



The Holy See

POPE FRANCISMORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE

DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAEThe generous to not judgeMonday, 18 March 2019[\[Multimedia\]](#)

On Monday morning, 18 March, during Mass at Santa Marta, the Holy Father focused his homily on passing judgement on others and neglecting to forgive. The Lenten period, he said, offers the opportunity to be more merciful and generous in our relations with others.

When the Lord replies to Abraham's advice on how to avoid making mistakes, he answers: "walk before me, and be blameless" (Gen 17:1). This advice to imitate God is also very valuable to us. In the day's Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus offers us advice which is very difficult to carry out: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (v. 35). "God's mercy", the Pope continued, "is a very great thing, very great. Let us not forget this". Many people believe they have done too many bad things that have earned them a place in hell, but they should be aware that God's mercy is there until the end.

The day's Gospel (Lk 6:36-38) identifies three steps to help us understand how to be merciful. Firstly, "'Judge not, and you will not be judged' (v. 37). This does not seem so bad to us but it is a bad habit, which meddles in our life without us even noticing it". The Holy Father thus invited everyone to consider how many times a day they judge others. "If I want to be merciful like the Father, as Jesus tells me, I must think: how many times a day do I judge?". This suggested Lenten exercise begins firstly with realizing that we are judgemental.

The second word of advice in Luke's Gospel is to "condemn not, and you will not be condemned" (v. 37). We condemn too much, Pope Francis said, and with this habit of condemnation, we show the Lord how he should behave towards us.

Luke's third word of advice is to "forgive and you will be forgiven" (v. 37). Even though "it is very difficult to forgive ... it is also a commandment that stops us before the altar, that stops us before communion". Jesus, he continued, tells us that if we have something unresolved with our brother, we should forgive him before approaching the altar. "In the 'Our Father' too, Jesus taught us that this is a condition to receive God's forgiveness: 'Forgive us as we forgive'". In doing this, "we are

giving God the measure of how he should be with us”.

“Do not judge; do not condemn, forgive and in this way you will be merciful like the Father”, the Holy Father summed up. However, he acknowledged that this is not easy because “in our daily chatter we judge continuously and we forgive with difficulty”. The day’s Gospel suggests a solution to avoid judging and condemning others and to foster forgiveness: to “give and it will be given to you” (v. 38). This explains the importance of almsgiving and the reason we should “be generous in giving. Not only material alms, but spiritual alms too: spend time with someone in need, visit someone who is sick, offer a smile”. Pope Francis concluded with a suggestion for how to continue this Lenten period: “by at least succeeding in not condemning others in our conversations, not judging and forgiving”, and by asking the Lord to show us this grace of generosity.