



The Holy See

MORNING MASS IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHA HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS “Jesus is our pilgrim companion”

Sunday, 26 April 2020

[\[Multimedia\]](#)

Introduction

Let us pray today, in this Mass, for all the people who suffer from sadness, because they are alone or because they do not know what the future holds for them, or because they cannot support their family because they have no money, because they have no job. Many people suffer from sadness. Let us pray for them today.

Homily

Very often we have heard that Christianity is not merely a doctrine, nor a way of behaving, nor a culture. Yes, it is all this, but it is first and foremost an encounter. A person is Christian because he or she has encountered Jesus Christ, has let him or herself be encountered by Him.

This passage of the Gospel of Luke tells us about an encounter, so as to enable us to know better how the Lord acts and how we act. We are born with a seed of restlessness. God wants it thus: the restlessness of finding fullness, restlessness of finding God, very often always without knowing that we have this restlessness. Our hearts are restless, our hearts are thirsty: thirsty for the encounter with God. Our hearts seek Him, many times on the wrong paths: it gets lost, then it returns, it seeks Him... On the other hand, God thirsts for the encounter to the point that He sent Jesus to meet us, to come towards this restlessness.

How does Jesus act? In this passage of the Gospel (see *Lk* 24, 13-35), we see clearly that He

respects our situation, He does not go ahead. Only at times, with the headstrong - think of Paul, when he is thrown down from the horse. But usually He goes slowly, respecting our pace. He is the Lord of patience. How much patience the Lord has with us, with each one of us!

The Lord walks next to us, as we have seen here with these two disciples. He listens to our restlessness, He knows it, and at a certain point He says something to us. The Lord likes to hear how we speak, to understand us well and to give the right answer to that disquiet. The Lord does not speed up His pace, He always keeps in step with us, very often slow, but His patience is thus.

There is an ancient rule of pilgrims, which says that the true pilgrim should go at the pace of the slowest person. And Jesus is capable of this, He does it, He does not speed up, He waits for us to take the first step. And when it is the right moment, He asks the question. In this case it is clear: "What are you discussing?" (see v. 17). He makes Himself appear ignorant to make us speak to Him. He likes it when we speak to Him. He likes to hear this, He likes us to speak to Him in this way, to listen to Him and to answer, He makes us talk. As if He were ignorant, but with great respect. And then He answers, He explains, up to the necessary point. Here He says to us: "Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" Then "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures" (v. 26). He explains, He clarifies. I confess that I am curious to know how Jesus explained, to do the same. It was a beautiful catechesis.

And then the same Jesus who has accompanied us, who has drawn close to us, pretends to go on further, to see the extent of our restlessness. "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over" (v. 29). And in this way we meet. But the encounter is not just a time to break bread here, but the entire journey. We meet Jesus in the darkness of our doubts, even in the ugly doubt of our sins, He is there to help us, in our anxieties... He is always with us.

The Lord accompanies us because He wants to meet us. That is why we say that the core of Christianity is an encounter: it is the encounter with Jesus. "Why are you a Christian? Why are you a Christian?" And a lot of people are unable to say. Some, by tradition. Others cannot say it, because they met Jesus, but they didn't realise it was an encounter with Jesus. Jesus is always looking for us. Always. And we have our restlessness. In the moment in which our restlessness meets Jesus, that is where the life of grace begins, life in its fullness, the life of the Christian journey.

May the Lord give us all this grace to meet Jesus every day; to know, to be aware that it is really He who is walking with us in all our moments. He is our pilgrim companion.

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.