". Indeed, we must never "forget that it was one of the three temptations": in the desert, Jesus was told: "go to the pinnacle of the temple and throw yourself down, and everyone will believe. Make a spectacle". However, "the Kingdom of God is silent, it grows within; the Holy Spirit makes it grow with our willingness, in our soil, which we must prepare". But it "grows slowly, silently".

The Gospel of Luke recounts that Jesus renews his discourse, asking: "Do you want to see the Kingdom of God?". And He explains: "they will say to you, 'Lo, there!' or 'Lo, here!' Do not go, do not follow them". Because "the Kingdom of God will come like a flash of lightning, in an instant". Yes, Francis added, "it will manifest itself in an instant, it is within". However, he remarked, "I think about how many Christians prefer a spectacle to the silence of the Kingdom of God".

In this regard, the Pope recommended a brief examination of conscience to avoid falling into the temptation of the spectacle, by asking a few simple questions: "Are you a Christian? Yes! Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Yes! Do you believe in the sacraments? Yes! Do you believe that Jesus is there and that He has come here now? Yes, yes, yes!". Well then, Francis continued, "why don't you go to adore Him, why don't you go to Mass, why don't you take Communion, why don't you draw near to the Lord", so that his Kingdom may "grow" within you? After all, the Pontiff stated, "the Lord never says that the Kingdom of God is a spectacle". Of course, he explained, "it is a celebration, but it's different! It's a beautiful celebration, a grand feast. And Heaven will be feast, but not a spectacle". Instead, "our human weakness prefers a spectacle".

This sometimes happens "in celebrating certain sacraments", he said, leading us to think about weddings in particular. We have to ask ourselves whether these people "have come to receive a sacrament, to have a feast like at Cana in Galilee, or have they come to have a pageant, to be looked at, for vanity?". There is thus "a continuous temptation: not to accept that the Kingdom of God is silent".

But, Jesus says in the Gospel of Luke: "the day that noise will be made, as the lightning flashes

and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of man be in his day, the day that noise will be made”.

As opposed to a spectacle, the Pontiff recalled, there is “the perseverance of so many Christians carrying the family forward: men, women who care for their children, take care of grandparents, who have only 50 cents in their pocket by month’s end, but they pray”. And the Kingdom of God “is there, hidden in that holiness of daily life, that everyday holiness”. Because “the Kingdom of God is not far from us, it’s close”.

The very “closeness is one of the characteristics” of the Kingdom. It is an “everyday” closeness. This is why “Jesus removes, from the mind of the disciples, the image of the Kingdom of God as a spectacle”. And instead, “when He wants to speak of the last days, when He will come in glory, the last day, He says: as the lightning flashes, so will the Son of man be, but first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation”.

Therefore, there is also suffering in the Kingdom God, take for example, “the cross: the everyday cross of life, the cross of work, of the family”, the cross of carrying on, and “this little everyday cross: rejection”. Thus, “the Kingdom of God is humble, like a seed: humble; but it becomes big by the power of the Holy Spirit”. And we have to “let it grow within us, without boasting. May the Spirit come, change our soul and lead us forth in silence, in peace, in quiet, in closeness to God, to others, in adoration of God, without pageantry”.

Francis concluded with the invitation to ask “the Lord for this grace of caring for the Kingdom of God that is within us and in the midst of us in our communities: caring with prayer, adoration, service in charity, silently”.