



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Three doors

Friday, 16 May 2014

(by *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly ed. in English, n. 21, 23 May 2014)

In his homily at Holy Mass Pope Francis commented on the day's Readings from the Acts of the Apostles (13:26-33) and the Gospel of John (14:1-6).

The Pope first recalled his reflection of the previous day, in which he focused on the fact that “the Christian life is always a matter of being on the way, and of not going alone”, but of going “in the Church, amid God’s people”. The Pontiff then noted that, in the day’s Gospel, Jesus himself says that “he is the way: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. Everything. I give you life, I reveal myself as the truth, and if you come with Me, I am the way”. That is why coming to know him who presents himself “as way, truth, and life” requires starting out on a “journey”. Indeed, Pope Francis said, “knowing Jesus is our life’s most important work”, also because in coming to know him we come to know the Father.

“But how can we know Jesus?”, the Pontiff asked. The Pope agreed with those who answer that “we have to study much”. He therefore invited everyone to “study the Catechism: a beautiful book, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, we must study it”. Yet he was quick to add that we cannot limit ourselves to “believing that we will know Jesus through study alone”. Indeed, there are some who “imagine that ideas and ideas alone will lead us to the knowledge of Jesus”. Even “among the early Christians” some thought in this way, and “they ended up a bit tangled up in their thoughts”. For “ideas alone do not give life”. Thus one who travels by this way “ends up in a labyrinth” from

which “there is no way out”.

This is precisely why, from the beginning there were heresies in the Church that often involved “seeking to understand who Jesus is only with our minds”. Here the Pope recalled the words of the great British author G.K. Chesterton, who called heresy an idea gone mad. In effect, the Pope said, “this is how it is: when ideas are isolated and alone, they go mad”.

The Pope then pointed out three doors we need to open if we want to know Jesus. Reflecting on the first of these doors, i.e. prayer, the Pope said that “study alone without prayer is useless. The great theologians do theology on their knees”. For, he said, if “by study we advance a little, without prayer we will never know Jesus”.

Regarding the second door, i.e. celebration, the Bishop of Rome said that prayer alone “is also not enough”. For “the joy of celebration is needed as well: celebrating Jesus in the Sacraments, for it is there that he gives us life, nourishes us, comforts us, makes a covenant with us, gives us a mission. Without the celebration of the Sacraments we will not arrive at the knowledge of Jesus; and this [celebration] belongs to the Church”.

Finally, to open the third door, i.e. the imitation of Christ, the Pope advised that we take up the Gospels in order to discover there what [Jesus] did, what his life was like, what he told us, what he taught us”, in order to “seek to imitate him”.

Passing through these three doors means “entering into the mystery of Jesus”, Pope Francis said. Indeed, “we can only come to know him if we are able to enter into his mystery”. And we need not be afraid of doing so. The Pope therefore concluded his reflection inviting those present to consider “over the course of the day what the door of prayer is like in my life” ... but true prayer, he said, “the prayer of the heart”.