



The Holy See

PASTORAL VISIT TO CASSANO ALL'JONIO

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Piana di Sibari (Calabria, Italy)

Saturday, 21 June 2014

On the Feast of *Corpus Christi* we celebrate Jesus “the living bread which came down from heaven” (Jn 6:51), food for our hunger for eternal life, strength for our journey. I thank the Lord who today allows me to celebrate *Corpus Christi* with you, brothers and sisters of this Church in Cassano all’Jonio.

Today is the feast in which the Church praises the Lord for the gift of the Eucharist. While on Holy Thursday we commemorate its institution at the Last Supper, today is for giving thanks and adoration. And in fact, there is a traditional procession with the Most Holy Sacrament on this day. *To adore Eucharistic Jesus and to walk with him.* These are the two inseparable aspects of today’s feast, two aspects that characterize the entire life of the Christian people: a people who adore God and a people who walk: who do not stand still, who journey!

First of all we are *a people who adore God*. We adore God who is love, who in Jesus Christ gave himself for us, offered himself on the Cross to atone for our sins, and by the power of this love rose from the dead and lives in his Church. We have no other God but He!

When adoration of money is substituted for adoration of the Lord, this pathway leads to sin, to personal interest and exploitation; when God, the Lord, is not adored, we become adorers of evil, like those who live by dishonesty and violence. Your land, so beautiful, knows the signs and consequences of this sin. This is *’ndrangheta*: Adoration of evil and contempt for the common good. This evil must be fought, it must be cast out! One must say ‘no’ to it! The Church, which I

know is so committed to raising awareness, must be ever more concerned that goodness prevail. Our kids demand it, our youth, in need of hope, demand it. Faith can help empower us to respond to these needs. Those who follow this evil path in life, such as members of the mafia, are not in communion with God: they are excommunicated!

Today let us confess it as we turn our gaze to the *Corpus Christi*, the Sacrament on the altar. And by this faith, we renounce Satan and all his machinations; we renounce the idols of money, vanity, pride, power and violence. We Christians don't want to worship anything and anyone in this world except for Jesus Christ, who is present in the Holy Eucharist. Perhaps we don't always understand the full meaning of our profession of faith, what consequences it has or should have.

This our faith in the true presence of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, in the consecrated Bread and Wine, is authentic if we commit ourselves to *walk behind Him and with Him*. To adore and to walk: a people who adore are a people who walk! Walk with Him and behind Him, as we seek to practice *His* Commandment, the one he gave the disciples precisely at the Last Supper: "Even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (Jn 13:34). People who adore God in the Eucharist are people who walk in charity. To adore God in the Eucharist, to walk with God in fraternal charity.

Today, as Bishop of Rome, I am here to confirm you not only in the faith but also in charity, to accompany you and encourage you on your journey with Jesus *Caritas*. I should like to express my support to the Bishop, to the clergy and the deacons of this Church, and also of the Eparchy of Lungro, rich in its Greek and Byzantine tradition. I extend it to all, to all the Pastors and faithful of the Church in Calabria, courageously committed to evangelization and to promoting lifestyles and initiatives that focus on the needs of the poor and the least. And I also extend it to the civil authorities who seek to authentically live the political and administrative commitment in service to the common good.

I encourage all of you to witness to concrete solidarity with brothers and sisters, especially those who are most in need of justice, hope and tenderness. The tenderness of Jesus, Eucharistic tenderness: that love so delicate, so fraternal, so pure. Thanks be to God there are so many signs of hope in our families, in the parishes, associations, and Church movements. The Lord Jesus never ceases to inspire acts of charity in his people journeying along the path! A concrete sign of hope is the *Progetto Policoro*, for the young people who want to compete and create employment possibilities for themselves and for others. You, dear young people, let no one steal your hope! I've said it many times and I will repeat it once more: don't let them steal your hope! Adoring Jesus in your hearts and staying united with Him you will know how to stand up to evil, to injustice, and to violence with the strength of goodness, honesty and virtue.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Eucharist has brought you together. The Body of the Lord makes us a single thing, a single family, the People of God reunited around Jesus, the Bread of life. What I

told the young people I say to everyone: if you adore Christ and walk behind Him and with Him, your diocesan Church and your parishes will grow in faith and in charity, in the joy of evangelizing. You'll be a Church in which fathers, mothers, priests, men and women religious, catechists, children, old and young people walk alongside each other, support each other, help each other, love each other like brothers and sisters, especially in difficult times.

May Mary, our Mother, Woman of the Eucharist, whom you venerate in so many Sanctuaries, especially the one in Castrovillari, go before you on this pilgrimage of faith. May she help you, help you always to be united so that, through your testimony as well, the Lord may continue to give life to the world. So be it.