



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

"We must pray with faith, perseverance, and courage"

Monday, 23 March 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

Let us pray today for the people who, due to the pandemic, are starting to have economic problems, as they cannot work and all this has an effect on the family. Let us pray for people who have this problem.

Homily

This father asks for health for his son (see *Jn* 4:43-54). The Lord rebukes everyone a little, but also him: "Unless you people see signs and wonders you will never believe" (see v. 48). The official, instead of remaining silent, goes forward and says to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies" (v. 49). And Jesus answers, "Go, your son will live" (v. 50).

It takes three things to make a true prayer. The first is *faith*: "If you have no faith..." And very often, prayer is merely oral, made using the mouth, but it does not come from the faith of the heart; or it is a weak faith... Let us think of another father, that of the possessed son, when Jesus answers: "Everything is possible for one who has faith"; how the father says clearly: "I do believe, help my unbelief!" (see *Mk* 9:23-24). Faith in prayer. Praying with faith, both when we pray outside [in a place of worship], and when we come here, and the Lord is there: do I have faith or is it a habit? Let us be attentive in prayer: let us not fall into the habit without the awareness that the Lord is there, that I am speaking with the Lord and that He is capable of solving the problem. The first

condition for a true prayer is faith.

The second condition that Jesus teaches us is *perseverance*. Some ask, but grace does not come: they do not have this perseverance, because in the end they do not need it, or they do not have faith. And Jesus Himself teaches us the parable of that man who goes to his neighbour at midnight to ask for bread: the perseverance of knocking on the door (see *Lk* 11: 5-8). Or the widow, with the dishonest judge: she insists and insists and insists: it is perseverance (see *Lk* 18:1-8). Faith and perseverance go together, because if you have faith, it is sure that the Lord will grant you what you ask. And if the Lord makes you wait, knock, knock, knock: in the end the Lord will give you the grace. But the Lord does not do this to make Himself sought after, or because He says it's "better to wait", no. He does it for our own good, so that we take it seriously. Take prayer seriously, not like parrots: *blah blah blah* and nothing more. Jesus Himself rebukes us: "Do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words" (see *Mt* 6:7-8). No, it is perseverance, there. It is faith.

And the third thing that God wants in prayer is *courage*. Someone might think: does it take courage to pray and to stay before the Lord? It does. The courage to stay there asking and going ahead, rather, almost - almost, I don't want to say something heretical - but almost like threatening the Lord. The courage of Moses before God, when God wanted to destroy his people and put him at the head of another people. He says: "No. I will stay with the people" (see *Ex* 32:7-14). Courage, the courage of Abraham, when he negotiates Sodom's salvation: "And if there were thirty, and if there were twenty-five, and if there were twenty...": there was courage there (see *Gen* 18:22-33). This virtue of courage is so necessary. Not only for apostolic action but also for prayer.

Faith, perseverance and courage. In these days, in which it is necessary to pray, to pray more, let us think about whether we pray in this way: with faith that the Lord can intervene, with perseverance and courage. The Lord does not let us down, He does not disappoint. He makes us wait, He takes His time, but He does not disappoint. Faith, perseverance and courage.

Prayer for spiritual communion

Those who cannot receive Communion, can now make a spiritual communion:

At Your feet, O my Jesus, I prostrate myself and I offer You repentance of my contrite heart, which is humbled in its nothingness and in Your holy presence. I adore You in the Sacrament of Your love, the ineffable Eucharist. I desire to receive You into the poor dwelling that my heart offers You. While waiting for the happiness of sacramental communion, I wish to possess You in spirit. Come to me, O my Jesus, since I, for my part, am coming to You! May Your love embrace my whole being in life and in death. I believe in You, I hope in You, I love You. Amen.

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