



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE

DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA **HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS** "Let the light of God enter in us so we do not become like bats in the darkness"

Wednesday, 22 April 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

At this moment, in which unity between ourselves and nations is very necessary, let us pray today for Europe, so that Europe might succeed in creating this fraternal unity the founding fathers dreamt of.

Homily

This passage from the Gospel of John, chapter 3 (see *Jn* 16-21), the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, is a true theological treatise. Everything is here: *kerygma*, catechesis, theological reflection, *parenesis*... everything is here. Every time that we read it we find more wealth, more explanations, more things that help us to understand God's revelation. It would be good to read it many times in order to draw near to the mystery of the Redemption.

Today I will take just two points from all of this, two points that are in today's passage. The first is the revelation of God's love. God loves us, and He loves us madly, as one of the saints used to say. God's love appears to be madness. He loves us: "God loved the world so much that He gave us His only son" (*Jn* 3:16). And He sent Him to die on the cross. And every time that we look at the cross, we find this love. The crucifix is truly the great book of God's love. It is not an object to put here or to place there, beautiful, not so beautiful, an antique, or modern, no. It is truly an expression of God's love. God loved us so much that He sent His Son, who annihilated Himself to

the point of death on the cross, out of love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son" (see v. 16).

How many people, how many Christians spend time gazing at the crucifix? There they find everything, because they have understood, the Holy Spirit makes them understand that all knowledge, all God's love, all Christian wisdom is there. Paul speaks about this, explaining that all his human reasoning served him up to a certain point, but the true reasoning, the most beautiful way of thinking, but also that which explains everything, is Christ's cross: it is a scandal (see *1 Cor* 1:23), it is folly, but it is the way. And this is God's love. "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son". And why? "So that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost but may have eternal life". The love of God, who wants His children to be with Him.

To look at the Cross in silence, to look at the wounds, to look at the heart of Jesus, to look at it all: Christ crucified, the Son of God, annihilated, humiliated... out of love. This is the first point that today we are shown by this treatise of theology, which is Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus.

The second point that will help us, too: "The light has come into the world, but men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil" (*Jn* 3:19). Jesus also picks up this theme of light. There are people - we too, very often - who cannot live in the light because they are accustomed to the dark. The light blinds them, they are unable to see. They are humans who are like bats, which only know how to move about at night. And we too, when we are in sin, are in this state: we cannot tolerate the light. It is more convenient for us to live in darkness. The light hits us in the face, it makes us see what we do not want to see. What's worse is that the eyes of the soul, the more they live in darkness, the more they grow accustomed to it, and become ignorant of what light is. One loses a sense of light through growing more accustomed to the darkness. And many human scandals, so much corruption, prove this. Those who are corrupt do not know what the light is, they do not know. We too, when we are in a state of sin, distance ourselves from the Lord and become blind. We feel better when we are in the darkness and we move about in this way, without seeing, like the blind, as best we can.

Let us allow the love of God, who sent Jesus to save us, enter into us, and may the light that Jesus brings (see v. 19), the light of the Spirit, enter into us and help us to see things with God's light, with the true light and not the shadows that the lord of darkness gives us.

Two things, today: the love of God in Christ, in the crucifix, in daily life. And the question we can ask ourselves every day: "Do I walk in the light or do I walk in the darkness? Am I a child of God or have I ended up like a poor bat?"

Spiritual Communion

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

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if you were already there, and I unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.