



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

No one can judge

Monday, 23 June 2014

(by L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly ed. in English, n. 26, 27 June 2014)

One who judges puts himself in God's place and thus faces certain defeat in life because he'll be paid back in kind. And he'll live in confusion, seeing a "speck" in his brother's eye rather than the "log" that blocks his own sight. During Mass, offering his reflections on the day's passage from the Gospel of Matthew (7:1-5), the Pope advised us to defend others and avoid judging them.

The Holy Father turned immediately to the day's reading from Matthew, which presents Jesus who "seeks to convince us not to judge": a commandment that "he repeats many times". In fact, "judging others leads us to hypocrisy". And Jesus defines hypocrites as those who act as judges. Because, the Pope explained, "a person who judges gets it wrong, becomes confused and is defeated".

One who judges "always gets it wrong". He's wrong, Pope Francis explained, "because he takes the place of God, who is the only judge: taking that place is taking the wrong place!". Believing you have the authority to judge everything: people, life, everything". And "with the capacity to judge" you also assume you have "the capacity to condemn".

The Gospel recounts that "judging others was one of the acts of the legal experts whom Jesus called 'hypocrites'". These are the people who "judge everything". However, the worst thing is that, in doing this, they put themselves in God's place, and God is the only judge". And to judge, God

“takes time, he waits”. These people, instead, act hastily. “This is why one who judges gets it wrong, simply because he assumes a place that isn’t his”.

The Pope clarified that this person “doesn’t only get it wrong; he also gets confused”. And “he often becomes obsessed with whom he wants to judge, with that person — so, so very obsessed!” Sometimes losing sleep over that “speck”, he repeats, “But I want to remove that speck for you!”. Meanwhile, he isn’t aware “of the log he has” in his own eye. In this sense, he gets “confused”, and “he thinks the log is that speck”. In this way, one who judges is a person who “confuses reality”, he is deluded.

Not only this. According to the Pontiff, one who judges “becomes defeated” and cannot help but to finish badly, “because the same measure will be used to judge him”, as Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew. Therefore, “the arrogant and condescending judge who assumes the wrong place, because he is taking God’s place, is betting on a loser”. Who is the loser? “The one who is judged by the same measure by which he judges”, the Pope clarified. Because “the only one who judges is God and those to whom God grants the authority to do so. Others have no right to judge: that’s why there’s confusion, that’s why there’s defeat”.

What’s more, the Bishop of Rome continued, “defeat goes even further, because one who judges always makes accusations”. In “judging others — Jesus gives the example of ‘the speck in your eye’ — there’s an accusation” always. Exactly the opposite of what “Jesus does before the Father”. In fact, Jesus “never accuses” but, on the contrary, he defends. He “is the first Paraclete. Then he invites the second, the Holy Spirit, to us”. Jesus is “the defender: he is before the Father to defend us against accusations”.

But when there’s a defender, there’s also an accuser. The Pope explained that “in the Bible the accuser is called devil, Satan”. Jesus “will judge at the end of the world, but in the meantime, he intercedes, he defends”. John, the Pope noted, “says it so well in his Gospel: don’t sin, please, but if someone sins, consider that we have a lawyer who defends us before the Father”.

Thus, he affirmed, “if we want to go on Jesus’ path, more than accusers, we must be defenders of others before the Father”. He then advised us to defend those who are subject to “something bad”: without giving it too much thought, he recommended, “go to pray and defend him before the Father, as Jesus does. Pray for him”.

But most of all, the Pope repeated, “don’t judge, because if you do, when you do something bad, you will be judged!”. This is a truth that’s good to remember “in everyday life, when we want to judge others, to speak ill of others, which is a form of judging”.

Therefore, the Pontiff confirmed, “a person who judges takes the wrong place, becomes confused and is defeated”. And in doing this “he isn’t imitating Jesus, who always defends before the Father:

he's a defence lawyer". One who judges, rather, "is an imitator of the prince of this world, who always goes against people to accuse them before the Father".

Pope Francis concluded by asking that the Lord "grant us the grace to imitate Jesus the intercessor, defender and lawyer for us and for others". And to "not imitate the other one, who will destroy us in the end".