



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAЕ

On the day of justice

Tuesday, 22 November 2016

(by <http://www.osservatoreromano.va>)

The world “does not like to think” about the ultimate reality, but this is part of human existence. And if we live “in fidelity to the Lord”, after our bodily death “we will not be afraid” to present ourselves before Jesus for His judgment. Following the path of the “last week of the liturgical year”, Pope Francis dedicated his homily at the morning Mass he celebrated in Casa Santa Marta on Tuesday, 22 November, to a reflection on the end times: “on the end of the world, on the end of history; on the end of each one of us, because everyone will have his end”.

It is a topic which might “sadden someone’s day”, the Pope said, because “he does not like to think about these things” or to take account of the fact that “when one of us is gone, the years will pass by and after a long time hardly anyone will remember us”. However, he added, “it is the truth. This is what the Church tells us: we will all have an end”. It is a truth which we are called to confront. In this regard, the Pope revealed: “I have a list, a diary which I write in when someone dies – a friend, a relative – I write their name there, and every day I see, on that day, the anniversary of their death: ‘He has been dead for twenty years! Time passes so quickly! And this other person thirty years; how quickly time has passed!’”. This reality is common to everyone, Francis said, and it “obliges us to think about what we leave behind, about the mark our lives leave behind”.

The first reading of the day, taken from the Book of Revelation (14:14-19), focuses on this theme. We read of “reaping, the harvest, the crop”, but also of “testing the quality of grain, of the grapes”. Namely, the Pope explained, “after the end there will be judgment. We will all be judged, each one of us will be judged”. Therefore, “it is good for us to think: ‘What will that day be like when I am before Jesus’, when the Lord will ask me for an account of ‘talents that he gave me’, or ‘how my heart was when the seed fell?’”. Recalling the “parables of the Kingdom of God”, the Pontiff proposed some questions to ask ourselves: “How do I receive the Word? With an open heart? Do I let it grow for the good of others or keep it hidden?”. This examination of conscience is good and useful, because “we will all be judged” and everyone will find himself “in front of Jesus”. We do not know the date, but “it will happen”.

Even in the Gospel, taken from a passage of Luke (21:5-11), we find advice in this regard from Jesus himself, who exhorts: “Do not be deceived!”. What deception is he referring to? It is the “deception of alienation”, the Pope explained, “and that of estrangement”: the deception for which “I am distracted, I do not think, and I live as if I were never going to die”. However, he asked, “when the Lord comes, who will come like lightning, how will he find me? Waiting or in the midst of so many disposals of life, deceived by things that are superficial, which have no transcendence?”.

We are therefore faced with a real and true “call from the Lord to think seriously about the end: about my end, the judgment, about my judgment”. In this regard, the Pope recalled how when we are children we go “to catechism” class, and are taught “four things: death, judgment, hell or glory”.

Of course, some might say: “Father, this frightens us”. However, Francis replied: “It is the truth. Because if you do not take care of your heart”, and “you always live far away from the Lord, perhaps there is the danger, the danger of continuing in this way, far away from the Lord for eternity. This is very bad!”.

This is why, the Pope concluded, “today it will be good for us to think about this: what will my end be like? How will it be when I find myself before the Lord?”. And to come to meet those who may be frightened or saddened by this reflection, the Pope recalled the passage in the Gospel acclamation taken from the Book of Revelation (2:10): “Be thou faithful unto death”, says the Lord, “and I will give you the crown of life”. Here is the solution to our fears: “fidelity to the Lord: this does not disappoint”. Indeed, “if each one of us is faithful to the Lord, when our death comes, as shall we say what St Francis said: ‘sister death, come’. It will not frighten us”. And even on the day of judgment, “we will look to the Lord” and we can say: “Lord I have many sins, but I tried to be faithful”. And since “the Lord is good”, the Pope assured, “we will not be afraid”.

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana