



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

MORNING MEDITATION IN THE CHAPEL OF THE
DOMUS SANCTAE MARTHAE

Three voices

Thursday, 24 November 2016

(by <http://www.osservatoreromano.va>)

In his homily at the Mass he celebrated in the Chapel of Santa Marta on Thursday morning, 24 November, Pope Francis offered a series of practical biblical suggestions in order to help us to truly recognize and listen to “the voice of the Lord” without falling into the temptation of corruption and worldliness, and to rediscover the beauty of the silent prayer of adoration. “In the final week of the liturgical year”, the Pope noted, the Church calls us “to think about the end times, because there will be an end: an end to the world, an end to each one of us”. And “the Church wants us to reflect on this: how the end will be”. In recent days, he said, “we have followed the readings and reflected on them: today I would like to pause, and continue to follow the readings, to reflect on the three voices, the three voices that appear in the liturgy of the word: a cry, a powerful voice and a whisper”.

The first voice Francis spoke of was “the cry”: referring to the cry that is the “loud voice” of the angel, as we read in the passage taken from the Book of Revelation (18:1-2, 21-23; 19:1-3,9) proposed for the first reading. The angel “cried with a loud voice: ‘Babylon has fallen’”. And, the Pope explained, that “corruption grew within the hearts of the people”, who took it to all of us; they brought it to all of us on the path of corruption. “Corruption is the way of living blasphemy”, the Pope explained, “corruption is a form of blasphemy, the language of this Babylon, of this worldliness, blasphemy: there is no God”, however “there is the god of money, the god of well being, the God of exploitation”.

The Pontiff went on to say that “this Babylon, this worldliness, this kingship of the world that seduces the great of the earth — some do not fall and are holy, others fall due to the power of corruption, the ‘power of blasphemy’ — it will fall, this civilization will fall and the angel’s cry is a cry of victory: ‘fallen’”. Babylon ends in this way, “that deceived with its seductions. And the empire of vanity and pride will fall, as Satan fell, it will fall”.

Then comes the second voice, which is “powerful, but not of an angel”, narrated by John in the same passage of the Book of Revelation: “After this, I heard a powerful voice of great multitude in heaven, saying: ‘Alleluia! Salvation, glory and power belong to our God’”. And “contrary to the angel's cry, which was a cry of victory because this corrupt city had fallen, this corrupt civilization”, the Pope explained that “there is the cry of the crowd, the people of God, the cry of praise: ‘Salvation, glory and power belong to our God, because his judgements are true and just’”.

This, the Pontiff said, “is the powerful voice of adoration, adoration of the people of Our God who saves, and also of the people who are still journeying on earth”. The people of God, the Pope continued, are “sinners but not corrupt: sinners who know how to ask for forgiveness, sinners who seek salvation in Jesus Christ”. And “these people rejoice when they see the end: it is the joy of victory in the people of God that brings about adoration, the powerful voice of adoring”.

“Our attitude is always positive”, Pope Francis said. “We cannot remain with only the first angel’s cry if there is not this other voice, this powerful voice of adoring God, the Lord”. The first “cry” is therefore “the fall”, while “the second is worship”. However, “in order to worship we must begin to adore here, and for Christians it is not easy to adore: we are good when we pray asking for something”. And “when we pray we also thank the Lord”, or we pray “for others: we are good, we know how to do it”. But “to worship, the prayer of adoration, of praise, that is not easy to do”, the Pontiff pointed out. This is why “we have to learn, we must learn how to do this now so that we do not learn it in a rush when we are there”. Francis therefore invited us to put ourselves “before the Lord, before the tabernacle, in silence” and “to adore”. Adoration is indeed a “beautiful prayer, because this prayer speaks volumes: ‘You are God, I am a poor child loved by you’”. And “this is very beautiful: to adore”.

“The third voice” that the Pope pointed out “is neither a scream nor a powerful voice: it is the voice of a whisper”. In fact, we read in the passage from Revelation: “Therefore the angel said to me: ‘Blessed are those invited to the wedding banquet of the Lamb’”. “The Lord’s invitation is always a voice that whispers”, the Pope explained; “it is a gentle voice, as is said in the Book of Kings. God speaks to Elijah, with ‘the thread of resounding silence’: how beautiful! God’s voice, when he speaks to the heart, is like this: like a thread of resounding silence, the whisper of God”. It is precisely “that invitation, that promise that he has made to us, to the people: ‘I will call them, I will take them to the desert and I will speak to their hearts’, with this sweet voice”.

“The end, our salvation”, Pope Francis affirmed, “will be this invitation: the invitation to the

marriage banquet of the lamb”. This “makes us think that those who have managed to enter into the feast, according to Jesus’ parable, were not the guests who refused to go; they are those who were at the crossroads on the journey, the good and the bad, the blind, the deaf, the lame, all of us, sinners, but with enough humility to say: ‘I am a sinner, and God will save me’”. And “if we have this in our heart, he will invite us; we will hear this whisper, this voice whispered to us, this thread of resounding silence that says: “Come, come to the banquet””.

In conclusion Francis recalled that the passage from the Gospel of Luke (21:20-28), proposed by the Liturgy, “concludes with this voice: ‘When these things begin to take place — namely the destruction of pride, vanity, all of this —, stand up and raise your heads, your redemption is near’”. This means that “you are invited to the wedding of the lamb”. Thus, the Pope expressed his desire that “the Lord will give us the grace to wait for that voice, to prepare ourselves to hear this voice: ‘Come, come, come, faithful servant, a sinner but faithful: come, come to the banquet of your Lord”.