



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

The bothersome cry

Friday, 6 December 2013

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In his homily during Holy Mass on Friday, 6 December, in the Chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis reflected on the nature of prayer. The Pope commented on the day's Gospel from St Matthew (9:27-31), which begins: "And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David'". The Pope noted the Gospel's use of the phrase "to cry aloud" and observed: "Even the blind man who entered Jericho cried aloud, and the Lord's friends wanted him to be silent". Yet the blind man "asks the Lord for a grace, and he asks for it crying aloud," as though he were saying to Jesus: "But do it! It's my right that you do this!"

"Here crying aloud is a sign of prayer," the Pontiff explained. Jesus himself, when he taught his disciples how to pray, told them to pray like the bothersome friend who went at midnight to ask for bread and a little pasta for his guests". Or again, he told them "to do as the widow with the corrupt judge". Pope Francis continued: "To do so — I would say — by being bothersome. I don't know, perhaps this sounds rather bad, but praying is a little like bothering God so that he listens to us". Prayer, he said, is a matter of "drawing God's eyes and heart to us". This is precisely what the lepers in the Gospel did; who drew near to Jesus and said: "If you will it, you can heal us!". And, Pope Francis added, "they did so with a certain assuredness".

“This is how Jesus teaches us to pray,” he explained. We generally bring our requests to the Lord “one, two or three times, but without great strength, and then I tire of asking and I forget to ask”. Yet, he said, the blind men whom Matthew describes “cry aloud and do not cease crying out”. In fact, the Pope added, “Jesus tell us: ‘Ask!’ and he also says: ‘Knock at the door!’ and whoever knocks at the door makes noise, he disturbs, he bothers”.

“These are the words Jesus uses to tell us how we should pray,” he said. “This is also the way the needy pray in the Gospel ... the blind feel confident in asking the Lord to make them well. So much so that the Lord asks them: ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’, to which they respond, ‘Yes, Lord. We believe! We are sure!’”.

These, then, are prayer’s two attitudes: prayer is “needy and confident”. “When we ask for something, our prayer is needy: I need this, hear me Lord!” And, “when it is true, it is also confident: listen to me, I believe you can do it, for you have promised it!”. In fact, Pope Francis explained, “true Christian prayer is founded on God’s promise”.

The Pope then turned to the first Reading from Isaiah (29:17-21), which contains God’s promise of salvation to his people: “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see”. This passage, the Pope affirmed, is a promise. “It is all a promise, the promise of salvation: I will be with you, I will give you salvation!”. And it is “with this assuredness” that “we tell the Lord what we need, confident that he can do it”.

When we pray, the Lord asks us, as he asked the blind men in the day’s Gospel: “Do you believe that I can do this?” This question, the Pope said, is the source of the question we must all ask ourselves: “Am I sure he can do it? Or do I pray a little but without really being sure if he can really do it?” “He can do it,” the Pope said, “even if we do not know when or how he will do it”. “This,” he said, “is the confidence of prayer”.

As concerns our need, it is best, Pope Francis said, to present them “truthfully to the Lord: I am blind, Lord, I am in need, I have this illness, I struggle with this sin, I am in pain”. “In this way,” he said, “he hears our needs, but he also hears us confidently asking him for help”.